

the droll

{Or, a *Stage-Play* about the END of *Theatre*}

by Meg Miroshnik

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THE DROLL had its world premiere at the Undermain Theatre in Dallas, Texas. Blake Hackler directed and the cast was as follows:

NIM DULLYN	Katy Tye
MARGARET KILLINGWORTH	Rhonda Boutté
ROSEY DREAD ROSEY	Justin Locklear
JAMES KILLINGWORTH	Jack Greenman
WILLIAM RIFEL	Alex Organ
DOLL CUTPURSE	Jenny Ledel
ROUNDHEAD	Anthony L. Ramirez

THE DROLL was also developed at the Pacific Playwrights Festival at South Coast Repertory. David Chambers directed and the cast was as follows:

NIM DULLYN	Laura Heisler
MARGARET KILLINGWORTH	Tessa Auberjonois
ROSEY DREAD ROSEY	Matt McGrath
JAMES KILLINGWORTH	Nick Ullett
WILLIAM RIFEL	Nathan Baesel
DOLL CUTPURSE	Katrina Lenk
ROUNDHEAD	Stephen Caffrey

THE DROLL was first workshopped at Yale School of Drama. Devin Brain directed, Tanya Dean dramaturged, and the cast was as follows:

NIM DULLYN	Blake Segal
MARGARET KILLINGWORTH	Da'Vine Joy Randolph
ROSEY DREAD ROSEY	Irene Sofia Lucio
JAMES KILLINGWORTH	Zach Appelman
WILLIAM RIFEL	Matt Biagini
DOLL CUTPURSE	Rachel Spencer Hewitt
ROUNDHEAD	Brett Dalton

## Dramaturg's Note

by Dr. Tanya Dean,  
Conservatoire, Technological University Dublin

For actors performing in London at the beginning of the 17th century, life must have seemed full of possibility. The city's thriving public theatres—like Blackfriars, the Cockpit and the Globe—enjoyed audiences of up to 3,000 people, who flocked to see performances of tragedies, comedies and histories. A succession of monarchs had been supporters of the arts—from Queen Elizabeth I (who died in 1603) to James I (who died in 1625). This had created a culture of noble patronage and success for favoured acting companies. When Charles I succeeded to the throne in 1625, it must have seemed as though this fortune would continue; Charles and his Catholic wife, Henrietta Marie, were noted patrons of the arts (with Henrietta Marie even deigning to perform in some of the lavish court spectacles).

Certainly, there were challenges and limitations on artistic freedoms for the acting companies: for example, all female roles had to be played by boy players, as it was considered immoral for women to perform on the stage. And all plays were subject to censorship, as they had to be sanctioned by the Master of the Revels before being approved for public performance. There was also a rising Puritan political force that objected to theatre as immoral. The 1572 “Act for the Punishment of Vagabonds” meant that any players who were caught performing without the protection of a noble patron would be arrested as “Rogues, Vagabonds and Sturdy Beggars,” and would be subject to punishment by one year's imprisonment and being burnt through the gristle of the right ear with a hot poker one inch in diameter, so that they would always manifest “his or her roguish kind of life.” (For a third offense, the punishment was death). And in plague-ridden London, the theatres were a prime breeding ground for infection, with thousands of Londoners crammed into the wooden buildings. Whenever the death rate from plague would rise too high, parliament would decree that the theatres would have to temporarily close, in order to stem the curve of infection. September 1640 and August 1641 saw the theatres closed down for two and four months respectively.

So when the Parliament first outlawed public stage plays on the 2nd of September, 1642, the acting companies must have assumed it was yet another temporary closure; an expedient necessity during a difficult time, as the Royalist cause and the opposing Parliamentary forces \*(known as the Roundheads) \*clashed in a civil war. Certainly, the parliamentary decree seemed to frame the closure as a temporary and necessary sacrifice, stating that “Public Sports do not well agree with Public Calamities...\*(It is therefore thought fit...That while these sad causes and set Times of Humiliation do continue, Public Stage Plays shall cease, and be forborn).” Yet the period that followed (known NOW as the Interregnum) saw theatre banned for a full 18 years, until the Restoration of Charles II to the throne in 1660. \*Later Parliamentary decrees \*extended the theatre closure in 1647 and 1648, \*stating that because stage plays invite “the high provocation of God's wrath and displeasure,” they were not to be “tolerated amongst professors of the Christian religion.” Harsh punishments were inflicted on both actors and audiences who engaged in illegal performances, and the

majority of public theatres were demolished. All hope must have felt lost for the acting companies as the country struggled with bloody and seemingly endless civil wars, the King was deposed (and ultimately executed in 1649), and both the Queen and the heir fled the country to go into exile. With their royal and noble patrons either dead, deposed or embroiled in war, and the public theatres shuttered, actors faced a desperate time. The actors of Blackfriars even \*begged Parliament to be allowed to act again, because, having been “trained up from their childhood” in the theatre, “\*they are now fallen into such a lamentable povertie, that they know not how to provide food for themselves, their wives and children...” “Without your mercifull and present permission,” the company of actors pleaded to an uncaring government, “they must all inevitably perish.”

**In Memory of the Actor, MITTERWURZER**

At its heart, this play is a love-letter to ACTORS.

In that spirit, I offer up the following excerpt from Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s *In Memory of the Actor, MITTERWURZER*. It is Hofmannsthal’s eulogy for a particular performer, but also, I think, about the power of all actors—for though their work is as fragile and ephemeral as their own mortal bodies, the death of a single actor may mark the death of a canon’s-worth of seemingly eternal characters:

He went out like a candle all at once.  
We wore a pallor on our faces like  
The hue reflected from a lightning-flash.

He fell; and with him all the puppets fell,  
Into whose veins this man had poured the blood  
Of his own being; silently they died,  
And where he lay, a heap of corpses lay,  
Strewn in disorder: here a toper’s knee  
Pressing a king’s eye, yonder Don Phillippe  
With Caliban as a nightmare on his neck,  
Dead every one.

--Hugo von Hofmannsthal, 1898

*Dramatis Personae*

**Nim Dullyn** (*he, him*), 12, the Theatrical Fanatick.

**Margaret Killingworth** (*she, her*), mid-40s, the Company Manager.

**James Killingworth** (*he, him*), the Prime Actor.

**Thomas Dread Rosey**, (*they, them*) mid 20s, the Player of Women's Parts.

**William Rifel** (*he, him*), 30s, the Supporting Actor.

**Doll Cutpurse** (*she, her*), 30s, the Tart.

**Roundhead**, (*he, him*), *Beast*, any age, the Fundamentalist.

{ Prologue }

ROUNDHEAD enters.

ROUNDHEAD

Ladies and Gentles!  
Look at ye, sitting so delicately in your seats.  
Already, We can see:  
You know well the ways of audiencing.

Ladies and Gentles.  
O, ho, you know well.

Course you know that straightaway,  
First thing we do when we sit down is:  
Check our pockets.  
For noise-making animals, birds or the like.  
*Silence* 'em, if you catch our drifting.  
Ho, *we* know well.  
When you're audiencing, like as not, shiny stuff will parade across the stage.  
Yes, in theatres, there are always Silks and skins and treasures fit for a K—

ROUNDHEAD starts to  
cough, as if on a hairball.

Apologies, Ladies and Gentles.  
You know how some words leave a sour taste in your mouth?  
Do what ye may, you cannot slip them out soft.  
Like the word (*spits*) King.  
Course that's a hard one when your audiencing.  
Cuz like as not—at the theatre—a Player will play (*spit*) King or (*spit spit*) Queen.  
And you know well:  
To Act Great Lord or Lady, those Actors must wear costuming.  
Like the Cr—

He hacks.

Yes, the (*spit spit spit*) CROWN.  
But did ye know?  
Once Ye might have seen the (*spit spit*) Queen Act the Actress.  
Can ye fathom that, Ladies and Gentles?  
Once upon a time, the GREAT LADY tired of sitting so delicately in her seat!

ROUNDHEAD laughs.

Ho, here's another one.  
Ye want to know what was happening while the Great Lady pretended?!  
Whilst the (*spit spit*) Queen played with her poppets,  
(*laughter building*) FUCKING Skeletons piled up in the streets.  
Don't that make you laugh!  
Little babes sicked up and starved!  
Gnawing on bones for want of bread!  
Ain't that jump the gleekingest thing ye ever heard?  
That is jump the GLEEKINGEST thing we ever heard!!!

He dies of laughter.

O, that's the kinda comedy.  
The kinda comedy that rose up the Roundheads for the Common Wealth.  
'Twas the beginning of the END, Ladies and Gentles!

He stops. ROUNDHEAD looks pleased with himself.

Well, whaddye know?  
We've jump delivered a Prologue.  
Quite like.  
Nearly like.  
*Jump* like.  
A Player.  
Well, as long as ye are.  
Still here.  
You might as well see a show.  
We'll spoil the Ending:  
There'll be a (*spit spit spit*) CROWN.  
O, and, ye might keep yer eye on the boy.  
Ho, we'll give you a *show*.  
One YEAR.  
One Day.  
After the *End*  
Of Theatre.

ROUNDHEAD begins to exit.  
Turns back.

We will save ye.

ROUNDHEAD exits.

{ Act One }

Scene 1

{ONE YEAR, One Day after the *End*.}

*Dusk in a muddy, rat-infested country Inn-yard.*

NIM DULLYN, 12, knocks on a door. His sleeve is drenched in blood.

No response.

He knocks louder.

NIM

Oy!  
Ope the *Door*.

More knocking.

NIM

Oy!  
I got ear of him.

From *Within*:

MARGARET

Who's there?

NIM

A Friend.

The Door is opened a sliver.

MARGARET

What is a Friend?

NIM

Nim Dullyn who looks for the Player *Killingworth*.

The Door is shut up.

MARGARET

O, fuck off.  
Our REVELS now are ended.

No *Players* no more.

NIM

But night last!  
I heard *Killingworth* play that fat knight Falstaff in the Droll.

MARGARET

Ho, that's a good laugh.

NIM

It WAS.  
I *laughed*.  
I laughed til I cried.  
And my Year Long Curse of Silence of Grieff  
was killed.

The Door is opened.

MARGARET KILLINGWORTH looks  
NIM over. He hides his bleeding wrist.

MARGARET

You ain't laughed in a year?

NIM

One Year, One Day.

MARGARET

You look One Year, One Day old, boy.

NIM

Oy,  
I'll be thirteen  
come Lady Day!  
But skills not, I came for *Killingworth*.  
I cogged out a'work today to stand watch the *Inn-yard*.

MARGARET

Then you pissed away a perfect good day.

NIM

Jump now, I heard his voice.  
He's within, I bloody wot.

MARGARET

And what if he wert, *Nim Dullyn*?

What then?

NIM

I come to tell *Killingworth* of my dreams to exercise the *Qualitie*.  
I come to beg him to learn me a *Player*.

MARGARET shuts up the Door; NIM  
stops her.

NIM

*Please*.  
I am not a SPY, Madam.

MARGARET

Ho, jump what a spy would say.

NIM

The Roundhead *Beasts* tried to clap me up, Madam.  
But I made a run.

NIM looks at his wrist.

MARGARET

You seem lamb enough, boy. But I was never a good judge of kind—jump look to how unwisely I  
married.

NIM

Is there nothing I can say—

MARGARET

There is nothing you can say.

{A beat.}

But you might pay.  
For three shillings, I would consider—

NIM

I haven't got that.

MARGARET

Good day, sirrah.

NIM sticks his bleeding wrist in the jamb  
as MARGARET closes the *Door*. A  
Cracking.

NIM

[to MARGARET:] But hold!  
You've scotched my hand bloody!

MARGARET looks at blood-drenched  
sleeve.

MARGARET

Shit.  
Gushing, that.

NIM

Least you might do is say me is there another Motion this week?

MARGARET looks pained as she says:

MARGARET

Boy, I must say it once more:  
The *Theatre* is Over and the Stage-Plays all Stamped out.

NIM

But how will I call for you, Madam, when I come back with the coins?

MARGARET

You won't.

NIM

If I do.  
Who'm I to ask for?

MARGARET

Mrs Killingworth.

MARGARET shuts up the Door.  
NIM cradles his wrist.

*Lights shift; rustling.*

Scene 2

That very EVE.  
*The Inn-yard.* A gust of *wind* and *rustling* of SHADOWS.

NIM DULLYN shakes a coin in a hat, a bloody *strip* of torn shirt in his injured hand. In his good hand, he holds a flickering candle.

NIM

Penny for a poem! Please, penny for a poem! Honour pricks me on. Yea, but how if honor prick me off when I come on?...Penny for a poem! Penny, please!

A *Figure* in a dress darts out of the shadows.

NIM

Penny for a poem, Madam!

The *Figure* lunges for NIM's throat.

NIM

Tuppence to shut me up! Tuppence all't takes!

The *Figure* holds NIM by the throat against the Wall of the *Inn*.

ROSEY

Shhhh. Mark now, *Listen*.

A beat. The *rustles* in SHADOW of before.

ROSEY

[*whispering*]

There's ROUNDHEAD round.  
You'll get yourself seized up, *playing*.

The rustles swirl and a SHADOW passes over. The *Figure* pushes NIM to the ground. They cover him and the Candle's Flame with a *Cloak*. The rustling grows louder.

Then *Silence*.

A Securing Procedure  
Look to your left

ROSEY  
{*hushed, quickly*}

NIM pokes his head out of the cloak.

Now right  
And Up above.  
All scale?

NIM  
{*hushed*}

All scale.

The Cloak is uncovered. NIM holds  
the candle to their face.

I know your face. You're—

NIM

Nothing.

ROSEY

No, I seen you.

NIM

Stuff a' Dreams.

ROSEY

At the Droll. You're *Thomas Dread*

NIM

Rosey

NIM and ROSEY

*The Player.*

NIM

*The candle goes out.*

Scene 3

*The Same.*

Two hours later, A Room at the Inn.

NIM DULLYN crouches in the Cloake, watching THOMAS DREAD ROSEY, the player of Women's Parts.

ROSEY

You may wear your *Rue* with a difference. There's a *Daisy*. I would give you some *Violets*, but they wither'd all when my father died. They say 'a made a good end—

They Sing:

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.  
And will 'a not come again?  
And will 'a not come again?  
No, no, he is dead,  
Go to thy death-bed,  
He will never come again.

*A beat.*

ROSEY stops Playing.

*A beat.*

NIM

It ain't half a laugh.

ROSEY

Isn't meant to be. It's a document in Madnesse.

NIM

O, but you say it sweet.  
How do you remember all them words?

ROSEY

I've been saying them most of my life.

NIM

What is't?

ROSEY

Ophelia.

NIM

Who's Ophelia?

ROSEY

Ophelia is the doomed Love to *Hamlet*.

NIM

Hamlet? I heard him. Bit part in *The Humours of the Gravemakers*.

ROSEY

Hold, Dullyn—  
You don't know Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark?

NIM

Weren't he the glum one in the *DROLL*?

ROSEY

You do know the *Droll's* an Abridgment?

NIM

How's that?

ROSEY

Gravediggers, Falstaff, the Fool?  
They all belong in their own proper Stage-Plays.  
But *The Droll* cuts out their half-checked bits of *JESTERY*  
And mixes them all together.  
A slice of vulgar this and that to make popular pie.

NIM

Sounds a feast.

ROSEY

It is food fastly.  
Discardable as *Junk*.  
But a necessary diet in *These Times*.

NIM

What of Mrs Simpkin? The Bumpkin's Wife? Does she also consort w'Hamlet?

ROSEY

No, they are not acquainted. In the *TRAGEDIE*.

NIM

Shame. Was your best jest.  
No harm, but your Other Parts...  
didn't much tickle.

ROSEY

A *Critick*, eh?  
Mayhap I should have left you in the yard after all.

NIM

No harm!  
I only meant. Weren't you that lacked, but the roles.

ROSEY

All the best bits for Players of Women's Parts are cut out  
of the Motions with a *Chained-Saw*.

NIM

Then why not play a man clown, Rosey, Sir...or, uh, Rosey, Madam?

ROSEY

Jump Rosey will do. And it skills not what's under my skirts if I haven't taken them off in near a  
decade.

NIM

When will Mr Killingworth come?

ROSEY looks at NIM, critically.

ROSEY

What are you, Nim Dullyn?

NIM

Me? I'm Nothing.

ROSEY

And your PEOPLE?

NIM

No PEOPLE.

A beat.

ROSEY

If you were to see James, what then?

NIM

I will ask him to learn me to Exercise the *Qualitie* of Action.

ROSEY

By your age, I'd ready trained some five year.  
There are forsooth arts that cannot be learnt late—  
Training you out of your accent to start.

NIM

*{heavy accent}*

My accent?

ROSEY

*Indeed.*

NIM

Rosey, I would make much pains.

NIM holds up his bad hand.

I have already done.

NIM folds the hand into a fist. ROSEY looks at the hand then grabs their Cloake.

ROSEY

Wait here, I'll go hence for a better bandage.

ROSEY peeks out to ensure all is clear, then exits; returns.

ROSEY

Keep your fingers in your pockets, Dullyn.

ROSEY *Exits*; returns.

ROSEY

And don't let Nothing in.

ROSEY *Exits*.

NIM sits. Then stands. Then explores.

He finds a HIDING PLACE and pulls out a worn Playbill bearing the name "*James Killingworth*". He squints at the text, then sees something else. A scroll. Unrolls it to

reveal an Illustration depicting a scene from “*The Chaste Shepherdess*”: A woman in an ornate dress holds a shepherd’s crook in one hand and a crown in the other. She is lowering it onto the head of a kneeling actor in rich robes—*James Killingworth*. He looks adoringly up at her.

NIM looks intently at the image when there is a tremendous Knocking from *Without*.

MARGARET  
[*from without*]

Ope the door!

Greater knocking.

MARGARET

You take me for a Gull?  
I hear you within.

NIM  
[*quietly*]

Mrs Killingworth?

*Coy:*

MARGARET

Nim, love, let me in.

NIM

Thomas Dread Rosey said not to—

NIM tries to return the papers to the trunk.

MARGARET

You want to see my Husband?  
Ope the door, Nim.

NIM stuffs the papers in his Jerkin and opens the door.

NIM

Mrs Killingworth.

Entering, raving *Mad*:

MARGARET

Didn't I tell you to bugger off?

NIM

Only conjuring up a few coins—

NIM puts forth his Bad Hand.

NIM

with my Good Hand, as you asked.

MARGARET

I must say it plain, Nim: We cannot take you on.  
Ain't enough to meet ends as it is.

NIM

Don't need Nothing.

MARGARET

Back before, when we played the Citty and the company were three times the size the take was fifteen pounds a day. But now, Nim, it's secret shows in shit-filled country yards. A good week now? Is *two pounds*. So, you may look upon the *Player Killingworth*, son, for a wondrous light moment. But we cannot take you on.

MARGARET spies the *Illustration*.

What the Devil--?

She snatches the paper from him.

NIM

I woulda put it back.  
On my life.

MARGARET tears the illumination,  
angrily.

NIM

Madam, apologies.

Of a sudden, a light *Without*. The  
Rustling.

The Door swings open, ROSEY enters.  
MARGARET scatters the torn paper.

ROSEY

Time's come, Mrs Killingworth. Lights on the horizon, we need to move on.

MARGARET

The Properties Trunk?

ROSEY

Will's after it. Your husband's done the Wardrobe.

ROSEY gathers their Things.

JAMES KILLINGWORTH appears. He moves with purpose, but he is yet jovial and radiant, the PRIME ACTOR.

NIM is stunned.

JAMES

Always the Midnights, isn't it, Margaret?

ROSEY exits.

MARGARET

It's a PLOT to rob me of slumber.  
Soon I'll look as old as you from the want of it.

JAMES

O, come now, Margaret, where's your sense of *Accitement*?

MARGARET

You are all the accitement my heart can dudgeon.  
Are the Holdings Books—

JAMES

Looked after, milady.  
Shall we dance?

MARGARET

Now, *James*.

ROSEY enters, more goods in hand. They retrieve another bundle.

Let's away.

ROSEY

Mr Killingworth. Sir?

NIM

JAMES KILLINGWORTH *sees* NIM.  
ROSEY *exits* again.

Ah, what is this?

JAMES

He followed Rosey—

MARGARET

A true Friend and Admirer, Sir.

NIM

*[cuts her off, speaks as steadily as he can]*

Then we must take him on!  
Come now, the time is here.

JAMES

JAMES KILLINGWORTH *offers* NIM a hand.

It is taken—NIM is careful to offer his good hand—and the boy is overcome.

MARGARET *looks on* sourly. JAMES *intones:*

Give me your hands, if we be friends,  
And Robin shall restore amends.

JAMES *looks to* NIM.

I foretell, my boy,  
the Beginning  
of a Great New *Adventure*.

JAMES

Scene 4

ONE YEAR, One Week after the *End*.

DOLL CUTPURSE is in a State of some Undress, wearing a Man's Hat, doing her *Strip Tease*.

DOLL

Betwixt You and Me, Gentlemen,  
It seems that one of you'll go home happy,  
that being that one of you'll take me home.

Don't no one want to go home happy?  
I know I'd like do, if I had a home to go to.

But that skills not!  
For they say Home is where you lay your—

*Bedfellow* for the evening, gentles. Or *Bedlady*. I don't complain, either hands.

Sir!  
Come see me Tease!  
Or jump come!

Madam.

*Madam*?  
Haven't been called *Madam* since I got off my back and out the Silver Cross.

Got a good eye of the Globe there.

DOLL shimmies a little.

DOLL removes her *Hat*.

DOLL tilts her *Head*.

DOLL sees Someone.

ROUNDHEAD steps closer. He wears spectacles and holds a book.

ROUNDHEAD

DOLL

ROUNDHEAD

DOLL

The Playhouse.

ROUNDHEAD

Very same.  
They pulled that one down.  
Firewood now.

DOLL

Shame.

ROUNDHEAD

You're some sort of...*Actress*.

DOLL

Ho, that's a laugh.  
I'm a whore.

ROUNDHEAD

Sinners, all.

DOLL

I absolute agree.  
You want to go home happy?

ROUNDHEAD holds up his book. It's a Bible.

DOLL

And?

ROUNDHEAD

You ought to be afraid to speak to Us such.  
We might tell a Friend.  
Who might tell a Friend.

DOLL

Please do.  
{*gestures lewdly*:} In my experience, them kinds of friends is my best clientele.

ROUNDHEAD walks toward her.

DOLL

Changed your mind, eh?  
You gonna take me home?

ROUNDHEAD grabs her collar, gets in her face. DOLL is suddenly afraid.

Don't—  
I'll give it away for free—

Then he *spit spit spits* in her face and lets her  
go, limp.

ROUNDHEAD

We will save ye.

ROUNDHEAD exits.

DOLL pulls her clothing back on.

DOLL

Don't no one want to take me home?

### Scene 5

{ONE YEAR, One Week after the  
*End.*}

Another *Inn-yard* in Another *Town*.

NIM DULLYN whittles a piece of wood  
with one hand. His other hand is more  
cleanly *Bandaged*. WILLIAM RIFEL  
circles him, *Suspect*.

WILLIAM

Ugh, my teeths ache from you, Kid.  
All Elbows and Action, when *Old Kill* comes round,  
Agazing at him sweeter than sugar bread.

NIM

I don't—  
That's not—  
Fuck off, *Rifel*.

WILLIAM

Would if this weren't the only tolerable bit of the yard.

Pig slop over there is crawling with Rats.  
Betimes, I'm waiting on your *Old Kill*.

*A Stale-Mate*; WILLIAM returns to circling.

WILLIAM

You know, I've heard you.  
These seven long days sith you've been following us.  
I've heard you.

NIM

What?

WILLIAM

Mutilating the Verse.  
Torturing the Words Themselves.  
*Rehearsing.*

NIM lowers his head.

WILLIAM

Give us a taste, why don't you?

NIM

Thought you heard.

WILLIAM

From afar.  
How'm I to judge your gifts from afar?

NIM shakes his head.

NIM

Must haul my own burden. To stay, I'm not to create cares for Mrs Killingworth.

JAMES enters, bottle in hand, singing a  
drinking song.

NIM

Sir?

WILLIAM

Kill, I've been waiting.

JAMES

Well then the world's mine oyster.

WILLIAM

A word, Kill? More privateish?

JAMES

Words, words, words.

I must forslow our conference for I am loathe to part with the little bit of jollification I had today.

WILLIAM

Kill, I think you'll want to hear—

JAMES

Yes, yes, in time, Will.

At present, I would like to bask in this mirth.

Makes me think on Ten Year Back.

Cause for a tipple.

JAMES lifts the bottle.

WILLIAM

Didn't wot you were ever needful for cause.

JAMES

Ten year back!

Remember, Will?

Your Voice had just suffered a sea-change into something rich and strange.

WILLIAM

I had jump begun to study HAMLET's lines.

JAMES

We had such fine actors in the troupe then. Ten strong men.

WILLIAM

Who all turned trundle tail and fled.

JAMES

And yet, Rifel, you art still here.

NIM

And you, Sir?

Where were you Ten Year ago?

What were you *Playing*?

JAMES

That is a tale, Son.

NIM

You might tell it?

WILLIAM

You needn't work so hard for it.  
He'd tell it to a *Post*.

NIM

Please, *Sir*?  
I would wrap it up in paper, your Tale, and put it in my HEART, Sir.

JAMES  
(*moved*)

Oh, Nim. What a thing to say.

NIM

Naught but the truth, Sir.

JAMES KILLINGWORTH *clears his throat...*

JAMES

On that hands, I suppose...

...then Acts in full voice.

JAMES

One Decade ere: I was but a lad of sixty.

WILLIAM looks round the Inn-Yard,  
especially mindful of the balconies above.

WILLIAM

Mind, Kill. The *Walls* have grown ears.

JAMES begins again, *half-voiced*:

JAMES

[*volume increases the longer he speaks*]

One Decade ere.  
O, those were Fair and Free Days.  
The Plague had just quit the *Cittie*  
And the Playhouses had ope up once more  
with Piles of new plays pining for the *Stage*.  
Margaret's Father was Producer then,  
my Dear Old Friend Roger Cavendish.

O, those were Fair and Free Days.  
And then the Most Wondrous Thing of All:  
Her Highness *Henrietta Maria*, the GREAT LADY Herself, fell in love with Theatre.  
It began slow: A command performance of a *Play* here, there.  
A request to greet the *Players* eftsoons the show.  
And then Favors:  
Gifts of Wardrobe you cannot Imagine.  
New-Sewn Cloakes of the best stuff,  
A Bear Suit, stitched of natural Bear Skins.  
For the more the GREAT LADY fell in love with Illusion,  
the more she wished it Real.  
Of a sudden, she was no longer satisfied to play spectator—  
Looking upon all her fine things in Action—  
but had an o'erwhelming desire to exercise the Action herself.  
She solicited me, the PRIME ACTOR, to give her Lessons in PLAYING.  
Every week we Rehearsed in preparation for a performance before the GREAT LORD.

NIM

A performance?

JAMES

She had commissioned a *Stage-Play* from one of her Court Wits

NIM

What wert the part?

JAMES

The *Chaste* SHEPHERDESS.

NIM

And the play?

WILLIAM laughs.

WILILAM

Yes, *Kill*, the play?

JAMES  
{*dejected*}

O, the play. That was the stinkiest piece of manure I'd ever played.

WILLIAM

The GREAT LADY's Author Wit was a half-wit.

JAMES

But have you seen her, Nim, the GREAT LADY?

NIM

Picture once.

JAMES

Nothing to her Divinity in the flesh Ten Year ere.  
And at the play's climax? She was greatly surpassing fair.  
For it was then, Nim, that she placed upon my head her costliest gift of all.

JAMES mimes a *Crown*.

Solid gold made weightier still by its status as SYMBOL of the world's natural order—

WILLIAM

Concerning which, my mumble-news—

JAMES

Very well, Rifel. What are the fishwives whispering?

WILLIAM

I think it better we retire—mayhap to your closet?

JAMES

Nim is our *Company Joynter* now.

A beat.

WILLIAM

[*not pleased*]

As you like.  
Rumour has it.  
Week last, they killed a juggler.

JAMES

For what? Crimes against his own dignity?

WILLIAM

This is sober, Kill.  
A man is dead.

JAMES

Rumour has it.  
Do you wot his name?

WILLIAM

No.

JAMES

Mere chatter.

WILLIAM

Well, chatter was when they clapped him up, they were looking for—

WILLIAM mimes the Crown.

NIM

The *crown*?

WILLIAM

Stint your \*mouth!

NIM

But why would a *juggler* have the--

WILLIAM claps his hand over NIM's mouth.

JAMES

We ought not speak so openly, Nim.

WILLIAM

[to JAMES:] *This is why I listed to talk PRIVATEISH—*

NIM

I'm so sorry, I didn't—

WILLIAM

If the end weren't already upon us, this Dully'n'd summon it.

JAMES

Trust, Rifel: The bark of these Beasts is worse than their bite. One year and what hath they to show for it? Naught but lights and petty harassment.

WILLIAM

Twenty-five years I've lived the life of Action,  
And I have felt the *Theatre* bend.  
But now it feels like to break.

JAMES clips WILLIAM to him, fatherly.

JAMES

Mark me well, William.

There is no END to *Theatre*.  
You must have FAITH.

NIM

In what, Sir?

JAMES look round and then shares the  
*Secret*:

JAMES

A Marvel.  
Witnessed within the Cittie Walls:  
A THEATRE seen standing.  
And not jump any Theatre, but the RED BULL.

NIM

The Red Bull?

WILLIAM

It wasn't pulled down year last with the Globe?

JAMES

A Chapman come from the Cittie direct saw it not eight days ago.  
Called it a beacon.  
Said there were flowers lain at its feet.

WILLIAM

Flowers?

JAMES

There are pilgrims yet. Awaiting the return.

NIM

Wondresse, Sir.

JAMES

O, Nim. You have no conceit of how.  
The Great Red Bull still standing, aready to charge.  
[to WILLIAM:] Doesn't that give you FAITH, Son?

WILLIAM

I would like to Play *Hamlet*  
in the Tragedie Compleat.

JAMES

Good night, sweet prince.

JAMES looks to NIM.

Now, what sort of cunning has our Dullyn created?

NIM

O, it's naught, Sir.

JAMES picks up a piece of the wood  
that NIM has been carving.

NIM

I'm not to be a burden.

JAMES looks closer at the wood.

JAMES

Is this--?  
Why, it looks the jump image of...Me.

NIM

Yes, Sir.  
I had hoped, Sir, to capture something of ye.

JAMES

It's the jump image!

WILLIAM

Give me an eye of it!

WILLIAM grabs the wood.

JAMES

Did Margaret study you to plume me up?  
In wood?  
In little?  
Doesn't sound like Margaret, listing for more copies of me around.

NIM

It was my invention.  
I thought to the moment already a Week ago  
when I was leaving my first DROLL—  
All I wanted was to see you and the Actions againe.  
Might not others want such a thing, too, Sir?  
Now, for a goat apiece, all your Publick might have you—in little in wood—  
to play the Actions over and over again in their homes.

A beat.

WILLIAM

Would be a work of cunning, Nim Dullyn, if we had a Publick to sell to.

JAMES takes the piece of wood again.

NIM

Then you ought to have a larger Spectatorship.  
Advertiserments would draw more People.

WILLIAM

[*sarcastic*]

O, you think?  
Forsooth, we had not dreamed the equal of your *Foxshipness!*

JAMES

I'm afraid Will's right. A small Publick is the necessary companion of our current troubles.

WILLIAM

Ferret not, Nim.  
Mayhap there is a fewness of People, but you may always keep company with your toys.

NIM

They're not toys, Will.  
They are *Figures* of the ACTION.  
ACTION-FIGURES.  
Not poppets.

JAMES plays a little scene with the  
*Action-Figure*.

JAMES

What a piece of work is man!

NIM

Mrs Killingworth.

NIM returns to work, vigorously.

WILLIAM

Who'd want Margaret as a Figure of Action?

JAMES

How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties—

NIM

Mrs Killingworth's coming across the yard.

WILLIAM looks out, squints.

WILLIAM

So she is.

WILLIAM hides the bottle and JAMES tucks up the *Action-Figure* into his sleeve as MARGARET enters.

JAMES

Margaret, my poppet!

MARGARET

Screeching in the *Inn-Yard*? Did you leese your brain of late, James? [*smelling JAMES's breath:*] You've been tippling.

JAMES

Never.

MARGARET

I saw the lights a mile off.

JAMES

Ah. Then it's time to move on.

MARGARET

Will, fetch off the curtain.

WILLIAM

Isn't that a Labour for the *Company Joynter*?

MARGARET

He's only one hand, you'll be faster. Nim's to tent around for Rosey. James, you'll look to the Wardrobing.

WILLIAM exits. JAMES nods.

I'm after all else.

MARGARET begins to exit.

JAMES

Certes, Margaret. I'm a sorry thing.

MARGARET

Jump look to the things, James.

MARGARET exits. NIM looks to follow.

JAMES

Nim, the *Figure*.

NIM *turns*.

NIM

It's yours to hold, Sir.

JAMES

That is overmuch liberal.  
I ought you a groat, Nim.

NIM

The pleasure is worth ten times that to me.

JAMES

Then I will pay you with a lesson, Dullynn.

NIM

Sir?

JAMES

A tutoring in the Action.  
Would you like that, Son?

NIM

Yes, Sir.

JAMES

Good now, heed Mrs Killingworth.  
I'm off.

JAMES exits. NIM looks up; his face is *aglow*.

NIM

Yes, Sir.

**Scene 6**

{ONE YEAR, Two Weeks after the  
End.}

**The DROLL begins.**

A rat-eaten Curtain. MARGARET  
appears to give the *Afore-Show*  
*Announcement*.

MARGARET

Con thanks and welcome to the Motion what'll begin immediate. But first, Securing Procedures.  
Gentles, take a look to the left and make certes your neighboring Member of the Publick be  
HUMAN and not BEAST.

MARGARET looks to her *Left*.

Good? Look to the right.

MARGARET looks to her *Right*.

And now up above.

MARGARET looks up *Above*.

All scale? Without furthering ado, The DROLL.

MARGARET exits. ROSEY appears from  
behind the *Curtain* to deliver the  
PROLOGUE in *Jig*.

ROSEY

Gentles, we entreat you; Let the world slip away,  
For ye shall never againe be younger than ye are today!  
Look unto our ACTIONS and have a full laugh  
As we act the Story of a Wit less than *half*.

The mind of this GULL is not sharpe, but limpkin.  
I now present you Gentle Creatures with  
The *Conceited Humours* of SIMPKIN!

WILLIAM enters to applause; he seems a  
little surprised. And then JAMES enters to  
applause as ROSEY turns the curtain  
around so that we are now backstage.

NIM sits. The basket of *Action-Figures* at his side is now o'erflowing; a *Figure*, half compleat, lies at his feet.

He holds a piece of paper, trying to concentrate on it.

MARGARET enters, carrying the Counting Books, wearing *Spectacles*.

MARGARET

Nearly a Lusty Rout we roused!  
Twenty-two whole personage in the crowd!

ROSEY  
{onstage}

Pray tell, kind Simpkin, what means you this farce?

JAMES  
{onstage}

I'll speak, Madam, soon as I stop the fartens my arse!

A loud FARTING noise.

NIM laughs.

MARGARET

You've had eye of that joke two weeks now.

NIM

It's so gleeking.  
He can't stop the fartens.

MARGARET

Yes, Nim.  
I wot.  
What is that?

NIM hides the folded paper.

NIM

What?

MARGARET

The bit of book.

NIM

It's nothing.

MARGARET

Show it me, Dullyn, or I'll claw it from you.

A Loud Farting noise from the stage as  
WILLIAM enters.

WILLIAM

You catch ear of that?  
They've gone *fanatick* for me!

MARGARET  
[*eyes still on NIM*]

Almost a Proper Publick againe, isn't it, Will?

WILLIAM

Supposing I take two bows today?  
I'll intend to take leave of the Stage as though I'm done for the day,  
Then, of a quirk, I'll return to Take Knee againe.

MARGARET

Jowl Yourselfe Out.

NIM

Break a leg, Will.

WILLIAM makes a farting noise as he steps  
through the Curtain to *Laughter*.  
{MARGARET returns to NIM.}

MARGARET

Gripe it over, Dullyn.  
Now.

{NIM hands her the paper.}

MARGARET

My husband wrote out this leaf.

NIM  
[*with hesitation*]

Yes, Madam.

For an acting lesson?

MARGARET

Yes, Madam.

NIM

So, set to it.

MARGARET

MARGARET opens the *Counting-Book* and begins her ciphering.

Plumed up six *Action-Figures* this morn, so if you're ferreting over MERCH sales—

NIM

I'm not.

MARGARET

--and I've another here, half-done.  
Might have him rounded off if you thought—

NIM

I don't.  
Study your role, Dullyn.

MARGARET

NIM returns to the small square of paper.

MARGARET works.

*A beat.*

Mrs Killingworth?

NIM

Yes, Nim?

MARGARET

I can't make much of this.

NIM

You can't read.

MARGARET

Not as such.

NIM

Mrs Killingworth?

*A beat.* MARGARET makes face as though she does not know what he will ask.

NIM

Mayhap you might learn me a few *Letters*.  
These big long ones.

MARGARET

May-hap.  
But you would have to con a few figures, too.  
I could do with a Helpmeet.

NIM

May-hap.

JAMES  
{*onstage*}

My love, rub my stick and set me a'fire.

ROSEY  
{*onstage*}

O, no, here cometh the wet blanket, my husband \*the squire!

The Audience laughs.

NIM

You want Help, truly?

MARGARET

What's your meaning, Dullyn?

NIM

I think I have...a SCHEME.

MARGARET

A SCHEME?

NIM

We'd make more money if we had more audience.

MARGARET

This is not news, Nim.

NIM

But the proof that the Red Bull Theatre still stands is news. How many do it hold?

MARGARET

One thousand. You couldn't keep such a thing secretive.

NIM

Wouldn't try.

MARGARET

In these Times? We'd have fortune to get one show only.

NIM

When I was needful of a fish, Mrs Killingworth, I'd use a net.  
We are needful of a Publick, we will use a social net.

MARGARET

A social net?

NIM

Our one large Publick makes a net for us to scoop up others. Tickets at the Red Bull cost \* what

MARGARET

Three pence for the ground.

NIM

I sell Action-Figures for a groat apiece. A Social net might buy the Merch for years to come,  
whether they seen the Droll or no. Then we have more than an Audience: We have Consumers.

MARGARET thinks for a moment.

MARGARET

ONE show only...it would have to be an *EVENT*.  
A *Stage-Play* in full.

NIM

[*in awe*]

Truly, Madam?

A beat.

MARGARET

No. Certes, no. 'Twould be such a danger.

NIM

Yes, Madam.

MARGARET

Now I want to see you Figure these Columns.  
In return, I'll break these Letterings into smaller sounds.

They exchange *Leafs* of PAPER. As NIM exits, an *Action-Figure* falls from his basket.

NIM

Thank you, Mrs Killingworth!

NIM *scampers* off as ROSEY and JAMES enter; the *Action-Figure* lies on the ground, unnoticed. ROSEY and JAMES's *Arms* are thrown about one another, triumphant.

JAMES

Like seeing a squint of Sun after a Year in Dark.

ROSEY

Had felt *Ten Years* of Dark to me, Sir.

JAMES

Bask in that affection, my darling *Rosey*.  
Let it turn you pink as your name.

MARGARET

You're in a passion.

JAMES

A bit of faith restored.  
The Ends always End.

MARGARET

Where's Will?

JAMES and ROSEY look back toward the *Stage*.

ROSEY

Sopping up the love, isn't he?

JAMES

He's got a sponge out there, daubing away at every last drop.

ROSEY

Marry, he's making his mark on that boy's trunk sleeve!

MARGARET

I ain't paying that boy a penny in Damages.

JAMES

Don't be an innocent, Margaret.  
Someone asked Will for an *Auto-Graph*.

ROSEY

Lo, the day has come: The Pigs have Taken Wing.

MARGARET

That's my Pen-quill he's using!

ROSEY

A Cup of *Tickle-Brain* to celebrate?

MARGARET

You wot the rules.

ROSEY

I wot, I wot:  
No eating in Costuming.

JAMES

I ought to find Nim.

WILLIAM enters, carrying a Bouquet  
of weeds.

ROSEY

Behold!  
The Great Player God—

WILLIAM throws his arms about  
ROSEY's neck and gives them the  
*Bouquet*.

WILLIAM

Rosey, I don't think I've ever told you:  
The first time I saw you play *Juliet* with the BOY PLAYERS,  
you glowed as if you had swallowed the sun.

ROSEY

[bewildered]

Thank you, Will.

WILLIAM approaches MARGARET.

WILLIAM

I have taken a Liberty, Mrs Killingworth, and it is your Plume.

WILLIAM hands her the *Pen-quill*.

MARGARET

I might also call that Liberty: *Ink*.

WILLIAM

Tuppence for your troubles, Madam.

WILLIAM hands her a coin.  
MARGARET bites the coin, skeptical.

It was thrown to the stage as I took knee thrice!

JAMES

It is certes fine to see you so sweet-blooded, Will.

WILLIAM

[*a new faith*]

I will play Hamlet  
in the Tragedie Compleat  
Anon, Kill.  
I Will,  
Won't I, Kill?

JAMES

[*miming Hamlet preparing to raise a sword to Claudius*]

Now might I do it pat, now he is praying.  
And now I'll do it.

WILLIAM

*I will.*  
I know I will.  
Come, Rosey.  
Run the Nunnery Scene with me.

ROSEY

I'll get me to a nunnery if you'll buy me a tipples.

WILLIAM

Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?

WILLIAM and ROSEY exit.

JAMES

I ought to tent around for Nim, he's expecting me.

MARGARET stops JAMES.

MARGARET

For this?

MARGARET shows him the Bit of Book.

JAMES

[*temper rising*]

Where did you come by this?

MARGARET

Nim *gave* it me, you dull fool.  
He can't read Letterings, you sot!

JAMES

He can't?

MARGARET

NOBODIES can read in these Times!  
E'en when you wert young, Boy Players learned speeches by ear.  
Books were dear years before they begun to be burnt.

JAMES

[*tapping his head*]

The old bucket isn't holding agood water anymore, I reckon.

MARGARET

Or might be that the last pupil you had wore a

She mimes a *Crown*.

MARGARET

*You-know-what* as her workaday weeds.

JAMES

Aye, that's the stuff.  
Swing hardly for me, Margaret.

MARGARET

After the GREAT LADY, you expect all your pupils to commission their own plays!

JAMES

Margaret, are you...gleeking with me?

MARGARET

Think on the Play Nim would command.  
The Tragedie of the *Joynter*.

JAMES

An ALERT for *Spoilers*:  
It ends with the SAWING of wood.

MARGARET laughs.

You're laughing.

MARGARET

After some months' Curse of Silence and Grieff.

JAMES

The *Ends* always END, my love.  
Come now: A Cup of Tickle-Brain and Some Grub.

JAMES and MARGARET *Exit*.

### Scene 7

{ONE YEAR, Eighteen Days after the  
*End*.}

Another town, closer to the *Cittie Walls*.

ROSEY

The LIPS  
The TEETHS  
The TIP-O-THE-TONGUE

NIM

I've rooted the speech.

ROSEY

Yes, but I'm to make you *Warm* first.  
The LIPS

NIM

The teeths, the tippa the tongue.

ROSEY

No, Nim, the point is to *Spit* out the syllables.  
The LIPS the TEETHS the TIP-O-THE-TONGUE!

NIM wipes ROSEY's spit from his face.

NIM

This is how *Killingworth* do?

ROSEY

Indeed, every time I play a scene with James, I am absolute *Rained Upon*.

NIM

James is on his way?

ROSEY

He had an *engagement*.  
With a bottle it seems.  
Now, I ought learn you to breathe.

NIM

I been breathing my whole life.

ROSEY

Big breath, Nim.

NIM sucks in air, his shoulders to his ears.

ROSEY

Now, that may suffice for the *Inn-Yard* Motion played to Two Farmers and a Chicken...

JAMES enters.

But an *Actor* must keep his shoulders still whilst he inhales.

Sir? NIM

What ho, Nim?  
I see our Rosey hath made you warm.

ROSEY  
Jump been holding the house for your arrival.

My thanks. JAMES

ROSEY exits.

Sir, I learnt all the words! NIM

Indeed, you've learnt from without.  
Hand on your belly, Nim. JAMES

JAMES breathes deep from his *Diaphragm*.  
NIM assays to do the same.

And now you shall find the words within.  
Breathe deep for me. JAMES

NIM puts his hand on his belly and breathes  
again. His shoulders are still.

Well done. JAMES  
Now, we speak from the gut:  
To be, or not to be—

That is the question. NIM

Deeper, Dullyn. JAMES

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind— NIM

JAMES

Deeper yet.  
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;  
No more.

{A beat.}

JAMES

You feel the difference?  
When you make the words your own?

NIM

I feel...  
Sadly.  
It didn't hit me heavy when I rooted the words,  
But jump now, hearing you Speak it, I feel so...  
Sadly.

JAMES

Thank you, Nim.

NIM

But it's not at all gleeking, Sir.

JAMES

Existence is oft not gleeking, Nim.  
It's a cold thing, to look out at the undiscover'd country  
from whose bourn no traveler returns—  
To look out and then to look inward at the *cesspool* the World has sunk one's soul into  
and to know, scale-headedly, that these are the only two choices a Human Being is ever given...  
It is not a gleeking business Hamlet is engaged in, Nim, that is true.  
But you know that, don't you, Dullyn?

NIM shrugs.

How did you make such close acquaintance with the question, Nim?  
To be or not to be?

NIM rubs his wrist.

NIM

Skills not.

JAMES

From whence were you coming when you stumbled into our DROLL?

NIM

A place I'm never returning.  
Knew that the moment I got ear of that...  
*Laughter.*  
Wert like Angel Bells ringing out.

JAMES

A mere Droll took hold of you that hardly?

NIM

Yes, Sir. I would do some Evil for your Motions.

JAMES is taken aback a bit.

JAMES

Evil?

NIM

My wrist weren't accidental. I put it in the jamb for Mrs Killingworth to shut up deliberate.

JAMES  
*[relieved]*

O, Nim, you were uneasying me!

NIM

I wanted to meet you. I thought Mrs Killingworth would have the sorries for me if she thought she'd scotched me hardly.

JAMES

Course, you did not know my Wife.

NIM  
*[looking him in the eye]*

May-hap, Sir, you do not know your Wife.

JAMES  
*[thoughtfully]*

May-hap.  
'Tis not possible to know what is Margaret and what is that which I've made of Margaret.

A beat. A *Confession:*

At the beginning of our joining, I gave Margaret *Sickness*. I passed on an Ill of the sort that makes one unfit for birthing. I told myself 'twas accidental.

NIM

Why would you do that to Mrs Killingworth, Sir?

JAMES

Life is composed of a series of Dark Bargains, isn't it, Dullyn? Roger Cavendish schemed that the best way to keep the Show money in the family was for us to marry. 'Twould not have been a lesser evil to leave her on her own.

*A beat.*

NIM

You done it for the survival of the troupe?

JAMES

For the survival of *Theatre*, Nim. You can understand that?

NIM

I think so.

JAMES

I want to show you...

JAMES takes pulls a key on a chain out from under his shirt.

NIM

A key, Sir?

JAMES

When we left the Citty one year back, it seemed a most temporary exile. I was certes the ordinance would last a week, no more. So I left behind a locked box. Beneath the floor in Margaret's office.

NIM

What do the box hold?

JAMES

Solid gold made weightier still by its status as SYMBOL of the world's natural order...

JAMES mimes putting a crown on NIM's head.

NIM

You have the—

JAMES holds up a hand to shush him.

JAMES

I have faith that it is still hid, awaiting our return.  
I will give you this key when it is time.

NIM

Me, sir?

JAMES

I would not endanger Margaret or Rosey thus \* in these Times.

NIM

Then \*Will—

JAMES

Will Rifel is a fine actor certes.  
And, to his credit, he hath stayed e'en beyond finer actors.  
But, atimes, his heart is not as strong as his artifice.  
Do you understand?

NIM

I think so, Sir.

JAMES

Ah, Time is a Wing-ed Creature. We have but touched on the Surface and already the Rehearsal is over.

NIM

But we didn't work at all.

JAMES

Do not ferret, Nim, we will make our way through Hamlet, certes.

JAMES takes NIM's chin in his hand.

JAMES

For I have faith, Nim Dullyn.  
In your Future—  
As an ACTOR.

JAMES *exits*; NIM watches him exit.

NIM

To be or not to be.

**Scene 8**

{ONE YEAR, Twenty Days after the  
*End.*}

DOLL performs her *Act* in the Inn-Yard,  
wearing her *Gentleman's Suit* and *Hat*.

DOLL

Ho, Dungforth. I'm a DOLL. Don't one of yous want to take me home? I can't Hear you! Don't one of yous want to *Take Me Home*?

To a Member of the PUBLICK:

Oooo, isn't this a nice cloth you've got skinward? When I was a Fripper—

To ROUNDHEAD seated in the  
Audience:

This GENTLEMAN here thinks I've been tippiling. Well, I have, but that's unrelative. I fripped old clothes for year. Ho, now, look at *this* gentle, sitting so delicately in his seat.

ROUNDHEAD

We know well the ways of audiencing.

DOLL

Indeed. So, you'll know: The best frippin' business wert the Show Business. All manner of rich costumes on the backs o' those poor bastards. Think on that, Dames! Me, Daughter Doll to my Mother Whore, born with sin on my soul thanks to the hole I come out of, holding the smoothest *Silks* and the lushest *Velvets* in my grubby little fingers.

ROUNDHEAD

Speaking of the Show business?

To another Member of the Publick, maybe she  
shows the *Action-Figure*:

DOLL

Any of yous seen other player types hangin' about? I'm lookin' to my left, my right, up above...No?

She looks at ROUNDHEAD:

ROUNDHEAD

All scale.

DOLL returns to the audience.

A beat.

DOLL

Thank you, Gentles, for being so gentle with me, your very own Doll! Tell a friend!

ROUNDHEAD gestures to her and she EXITS.

### Scene 9

{ONE YEAR, Twenty Days after the  
*End.*}

MARGARET enters with the *Counting Books* and *Cash-Pouch*, the sounds of a *Market* nearby. NIM trails behind.

MARGARET

Hurry up, Nim! House opens in an hour and we've yet to count out the drawer.

MARGARET hands him the *Ledger*. NIM opens it.

NIM

Madam, I've been thinking more on my SCHEME.  
I thought I might ask Mr Killingworth—

MARGARET

What?

NIM

Well, if we wert to do a *Stage-Play* in full, which one \*would we do?

MARGARET

No, absolute no!

NIM

But Madam—

MARGARET

Nim, if *we wert* to do a *Stage-Play* in full, you and I would make the choosing.

NIM

Us?

MARGARET

Certes, we'll tell James to draw up a *Short-List* of his dearest works, founded on what he would call "ARTISTIC CONCERNS". We would listen to him and nod our heads vigorously, then we'd go cipher out the *Highest-Grosser* per performance.

MARGARET helps him open the *Ledger*.

MARGARET

Like as not it'd be a Comedie. Always easier to sell a laugh.

NIM

Yes, Madam.

MARGARET

As the Great Producer Roger Cavendish used to say: The Real Drama of Show Business is the BUSINESS.

NIM

Your father, Madam?

MARGARET

O, Nim, he was a *Show-Man* with a reputation that outsized his belly.  
I list you could've made meeting with him, Nim.  
He would've taken a glint to you.

NIM

Me?

MARGARET hands NIM several  
*Counting-Books*.

MARGARET

Now, this one wouldn't do. Were writ to feature the spectacle of a bear. But we bartered the *Bear-Suit* months back to a Butcher, what had, I think, *Intimate Ideas* for use of them skins.

ROSEY enters.

ROSEY

I had no conceit your mind was so guttered, Mrs Killingworth!

MARGARET

What now, Rosey?

ROSEY

William's desperate for you—he's mislaid his girdling.

ROSEY exits.

MARGARET

As though I would have any conceit of where? [*to NIM:*] Count out the Drawer.

NIM

\*Yes, Madam.

MARGARET

And if you see Some Things, say Some Things.

MARGARET hands NIM the *Cash-Pouch*.

MARGARET

Don't you go cozening me, Nim.

NIM

No, Madam.

MARGARET *Exits*. NIM opens the *Counting-Books* and *Cash-Pouch* and softly recites a soliloquy.

DOLL *Enters*.

DOLL

Greetings, Little Sir.

NIM closes the *Cash-Pouch*, startled.

You put the lapse on me!

NIM

NIM looks at DOLL in her Gentleman's Suit,  
winded by her.

What're you called, Little Sir?

DOLL

I'm not so little, wot.

NIM

Ahh, what're you called Not-SO-Little?

DOLL

Nim.  
Madam.

NIM

Madam? Call me Doll.  
Say, Nim, what're you a Not-SO-Little of?

DOLL

Joynter.

NIM

Uh-huh.  
Can't say I think you look the Part. Ho, speaking of PLAYING PARTS—

DOLL

My *Associate*'ll be back shortly.

NIM

Associate, eh?  
Sure you ain't meant fellow PLAYER?

DOLL

Who are you?

NIM

Told you, I'm a Doll.

DOLL

NIM gathers up the *Counting-Books* and  
grabs the *Cash-Pouch*.

DOLL

O, slacken up, Nim.  
I'm an *Old Friend* to James.

NIM stops.

DOLL

We're acquainted in a Personal Sort of way—  
I aim you're Not-SO-Little enough to wot what I'm clewing at.

NIM

[*flattered*]

I would aim so.

DOLL

This wert an age ago.  
I've grown elder since, though my tastes have tended substantial younger in the meanwhile.

NIM blushes up again.

NIM

[*looking off in the direction JAMES exited*]

*Killingworth* wots you're about?

DOLL

Not yet.  
He also don't know about my new Career.

NIM

What's that?

DOLL

I've got me an ACT now.

NIM

An ACT???  
What's your Act?

DOLL

O, I do ROPE DANCING, JIGS, and ANTICKS galore.

NIM

Sounds like Entertainment.

DOLL

I promise you, I am. You been to the Cittie?

NIM

Never.

DOLL

I come direct from there, set out two days ago.

NIM

Is it Wondresse?

DOLL

Ain't the divertment once was. One lonely Theatre still standing, and they've fixed to pull it down.

NIM

The RED BULL?

DOLL

You got ear of it?

NIM

When—

DOLL

They doing the Deed? I don't wot precise—week next, I aim.

ROSEY enters and sees DOLL.

ROSEY

*Nim*, WHAT are you doing?

NIM

She's called Doll and she has News of the RED BULL.

ROSEY

What in devils, Dullyn?

NIM

Not to ferret, Rosey—she's a player, too.

DOLL

Rosey?

*Thomas Dread Rosey?*

ROSEY

Have we made meeting?

DOLL

Not properly, no, but I saw you Ten-Year back play Miranda—

ROSEY

At the Fortune.

DOLL

You wert so newborn, Nim's age like.

ROSEY

You saw that?

DOLL

Inhaled it with my eyes, really.  
Particular that Voile Dress you perked up in Act Five—  
Scarlett Red with Black Lace Partlet on the Bosom.

ROSEY

[*remembering*]

And gold embroiderwork!  
O, Lord only wot how Miranda found that dress on a desert island.  
I'd forgot that ridiculous thing.

DOLL

I couldn't.  
Nearly as Ravishing as your Performance, wert.

ROSEY

[*entirely charmed*]

Sorry, you don't seem the Stranger, but I can't for the Life of Me think that I've seen you play.

DOLL

Like as not you haven't.  
I'm new to the Qualitie.

ROSEY

No one's new to the Qualitie in these times.  
Apart from Nim here.

DOLL

O, take off that mug, Rosey. I'm not a *Spy*.

ROSEY

Jump what a spy would say.

DOLL

Do I look like a Beast to you, Rosey?  
No, I put the lapse on them.  
Moment afore I'm to begin my *Show*,  
I make report of a fire explosion cross town.  
Skills not what it is, long as it's cross town.

ROSEY

You're sure we've not made meeting?

NIM

[to ROSEY]

She knows James.

ROSEY

Your aspect seems so known to me.

DOLL

I hope it could become more so.

WILLIAM enters, carrying a *Counting-Book*.

WILLIAM

Thomas, Margaret's wondering where—

WILLIAM sees DOLL.

WILLIAM

Who the hell's this, Rosey?

DOLL

Doll.

WILLIAM

*Doll?*

You're galling me, Doll. [to ROSEY:] What's she doing hanging about?

NIM

She's got an *Entertainment Act*, Will.

DOLL

May-hap you should get eye of it.  
You look like a Man what could stomick some *Entertainment*.

WILLIAM

[*flummoxed*]

What sort—

DOLL

O, I do all sorts.

DOLL touches his sleeve.

DOLL

A fine Wool this is, worsted.

WILLIAM

[*to NIM and ROSEY, distracted by DOLL:*]

Mrs Kill hent me over with one last Book, said she'll be by shortly.

DOLL

This is my cue: EXEUNT, I think.  
Goodbye, my tender-hefted luvs.

NIM

But Doll—

ROSEY

How will I see you again?

NIM

Me too.

WILLIAM

Me three, I suppose.

DOLL

I ain't hard to find.  
In the Citty.

DOLL *Exits*. ROSEY, WILLIAM, and NIM watches her leave. MARGARET enters, holding another *Pen-quill*.

MARGARET

I found one more—  
What's wrong?

ROSEY

No, no, it's naught.

MARGARET

Then fix your faces, the three of you.

MARGARET opens the *Cash-Pouch*.

MARGARET

You little galler.

NIM looks to MARGARET.

NIM

What?

MARGARET

It's empty, you wot What.

WILLIAM

Nim filched the Fund?

NIM

Weren't me.

ROSEY

Holy shat!

NIM

What?

ROSEY

We was just cozened by DOLL CUTPURSE,  
the most well-talented Thief-Taker around.

MARGARET

You invited a Harlotry *called* CUTPURSE to take off all our hard-raised Funds?!

WILLIAM

I only just arrived.

MARGARET

Your loins were so loud you couldn't hear your brains?

NIM

This isn't the worser of it.

WILLIAM

Stint your mouth, Nim.

Regarding The RED BULL. NIM

JAMES *enters, unnoticed.*

What of it? MARGARET

They're pulling it down. NIM

When, Nim? MARGARET

Doll didn't know jump precise— NIM

Doll? JAMES

They all turn to look at him.

Cutpurse. MARGARET

If a Cutpurse says it's currents, it is so. JAMES

You take honest the word of that thief-taker? WILLIAM

Who hears the rumblings better than one with her ear low? JAMES

Then we ought leave tonight. MARGARET

Leave where? ROSEY

For the Cittie. MARGARET

The One Lonely Theatre still standing. NIM

MARGARET

For our Scheme.  
A Performance.

JAMES

A *Stage-Play* in Full.

NIM

Yes, Sir.

WILLIAM

Are you wood?

JAMES

The return.  
For our pilgrims who lay flowers at the Red Bull's feet.

NIM

Yes, Sir.

ROSEY

So, we'd jump follow Doll through the Walls?

WILLIAM

'Tis a Death Wish.  
Times are e'en more troubled\* there.

JAMES

But would there be aught else worth dying for?

WILLIAM

Well, we ain't got tuppence to rub together thanks to Nim.

MARGARET

Jump why we must go now.

NIM

I could weave a net for the catching with advertiserments.

A beat.

WILLIAM

The Last *Stage-Play* in full.  
May-hap HAMLET.

JAMES

Once more unto the breach, *dear friends*, once more.

ROSEY

On to the Citty!

NIM

Once more unto the Red Bull?

MARGARET

I'll pack the trunks.

She begins to exit.

MARGARET

Nim, take on the *Curtain*.

ROSEY

[to NIM:]

I'll give a hand.

MARGARET

James, look to the Wardrobing.

WILLIAM

Kill?

JAMES

[to MARGARET:]

With pleasure.

MARGARET, NIM, and ROSEY exit.

WILLIAM

I have learnt the whole of Hamlet—

JAMES

We are assaying to make haste, Will.

JAMES exits. WILLIAM  
watches him go.

WILLIAM

[*still looking offstage*]

Now might I do it pat, now he is praying.

And now I'll do it.

WILLIAM exits. The *rustling*. DOLL enters, followed shortly by ROUNDHEAD.

ROUNDHEAD

At long long last,  
The Players  
Come to Us

DOLL points in the direction all have just exited.

DOLL

in the Cittie.

ROUNDHEAD waves her off in that direction. DOLL *Exits*, with purpose.

ROUNDHEAD looks back out. And *Smiles*.

*Black out.*

**Intermission.**

{Act Two}

Scene 10

ONE YEAR, Twenty-four Days after  
the *End*.

Blinding *lights* up on a small  *Holding Cell*.  
This is bright white light of a sort not seen  
previously.

The incessant ringing of BELLS.

MARGARET, ROSEY, and JAMES sit  
*rigid* and *close*. They look petrified.

{A long beat.}

JAMES

Papers? When did we need aught to enter the Citty? What *PAPERS*?

MARGARET

Quieten, James.

{A beat.}

ROSEY

*Nim*.  
Alone.  
With them.

JAMES

Will. Alone with them.

MARGARET

The *trunks* alone with them.

JAMES

O, how I had hoped that my final sight would be a *Theatre*.

MARGARET

Stint the desperate chatter. The walls have grown Ears and Eyes.  
And we are but HUMBLE FRIPPERS, selling our trunks of Old Fancy Dress.

ROSEY

Thank you, Margaret. I feel positively fortune-soaked that you were not taken on your Own. Nim mayn't perform worse than that—inconceivable, a performance worse than that.

JAMES

Isn't jump the playing that must be ferreted o'er. There's also the chance of betraying.

ROSEY

I do believe him harmless. Nim would never—

JAMES

Not Nim I'm thinking on.

ROSEY

...Will?

Sounds of Street Chaos. {A change of Subject Matter:}

MARGARET

O, these monstresse LAMPS.

ROSEY

The light they give don't fadge my Complexion.  
I look dun, don't I?

MARGARET

With as much paint as you paint on—

A *Clanking* offstage. All straighten and grasp hands tightly.

JAMES

[*a whisper*]

If we are mark'd to die...

Clanking echo. NIM *enters*, smiling.

ROSEY

Nim!

MARGARET

What news, Nim?

NIM

We are free to leave.

ROSEY

And the trunks?

NIM

Untouched.

MARGARET

Nim, are you certes?

NIM

As never before.

ROSEY

This is some magick-work.

JAMES

How was it done?

ROSEY

With a wand!

JAMES

I speak sober.

Did you make a bargain with them?

NIM

Of a sort.

{A beat of Horror.}

MARGARET

What sort?

NIM

I promised aught.

JAMES

You promised—

NIM

*Comps.*

MARGARET

What?

NIM

Seems the Patroller's Wife wert a *Theatrical Fanatick* before The End.

Her name day's approaching, so I promised him Complimentary Theatre Tickets.

JAMES

You told the Patroller that we are Players?

MARGARET desperately scans the room.

MARGARET

Quieten that, both!

[to NIM:] Nim, are you wood?

ROSEY

And that made the clincher? We're free for a free ticket or two?

JAMES

Something is not so here.

MARGARET

I'll say!

We only have [*whispering the words:*] One Performance—there's no accommodation for *Comps*.

NIM

Oy, won't be NO Performance if we don't get through the Walls.

I made an executing decision.

JAMES

No, no, quite right, Nim.

NIM

Let's light out, yea? The trunks are outside.

MARGARET

Will's yet with THEM.

JAMES

Something's not so.

ROSEY

Will's never so.

WILLIAM enters, sweaty and ill.

WILLIAM

This is the *End*.

Aim they'll send a Firing Squad.

MARGARET

Will! Quickly now.

WILLIAM

I would not ope my mouth—

ROSEY

We're free to take leave. Clever Nim expanded our audience and bargained our Liberty.

WILLIAM

At what price hath he betrayed us?

ROSEY

For a *Comp* or two—

MARGARET

Or one—

ROSEY

We are free.

WILLIAM looks at NIM.

WILLIAM

[*still looking at NIM*]

Do you believe such--

JAMES

I do

WILLIAM

we ought leave.

Then

MARGARET

Quickly now.

All make haste to go: Putting up *Hoods*,  
tying *Cloakes*, winding *Scarves*. And then,  
Five in a line, they step out and travel;  
mayhap they face *Upstage*.

The noises of the *Cittie* swell:  
The propulsive hum of *Traffick*  
punctuated by Church bells.

The gleam of the Citty is Blinding. They  
put up their hands as shields.

ROSEY

The Citty!  
Home, sweet.  
And yet—

A percussive sound like *gunshots*.

WILLIAM

Something is not so.

NIM

Where is it, the Red Bull?

ROSEY

Can't make it out.

MARGARET

Means nothing. Couldn't ever see it from here.

WILLIAM turns from the Light, looks at  
NIM.

WILLIAM

Should not be so simple.

ROSEY

No going backwards, Will.

JAMES looks to NIM, then turns  
WILLIAM back to the Light, gently.

JAMES

Rosey's right. From this bourn, we will never return.

MARGARET

It's time.  
Break a leg.

MARGARET steps forward into the Wall  
of Light and is *Departed*.

ROSEY nods to WILLIAM, then they step forward into the Wall of Light and are *Departed*.

JAMES  
You'll fix the figures for *Hamlet*, Nim.

NIM  
But Mrs Killingworth said a Comedie—

JAMES  
If I needs must choose one play to live on:  
It must be *Hamlet*.

NIM  
Yes, Sir.

JAMES  
All we need, Nim, is one child.  
To hear the play—

NIM  
And wrap it up in paper and put it in his heart.

JAMES  
Yes.  
Now, come.

NIM  
Presently.

JAMES steps forward into the Wall of Light and is *Departed*.

ROUNDHEAD enters and NIM turns to see him.

ROUNDHEAD  
We have a dark bargain, boy.

NIM nods. He turns back to the light.

NIM  
I must do some Evil.

NIM inhales deeply, his shoulders to his Ears, then steps forward into the Wall of Light and is *Departed*.

**Scene II**

{ONE YEAR, One Month after the  
*End.*}

DOLL CUTPURSE Entertains under  
fluorescent lights.

DOLL CUTPURSE

My darling little WRETCHES,  
you have now peeped my Sketches of *gleeking* and *groaning lewd* ilks.  
You've watched my Rope Dance,  
We've played games of Chance  
And I've stripped me clean down to my silks.

Now for ENTERTAININGS of another sort, my sweet sad sacks. O, not to ferret, dears! I  
won't weary you to your graves with *Plots* and *Characters* and *Expository Descript*—this ain't the  
legitimate THEATRE after all.

DOLL scans the crowd.

No? Then, anon, I'd like to flatter my *Female Fanaticks*, the makers of my fairer applause, you  
Cittie Girls who are the Pretty Girls

*Sung:*

(I wish they all could be Ci-ii-iittie Girls.)

You London dames, whose passing fames  
Through pretty legs wide spread,  
Your toes to skye, ascending hye  
And deep down below: A head.  
Of Common lore, called generall whores,  
Your dark wet holes do sell.  
But for these claims, I'll say no more,  
Though vent I have heard tell.  
Tell truth, I can't believe such guff, not their veracity:  
For when *I'm* about, you London dames give all away for free.

DOLL *curtsies*.

Now, it is near time I take my leave of you lovelies—so allow me jump one back-trick more: A FIRE-EXPLOSION. I see the Sistering Ladies Whispering: Why a FIRE-EXPLOSION? What in reasonability has this Spectacle to do with aught that came ere? And I resolve you to query the menfolk amongst you. It skills not the context, gentlemen know, a FIRE-EXPLOSION is *Entertainment*. Without furthering ado...

DOLL steps back and detonates a *Fire-Cracker*; a large crash.

You've been a lovely audience, Ladies and Gentlemen, and I've been a *Doll*! Thank you and fare ye well!

DOLL takes knee to applause. DOLL *exits*, and ROSEY makes way to the *Stage*. A beat as ROSEY waits.

ROSEY  
[*quietly*]

Doll.

Upon hearing ROSEY's voice, DOLL freezes.

DOLL  
[*also quiet*]

Rosey?

ROSEY

Something is not so.

DOLL

I've a KNIFE in my smock.  
Mark: You tell *James Killingworth* I ain't stolen\* half what—

ROSEY

James?  
James didn't send me.  
Could we talk somewhere more privateish?  
It's jump so...*light*.

ROSEY looks around.

DOLL

Did you...  
You come to get eye of my Act?

ROSEY

Something is not so.

DOLL

You see the Act or no?

*A long beat.*

ROSEY

Shall I speak soberly?

DOLL

By all means.

ROSEY

You have potential...

DOLL

I do—

ROSEY

--if you'd been trained proper from the proper age.

DOLL

What?

ROSEY

Fixed your accent for \*starters

DOLL

My *accent*?

ROSEY

There are gestures that cannot be learnt late.

DOLL

You do wot training weren't an option.  
You forget I really got *Bawd* parts under my skirts.

ROSEY

No excuse.  
It's resty and undisciplined.  
All that skin.

It's PANDERING.

DOLL

Pandering?

ROSEY

And that FIRE-EXPLOSION? There was no climax, no earned release—simply chaos as its own reward.

DOLL

I see.  
Aim my take.

ROSEY

Sorry?

DOLL

How much that PANDERING make me, you aim?

ROSEY

Mrs Killingworth does the figures, I'm not—

DOLL

Ten pounds.

ROSEY

[*impressed*]

That seems agood deal.

DOLL

That IS agood deal.

Because the easy laughs, the glut of skin, the FIRE-EXPLOSIONS?

All appeal to BOYS of a bordering age.

And BOYS of a bordering age?

Make for repeat business.

Skills not they've seen the Act three times already, they ain't here for the *Themes and Motifs*. My show's as good the first time as the fifth.

ROSEY

I believe you have gotten the forehand. You can ungrip the Knife now.

DOLL does not move.

DOLL

What do you want, Rosey?

I—I want to see you.

ROSEY

I'm standing in view.

DOLL

I want to more than see you.

ROSEY

O.

DOLL

DOLL drops her hands.

You can't trust and keep me, Rosey.

ROSEY

Now, see, you've proven yourself true for I can't trust you when you say I can't trust and keep you.  
So, I can trust you.

DOLL touches ROSEY's hand.

There's no logic in it.

DOLL

You say honest when you say you lie.

ROSEY

This don't end well for either of us.

DOLL

DOLL kisses ROSEY.

I need an encore.

ROSEY

DOLL looks about.

I have an engagement.

DOLL

But I am like to a Boy of a Bordering Age. I want to be repeat business.

ROSEY

And I need to make a Living.

DOLL

ROSEY  
Then what if I tender you a job?

DOLL  
A JOB?

ROSEY  
In a *Theatre*.

DOLL  
There ain't but one *Theatre*.

ROSEY  
Lo, and how'd you like to play *Gertrude* in it?

DOLL  
Gertrude?

ROSEY  
The *Great Lady* of Denmark.  
And you—the first Lady to play her.

DOLL  
You don't mean it.

ROSEY  
I speak sober.

A half beat.

DOLL  
Yes.

ROSEY  
Yes?

DOLL  
Yes.

ROSEY *kisses* DOLL. After a moment,  
she pulls back and looks about.

DOLL  
If I'm going, we must needs get gone now.

Now.

ROSEY takes DOLL's hand and they exit, running.

**Scene 12**

{One YEAR, One Month, Three Days after the END.}

From a far off, *Church Bells*.

Blinding lights on the ruins of an old theater; it has been razed down to its foundations. A short burst of *Gunfire*.

MARGARET does not look directly at the light.

MARGARET  
[*quiet*]

That way, I aim.

JAMES enters, disoriented by the light.

JAMES

It's jump these LAMPS.

JAMES gains his footing.

All those Country Motions, I hoped for naught more than LIGHT—

MARGARET

Our stumpy candles.

JAMES

Now, I would die for DARKNESSE.  
I told Nim: There can be no magick in this light.

JAMES stops in the rubble of their former theatre.

JAMES

Here.

JAMES looks around.

Here?

MARGARET

Your desk—

JAMES

--wert here. And now—

MARGARET

JAMES  
Our theatre is dissolved and like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
leaving not a rack behind.

MARGARET  
[reproachful]

Stint the verse, James.  
Wert all I had to show for my life.

JAMES starts digging in the rubble.

A wonder.

JAMES

No.

MARGARET  
[skeptical]

Yes! It is a *wonder*.

JAMES

MARGARET helps him dig. JAMES pulls  
out a *locked-box*.

It hath survived.

JAMES

*Under my desk*.

MARGARET

JAMES  
One YEAR, One Month, and Three Days, it hath survived!  
A symbol of the world's natural order.

{A half beat.}

MARGARET

You believe that, truly?  
That the Great Lady wert truly divine?  
You wert...well acquainted.  
She didn't seem jump flesh and guts like the rest of us?

JAMES reaches out for her.

JAMES

Margaret. I have many sorrows as regards to you.

MARGARET

You jump have a burthen you'd rather not haul alone, so you're chipping me off a piece.

JAMES pulls her face to him.

JAMES

Mark me, Margaret, I speak sadly.  
And Finally.

A beat.

MARGARET

If you wert forsooth repentful, you would gift me Nim.

JAMES

*Gift* you Nim?

MARGARET

If you Forsooth believed that you have wronged me cruelly and oft—  
You would sack Nim from the show now and let me take him on.

JAMES

Take him on?

MARGARET

Learn him the Art of the Business of Art, as my father did me.  
What have I ever asked of you, James?

A beat.

JAMES

Margaret, Nim is not a poppet, I can no more *gift* him than—  
I am sorry, it's not in my controlling.

A beat.

MARGARET  
[*businesslike*]

I'll make scout on the Red Bull at cock-shut time.

JAMES

My love--

MARGARET

No more soliloquies, James.

MARGARET turns to him.  
*Stonehardly:*

Will will play Hamlet.

JAMES

Will he?

MARGARET

I'm henting Hamlet from your wrinkle-fingers.  
Time for you to play Claudius. Or the Ghost.  
Skills not to me.  
But you're jump too fucking eld to act the Student.

JAMES

I see.

MARGARET

Come hence.

MARGARET begins to exit. JAMES sways a bit, unbalanced, then turns to follow MARGARET.

### Scene 13

{ONE YEAR, One Month and One Day  
after the *End.*}

Rustling, church bells, chaos. WILLIAM sits alone in a Room at the *inn*.

There is a massive pile—hundreds--of *Action-Figures* and the trunk behind him.

He gives the biggest, most triumphant soliloquy of all time.

WILLIAM

To be!  
Or not to be!  
*That* is the fucking 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!

A Knock on the door.

I have ENDED THEM!

NIM  
{*without*}

Oy! Ope the door.

WILLIAM

Who's there?

NIM  
{*without*}

Will, you wot my voice!

WILLIAM

Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself!

NIM  
{*without*}

Will!

WILLIAM opes the door and NIM steps in.

WILLIAM  
My most dear lord!

NIM  
This is Hamlet?

WILLIAM  
Everything is Hamlet, Nim!  
Did you fetch the Playbill?

NIM  
The Printer's Wife said she wert a friend to James.

WILLIAM  
Let me get eye of it.

NIM takes a scroll from his jacket. He unrolls it: A poster for *Hamlet*.

NIM  
I thought it the jump image—

WILLIAM  
It *is* the jump image—

NIM  
Of *you*.

WILLIAM  
As the *Prince of Denmark*!

NIM  
I'll post it at the Red Bull.  
Then tell all who look on it to tell a Friend.  
We will scoop a thousand souls with our net.

WILLIAM starts to panic at the thought.

WILLIAM  
Ah.

NIM  
What?  
What did I say?

WILLIAM

Naught.

NIM

You turnt green.

WILLIAM

It's jump if I think on it—

NIM

On\* what?

WILLIAM

The plan is absolute raving wood, if I think on it.  
The Red Bull will be *infested* with Beasts, if I think on it.

NIM

How long have you waited to do Hamlet?

WILLIAM

Sith I wert your age like.

NIM

So do not think on it.

NIM begins to roll the Playbill back up.

WILLIAM

I outlasted all those Fine Actors who Kill preferred.  
And then even old Kill himself.  
In my lowest Hours, I thought on how I might—  
I would do some Evil to play Hamlet.

NIM freezes, looks at him.

NIM

Did you?

WILLIAM

What?

NIM

Do Evil?

WILLIAM

No!

Did you?

NIM

They told me I might save myself.  
But I would not.  
For I had FAITH in the power of Theatre.  
That no one might see James Killingworth play and not be moved.

A tense beat and then A KNOCK.

ROSEY  
{without}

Ope the door!

WILLIAM  
{playing the game again}

How now, Ophelia!

ROSEY  
{without}

Ope the door, Will!

WILLIAM opes the door.

WILLIAM

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

ROSEY  
{not into it}

No, my lord.  
{to NIM:} Have you begun the Advertiserments?

NIM

Got the Playbill in hand.

ROSEY

I tented around this morn for former Players.

WILLIAM

You found any of those cowards?

ROSEY

Jump one. But he wert so wine-soaked he could not stand.

WILLIAM

And Doll?

ROSEY  
Rooting the words as we speak.

NIM  
I'll set off to the Red Bull.

ROSEY  
Will will go with.

WILLIAM  
But I'm Hamlet!

ROSEY  
Hamlet will go with.

WILLIAM  
Then I'll bring my sword.

NIM  
It's a prop.  
The tip's dull.

WILLIAM  
Let's away.

NIM and WILLIAM exit. ROSEY  
locks the door behind them.

ROSEY fixes their face.

A Knock at the door.

ROSEY  
Who's there?

DOLL  
{*without*}  
A Friend.

ROSEY opes the door.

ROSEY  
What is a Friend?

May-hap I could show you. DOLL

DOLL kisses ROSEY.

Friendly that. ROSEY

I've rooted all the words. DOLL

Give me eye of it! ROSEY

What? DOLL

Gertrude. ROSEY

DOLL  
To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,  
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:  
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,  
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

ROSEY  
Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

DOLL  
How now, Ophelia!

A half beat.

What?  
What's wrong?

ROSEY  
{*moved*}  
You have talent.

DOLL  
I have waited long to hear such words.

ROSEY kisses DOLL.

Ophelia, what wilt Hamlet say?  
DOLL

Fuck Hamlet.  
ROSEY

Fair reply.  
DOLL

ROSEY starts to kiss her again; DOLL  
holds them back.

And how sounds my accent?

Doll...  
ROSEY

You can speak \* plain.  
DOLL

Doll, I should not have spoke \* so unkind—  
ROSEY

I made great pains.  
DOLL

I can see.  
And I mean hardly, Doll: You \*have talent.  
ROSEY

No, not *now*--  
Ten years ere.  
James.  
DOLL

James?  
ROSEY

James played Prospero.  
DOLL

At the Fortune.  
ROSEY

Ten years ere.  
DOLL

I set to him.  
After the show.

ROSEY  
You were acquainted in a personal sort of way.

DOLL  
I had *dreams* to make myself an Actor.

ROSEY  
Alas, Sweet Lady—

DOLL  
He wouldn't take me on.  
Said I hadn't the heart for it.

ROSEY  
He could see your heart?

DOLL  
I wot not.

ROSEY  
He could not see your heart.

ROSEY embraces her; ROSEY looks unsettled.

#### Scene 14

{ONE YEAR, One Month and Three  
Days after the *End*.}

JAMES, disoriented, holding the *Lock-box*,  
steps into the light.

JAMES  
Oh, that this too, too sullied flesh would melt,  
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew...

JAMES stumbles off.

**Scene 15**

{ONE YEAR, One Month and Four Days  
after the *End.*}

Stark white light. DOLL and WILLIAM,  
both hooded, rehearse.

O, Hamlet speak no more!  
DOLL  
[*quietly*]

Too volumed.  
WILLIAM  
[*sharply*]

DOLL *sighs.*

O, Hamlet, speak no more:  
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;  
DOLL  
[*nearly inaudible*]

With *increasing* Volume:

And there I see such black and grained spots  
As will not leave their tinct.

Hold.  
WILLIAM

WILLIAM signals. He looks off.

Look to the left.

DOLL rolls her eyes and looks off in the opposite direction.

Look to the right. And above.

DOLL  
[rote]

All scale.

WILLIAM signals.

[*ever increasing volume*]

Nay, but to live  
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed—

The sound of an Explosion some distance off. WILLIAM turns sharply.

WILLIAM

You hear that?

DOLL  
[*increasing volume*]

Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love

WILLIAM

Hold.

DOLL

OVER THE NASTY STY,--

WILLIAM  
[*hissing*]

Hold.

WILLIAM

Doll, hold!

WILLIAM springs up and claps a hand o'er her mouth. He forcibly turns her head along with his.

WILLIAM

Look to the left. Look to the right. And above. All scale.

DOLL pulls off his hand.

DOLL

How'm I to do Gertrude justice like this?  
My words fly up, my thoughts remain below—

WILLIAM

Rehearsal is over, I aim.

DOLL

What about the bit after I orchestrate the Fire-Explosion? Aaaaand...BAM! The Ghost Entereth.

DOLL waits for WILLIAM to begin the scene. He listens to something offstage.

WILLIAM

Hold.

DOLL

Don't it figure they'd have clapped us up already if they wanted to? You ain't so well disguised.

WILLIAM

Yea? Well, neither are you. Tenting around after us like you been set to it.

ROSEY enters, spattered in Blood.

By the *Roundheads*, mayhap?

DOLL sees ROSEY.

DOLL

Shit.

WILLIAM

Shit is right.  
I didn't never trust you—

DOLL

Rosey?

WILLIAM turns.

O, Rosey!

WILLIAM

It's not—  
It's not—  
Secure.

ROSEY

DOLL runs to ROSEY, clips them tightly.

Rosey, what happened?

WILLIAM

It's not Rosey's blood.

DOLL

Wert a girl.  
Younger than Nim.  
Afore my eyes.

ROSEY

Hush then.

DOLL

WILLIAM approaches, rubs off a bit of  
blood, gently. *Very quietly:*

Yet here's a spot.  
Out, damned spot! Out—

WILLIAM

ROSEY begins to *Howl*.

It's not a Fucking Play—wert a *Girl*, not a character, wert a—

ROSEY

Hush.

DOLL

Not Hush. Not HUSH.

ROSEY

Rosey, I only wanted to unstain—

WILLIAM

DOLL

Rifel, luv, I think you ought exit.

DOLL and WILL lock eyes a moment; he turns to leave.

ROSEY

I had long made the delusion that there is aught *Noble* in this, the speaking of lines written before we wert born. That this would be enough. [*to DOLL, urgently:*] 'Tis not aught approaching enough!

DOLL

Speak no more.

DOLL holds ROSEY.

### Scene 16

{ONE YEAR, One Month and Five Days after the *End.*}  
Sounds of the *Cittie*. NIM steps forward.

NIM

'Tis now the very witching time of night,  
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out  
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood  
And do such bitter business as the bitter day  
Would quake to look on.

MARGARET Enters.

'Tis Hamlet, gentlefolks. 'Twill change your life, gentlefolks.  
Mrs Killingworth!

MARGARET

Come close, Nim!

MARGARET hugs him.

NIM  
{*confused*}

Mrs Killingworth?

She says nothing to him, just starts working.

MARGARET

Action Live in the Flesh, gentles! If you've never seen it before, you may never see it again. Worth the risk, will be the time of your life. Tell a friend!

NIM

Tell a friend! A *Stage-Play* will change your life, Madam! The Player Killingworth will change your life. Will be the time of your life.

As MARGARET and NIM work, WILLIAM, DOLL, and JAMES enter from points amongst the Publick, also handing out Advertisements, also whispering.

Staggered, but *simultaneous*:

WILLIAM

Tell a friend! One night only—the role the Player William Rifel wert born to play. Get eye of his first turn as the PRIME ACTOR in a *Stage-Play* in Full Presented in a Theatre Proper! The time of your life. Tell a friend!

DOLL

Tell a friend. My first dramatic role. All kinds of perversities for yous Specialist numbers. In bed with my son, the works. A Mother's lap ain't necessarily a one-way street, you see. Will be the time of your life. Tell a Friend.

JAMES

What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason how infinite in faculties, in form and moving, how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god! 'Tis Man invented *Theatre*, Sir. And yet—'tis unquestioningly divine. Tell a friend.

As the whispers crescendo, the Sounds of a Crowd of One-Thousand Souls filling into a theatre filter in 'til NIM, MARGARET, WILLIAM, DOLL and JAMES are gathered together.

ALL

Tell a friend!

The Sounds of the *Crowd* are now near in Range.

JAMES

Where is Rosey?

Organizing the Decoy. MARGARET

Making report of a distraction cross-town. DOLL

Let's go in. MARGARET

NIM stops JAMES as the others exit.  
JAMES stoops a bit as the others retreat  
from view, suddenly frail.

Sir, a moment? NIM

I have so few of them left. JAMES

Are you sickly? NIM

Sick now! droop now! JAMES

Sir, I must say you. At the Bordering— NIM

No, Nim, there's no time. I must ope that box soon. JAMES

JAMES takes the key off his neck and  
hands it to him.

Sir. NIM

JAMES staggers off.

A long beat and then a rustling.

Who's there? NIM

Stand and unfold yourself. ROUNDHEAD

ROUNDHEAD enters.

See, We know well the ways of Audiencing.  
Jump like a Player.

NIM

Beast.

ROUNDHEAD

Ah, yes, we all say our lines.  
Are the Properties and Wardrobe pre-set?  
We are thinking on *one piece* in particular.

NIM

We are assaying to make haste.

NIM tries to exit; ROUNDHEAD stops  
him.

ROUNDHEAD

We made a Bargain at the Bordering.

NIM

A Stage-Play in Full.

ROUNDHEAD

For the...

NIM *spits spits spits*; ROUNDHEAD joins  
him for the second and third.

ROUNDHEAD

CROWN.

NIM nods.

ROUNDHEAD

Go forth then.  
And play.

ROUNDHEAD exits as ROSEY enters.  
Their dress is distinct, unlike anything  
they've worn before; it should suggest  
*Guerilla Warfare*. Their face is unpainted.

Rosey? NIM

Fetch off Doll, Nim. ROSEY

Yes, Rosey. NIM

NIM runs off.

It is not Secure. And there is no *Procedure* that could make it so. ROSEY

DOLL enters, wearing a red gown.

You made report of the Distraction-- DOLL

DOLL sees ROSEY.

It is *Theatre* that is the Distraction. ROSEY

You don't look yourself. DOLL

We have been wearing the Queen's cast-offs so long\* we forgot... ROSEY

Rosey, you don't sound yourself. DOLL

Why did we think--?  
We must needs be trained up from our\* accents? ROSEY

Let's speak on this after the \*show. DOLL

No, we must go forth and *fight*. ROSEY

What—  
Now? DOLL

ROSEY

Come hence and make your life of use.

ROSEY turns to go.

DOLL

But I—  
I want to do Gertrude justice.

ROSEY turns back.

ROSEY

You only learnt Gertrude's lines last week.

DOLL

I might've learned 'em ten year ere if he would've jump taken me on.

ROSEY

But that is jump *why!*  
You must come and make your life of *use*.

A beat.

DOLL

The Beasts already used that rhetoric with me, Rosey.  
Set me to tent after you the Player (*spit*) King.  
Lure you to the Citty.

ROSEY

And now that we are here...

DOLL

I want to exercise the Qualitie.

MARGARET

[*offstage*]

Con thanks and welcome to the *Red Bull*.

DOLL

*Please*. We have a Publick, Rosey.

MARGARET

[*offstage*]

The *Show* will begin fastly, please take your places—

DOLL

I must play.

ROSEY shakes their head.

ROSEY

All this trouble begun with illusion.  
{gesturing to the gun:} I'm off to do the *real*.

ROSEY exits.

DOLL

I turn'st mine eyes into my very soul.

DOLL exits and the sounds of the  
Crowd grow louder still until we  
enter...

### Scene 17

{THAT VERY EVE}

*Inside the Red Bull.*

MARGARET gives the *Before-Show*  
*Announcement* and the Crowd settles a bit.

MARGARET

Gentles. I had forgot this feeling, standing afore *a thousand* of you. Welcome back, Gentles. To the One Lonely Theatre Still Standing and this performance of a *Stage-Play* in full. THE TRAGEDIE OF HAMLET, *Prince of Denmark*. Without furthering ado...

The lights shift and NIM enters.

Church bells begin, a signal.

ROUNDHEAD rustling increases and  
*Church Bells* increase in volume.

NIM

'Tis now struck twelve—

ROUNDHEAD

[*unseen*]

It is time.

NIM

No.

ROUNDHEAD rustling increases.

ROUNDHEAD  
[*unseen whispering*]

It is time.

NIM

No.

ROUNDHEAD enters.

ROUNDHEAD

Ladies and Gentles!  
Still here.

WILLIAM unsheathes his prop sword as  
ROUNDHEAD approaches.

WILLIAM

Stand back!

ROUNDHEAD  
[*gesturing to WILLIAM*]

O, a performance, Ladies and Gentles!

WILLIAM

BEAST!  
Stand back!

ROUNDHEAD

Now we might as well see a show.

NIM

No.  
We had a Bargain.  
You ain't held your end.

WILLIAM looks at NIM.

NIM

We had a BARGAIN.

WILLIAM

What Bargain?

ROUNDHEAD

It is *Time*.

NIM

We ain't even finished the first scene!

WILLIAM

All this time he's passed me over when I would not ope my mouth!

NIM

I have had FAITH, Will.

WILLIAM

KILL.

NIM

That the power of theatre is so great—

WILLIAM

James Killingworth!

NIM

No one, however Beastly, might see him play and not be moved!

WILLIAM

Come forth!

NIM

Yes, they must see him play!

ROUNDHEAD

Yes.

WILLIAM

KILL, come forth!

MARGARET enters.

MARGARET

Nim?

WILLIAM

He flattered and you all believed.

MARGARET

What have you done?

NIM

I made a Dark Bargain at the Bordering.

ROUNDHEAD

Ladies and Gentles!

ROUNDHEAD looks to a spot upstage and JAMES enters, wearing what were once very fine robes and carrying the Lockbox.

The *Ghost* entereth.

NIM, WILLIAM, and MARGARET turn to look.

MARGARET

James!

ROUNDHEAD

He hath delivered Us A (*spit*) KING

WILLIAM

Kill!

ROUNDHEAD

Of shreds and patches.

NIM

Sir!

You must play!

JAMES  
[*heartbroken*]

You offered me up.

NIM

They would've killed you right there.

At the bordering.

I begged.

That you might get to see a theatre.

MARGARET

How could you be so simple?

NIM

I told them they must needs only let us through the walls  
So you might fetch the hidden treasure  
And bring it to the theatre.

JAMES

You promised them—

ROUNDHEAD

The (*spit spit spit*) CROWN.

NIM

It is but a bit of costuming.  
You need only put it on for a moment and play.

JAMES

In this Beastly motion?

ROUNDHEAD

Before An Audience.

MARGARET

You have done some Evil, Boy.  
*Our Audience.*

NIM

They will fall in love with the Action as I did and all will be spared.

WILLIAM

The little beast.

NIM

I done it for you, Sir.

NIM dodges WILLIAM to reach JAMES  
as DOLL enters.

JAMES

For the survival of *Theatre*.

JAMES nods at NIM and he removes

the key.

JAMES kneels and offers up the  
*Lockbox*.

NIM opens up the box and a golden glow  
is cast on his face. He lifts up the *Crown*  
and places it atop the kneeling James's  
head.

JAMES  
[*attempting a line, in pain*]

*Remember me.*

ROUNDHEAD

Ladies and Gentles, sit so delicately in our seats—

JAMES tries to stand and stumbles.  
Armed ROUNDHEADS surround the  
stage as ROSEY enters, quietly.

ROUNDHEAD

A Securing Procedure, Gentles!

WILLIAM  
{*to James*}

You cannot trust and keep him.

ROUNDHEAD

Take a Look to your Left and know that your neighboring member of the Publick will suffer  
BEASTLY!

ROUNDHEAD disarms ROSEY.

MARGARET

A thousand souls.

DOLL

*Rosey.*

ROUNDHEAD

Well, whaddye know?  
*A Player.*

MARGARET  
[*out to the audience*]

Not to ferret!

NIM

Sir, they must see what I saw.  
That first night at THE DROLL.

MARGARET

We will save ye.

ROUNDHEAD advances  
toward James.

ROUNDHEAD

Ho, this Inn's a near tinder box, so we'll jump hope your last moments is gleeking ones!

JAMES takes off the CROWN and offers  
it up.

NIM

No!  
First they must see you play.

JAMES

No, Nim.  
They must see *you* play.

ROUNDHEAD

It is *Time*.

ROUNDHEAD moves to grab the *crown*.  
NIM jumps to defend JAMES. NIM  
removes his *Joynting Knife* from his chest  
and holds it aloft. The threat turns  
*Theatrical gesture* and NIM begins to play  
to the Publick. As he speaks, his voice  
suffers a sea-change into something *rich*  
and *strange*.

NIM

I sleep with my knife next to my heart  
and have done One Year, One Month, and One Week since I started *Joynting*.

A ROUNDHEAD

Silence, Player!

NIM

[*even more volumed*]

I sleep with my knife next to my heart,  
so that if I wert to be clapt up in the Midnights  
I might slash my own Throat to save from tarring for the ROUNDHEADED COWARDS  
what killed my *Family* compleat.  
All but me and my wee Sister who hid fox in a tree trunk.  
She died ten days later, Gentles, for want of milk.

ANOTHER ROUNDHEAD

Speak. No. More!

ANOTHER ROUNDHEAD starts  
toward him, but the ROUNDHEAD stops  
him, intrigued by the performance.

NIM

So, when the Beasts clapt me up, One Month, One Week ago,  
They said it was *Time* for a Show.  
I unloosed my heart-knife and set out to running.  
I ran 'til I was cornered in a *Courtyard*,  
Where I shut up an old door, wanting only enough time to do the Deed.  
I did my wrist.  
Best hand first, planning the worser and my throat eftsoons.  
I had the knife pitched for another cut when I heard it.

ROSEY

*Laughter.*

NIM

I followed the sound of it: Climbed over a wall, squeezed under a fence, picked the locks of old  
doors with my knife 'til I got eye of—

MARGARET

The Droll.

WILLIAM

*The Player Killingworth.*

NIM

Face-a-painted in velvet robes, singing a jig and falling on his arse over and over.  
I LAUGHED 'til I was blear-eyed, crying.  
[*to ROUNDHEAD:*] If you only might have seen him thus.  
And I thought:  
What nobler thing is there than this DROLL,  
That can save a life by *Laughter*?

JAMES

I saw it scale in your eyes that night.

NIM

[*nodding*]

To be or not to be.

ROUNDHEAD

The Future Player [*spits*] King.

WILLIAM

What—Nim?

ROUNDHEAD

We have found the Future Player [*spits*] King.

JAMES

He is Hamlet.

JAMES falls.

ROUNDHEAD

Now, allow us jump one backtrick more.

DOLL

Shit.

WILLIAM

From this bourn no traveler returns.

MARGARET

There are exits located here, here, and there.

DOLL, ROSEY, WILLIAM, and  
MARGARET look out as though they  
might run.

ROUNDHEADS

[*in a round, surrounding the theatre:*]

The End the end

The End the end

The End the end

The End the end

THE END OF THEATRE.

ROUNDHEAD walks toward NIM.

MARGARET

There is no End to *Theatre*.

ROUNDHEADS

Without a Future, this is the END.

MARGARET

Will, *please*.

WILLIAM

James Killingworth is not the end of Theatre.

ROSEY looks to DOLL.

ROSEY

A distraction.

DOLL

For our Boy of a Bordering Age.

ROUNDHEAD

Without furthering ado...

WILLIAM dives at ROUNDHEAD with his prop sword and knocks his firearm from his hands. ROSEY scrambles to get the firearm as DOLL gives NIM a path to exit.

DOLL

Nim, run!

NIM shakes his head.

ROSEY

Now, Nim.

ROSEY pushes the gun into NIM's hands; he looks at the weapon helplessly.

MARGARET

Nim! NOW.

A FIRE-EXPLOSION and NIM runs. Behind him, the great globe itself dissolves

and this insubstantial pageant fades,  
leaving not a rack behind.

{ Epilogue }

SIXTEEN YEAR, Three Months, Two  
Days after the *End*.

NIM DULLYN, now 27 years old,  
crouches over a Counting-Book, counting  
out coins. He counts, checks his Ledger,  
then counts again.

He notices something, pulls it out. It is an  
Action-Figure. If we can see details, we  
might note that it looks like Nim himself.

Of a Sudden, a Knock at the Door. NIM  
freezes.

A beat. Louder knocking.

NIM closes the Counting-Book with care  
and stands up quietly.

More knocking. A VOICE on the other  
side of the door cries out; it is muffled and  
sounds suspectly like ROUNDHEAD. Or  
a Child. It is not possible to know for  
certes.

VOICE

Oy!  
Ope the door!

NIM moves quietly, still holding the  
Action-Figure, to pick up a piece of  
weaponry.

VOICE

Oy!  
We saw you go inn.

NIM raises the weaponry at the word:  
We.

Who's We?  
NIM

A Friend.  
VOICE

NIM's face tightens at the next inquiry; it is a memory of Betrayal, and also, truly, a question.

What is a Friend?  
NIM

A loyal thing who looks for the Player Dullyn.  
Who is not Dull at all, but indeed has been lately seen playing Sharp as an axe.  
VOICE

Ho, now, Fuck off.  
You take me for a gull? Theatres have been closed some Fifteen-Year now.  
Lately seen.  
NIM

Please, Sir!  
I only want to look on the Player Dullyn.  
When he exercised the Qualitie, I could hardly breathe for the bignesse of him.  
VOICE

NIM sets down the weapon at the word: I.  
He takes a big breath, shoulders remaining in place.

Fifteen Long Year, but Silence and Grieff.  
Naught but Silence and Grieff.  
O, the Theatre is closed.  
NIM

Holding the Action-Figure, he begins to open the door.

And Our Revelle's now are ENDED.

The door stands open, NIM looking out; we cannot see to the other side.

{ *End of PLAY.* }