

Do you have five minutes, even three? That's all you need to read one article in this newsletter. If you like it, there's more, read on. If not, well you get the idea what we're up to here.

ways that Bill still matters  
an occasional newsletter, Fall 2012

## Incorporating Friends into Shakespeare

By Blair Warner

Shakespeare. The greatest playwright ever, whom many fear, including myself. But I am here to tell you that Bill is not so bad. Reading Shakespeare is less difficult if you think of the plays as people you know.

Not the plays, of course, but the characters in the plays. Just envision people that you know as you read the scenes—pretend they are the ones on stage. It might sound silly, but it really helped me while reading *Taming of the Shrew*. I imagined one of my close friends Ashley playing the role of Bianca and her younger sister Nicole playing the role of Katherina.

Both sisters have personalities that can be compared to the two sisters in the play. Ashley, who is soft-spoken at times, is very nice and peaceful, like Bianca. She gets along with everyone that she meets. Nicole is much more like Katherina. She is strong-willed, says whatever happens to be on her mind, and at times can be angry. People tend to be intimidated by her mannerisms. Just like Kate in *Taming*.

Imagining the similarities between these pairs of sisters as I read made me laugh at times, enjoying *Taming* more and more as I read. Incorporating friends into the reading of the play helped me understand Shakespeare in new ways. When I described this swap with another friend who knows both the sisters and the play, she saw the comparison immediately and was surprised she hadn't made the connection before.

So, next time you are having a hard time connecting with the material in front of you, try envisioning the characters as people that you know. I had great fun trying to find people whom I thought fit the play, and you might too.

## Wing Man Shakes It Up

By Amanda Bevacqua

Have you ever had that moment in your bromance when you were telling your best bud about a girl? You just wanted his opinion, but he decided to go out and get her for you. Who could refuse, who could be so ungrateful? Sound familiar, because if it does, you have had a Shakespeare moment.

In *Much Ado About Nothing*, not only do many of the characters dress in disguise, pretending to be someone else, but one goes so far as to woo a woman in disguise in order to win her love for his best friend. Call this the Claudio and Don Pedro Swap.



Shakespeare Now

In the play, Claudio falls deeply in love with Hero just by looking at her. It is love at first sight. He is troubled by this passion and is venting to his boys. He does not know how to approach her. He is a shy guy. But Don Pedro, his best bud, is not shy! He insists that he impersonate Claudio at a masked dance and woo Hero into loving, not him, but Claudio. Stupid plan, right? It's hard to imagine how this would work out well, but this *is* Shakespeare, and miraculously the plan works flawlessly. Don Pedro woos Hero to love Claudio and they succeed in getting married—*eventually*—but that's another story.

You see this at the local watering hole from time to time. Two buddies decide to make a plan to get a lady. In that plan there is a wing man (Don Pedro) that sets it up for the one who wants the girl (Claudio). If the plan works he's got her! So while you think this is a new clever way to get the girl, it's not. Shakespeare thought this up over 400 years ago. So, if you need some more pointers, or just new equipment to get the girl, pick up some Shakespeare!

## Shakespeare in the Stark: Shakespearean Themes in *The Avengers*

By Cat Mount

The recent success of Marvel's *The Avengers* has caused an increased interest in all things superhero. The film was a rave hit with energetic fight sequences, witty quips, and a truly beautiful cast. One particularly funny quip comes from Tony Stark where, upon meeting Thor for the first time, he snarks that they're all actually performing Shakespeare in the Park. In theaters this earned the laugh it played for, but, in reality, Tony Stark is not wrong in applying Shakespeare to the events of Avengers. In fact, major themes in the film are also major themes presented in Shakespearean works.

*The Avengers*, like the *Thor* comics, pit brother against brother. The dysfunctional relationship between Thor and Loki is the driving force behind the events of the film. Loki, the villain, is fresh from exile and he is nowhere near ready to forgive Thor for being the better-liked brother. Loki's jealousy is his greatest motivation. Likewise, Don John's jealousy of his brother Don Pedro in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* is also what drives him. Out of jealous malice he strives to cause mischief and strife by deceiving Claudio and Don Pedro about Hero's virtue. He is an illegitimate son of a king and desperate to prove himself. This is Loki. His character is also somewhat reminiscent of Iago from *Othello* who, jealous of his brothers-in-arms, does all he can to destroy them.

Intentional or not, the film pulls a major plot point from *Romeo and Juliet*. The end of the play sees the Montagues and Capulets coming together to cope with the mutual tragedy of losing children. It is so effective that the writers of *The Avengers* worked in the death of Shield agent Phil Coulson as a turning point in the film. The tragedy of his death brings the team together. They have something to avenge, something to fight for. It is heartbreaking, understandable, and Shakespearean.

Of course, with a villain like Loki, what's a film without some deception? Loki pulls the classic tricks: mirages here, body doubles there. Minor tricks play a role in every Shakespearean play. *Much Ado* and *Taming of the Shrew* see characters

*It is a matter of faith to some that you can tell a lot from a title. How about these?*

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### Most Children Have Seen *Hamlet*

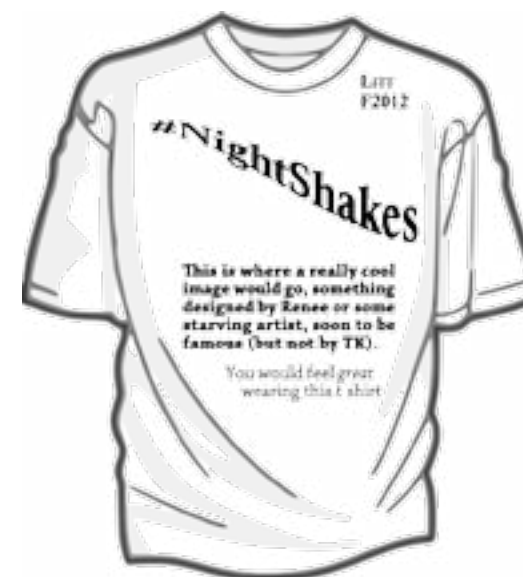
### Shakespeare in Feudal Japan: Kurosawa's Revision of *King Lear*

### Hamlet: The First Emo Kid

## The #NightShakes T-Shirt

"What a piece of work is this T! how noble in form! how infinite in sizes! in form and moving how express and admirable!"

Hamlet (slightly reworked)



click on Ts for a closer look



In the Autumn of 2012, a group of literary minded seniors completed the first ever night-time Shakespeare course at Stockton College. Here is the commemorative T that never was (like our lovely day trip to PENN, swept aside by Sandy). Please remember, most fetishists agree that it is good for your health to reread Shakespeare at regular intervals throughout life.

faking identities. *Hamlet* sees Hamlet employ tricks to get Claudius to confess to murder. Speculation suggests that the plot of *The Avengers* is actually a ploy by Loki to achieve an unspecified goal. Recently the writers of the film revealed that Clark Gregg will be reprising his character Phil Coulson, meaning that his character did not die. Now, that sounds like Leonato letting Claudio believe Hero is dead in order to force Claudio's feelings of guilt at slandering Hero.

It may very well be a testament to clever writing that a character brings up Shakespeare in the film. This only serves to draw attention to the similarities between the two. The success of Marvel's films should not only be sparking interest in comic books, but also in Shakespeare. If they keep up the good work, it just might.

## Cosmo Quiz: What kind of shrew are you?

By Jamie Taylor

**Question 1:** Have you ever gotten so angry that you hit someone with a lute?

- A. Of course.
- B. No, but I thought about it.
- C. Never!

**Question 2:** If a guy was only interested in you (at first) for your money, you would...

- A. Keep dating him; I'd probably do the same if I was a guy.
- B. That's disrespectful. I'd make someone kill him.
- C. Greed is a sin. I'd prefer a holy marriage.

**Question 3:** If your husband made you sleep with someone for promised money, you would...

- A. Call him a join'd-stool, hit him, and then tell him to beware your sting, and then hit him again.
- B. Again, that's disrespectful. Someone kill him.
- C. Oh my, I just couldn't! Heaven save me!

(Answers on page 5)

## Most Children Have Seen *Hamlet*

By Megan McCandless

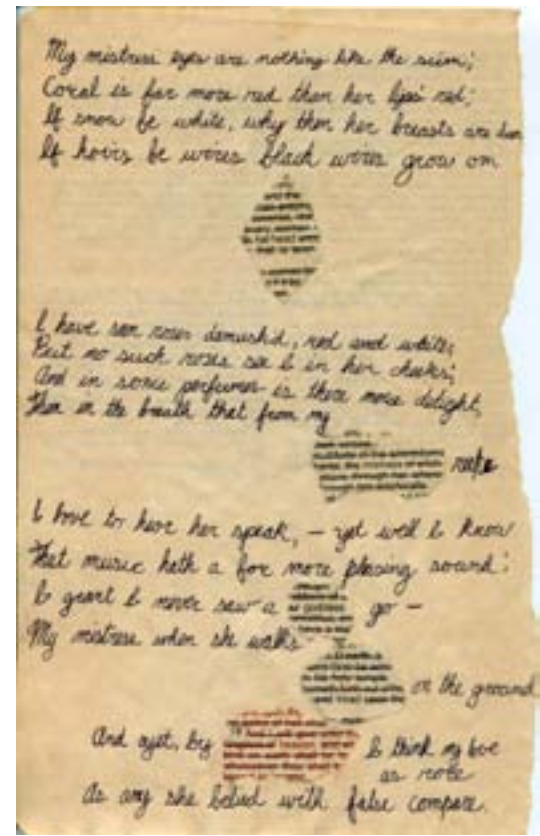
Most people do not realize that *The Lion King*, a classic childhood film, is actually Shakespeare. This infamous work by Disney shares a multitude of similarities with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. People who have not read Shakespeare would never notice. How could they? But when considering that both works' plots center on the idea of a king being murdered by his brother who seeks to take over the kingdom, and the sons are the central characters as they seek revenge for the deaths of their fathers, it seems nearly impossible to miss the comparison. But for those who do, let's take a closer look at some character comparisons.

*The Lion King's* protagonist Simba mirrors that of the character Hamlet. Each son loses his father and is deeply affected by this loss. Both know deep down that they must seek revenge against their uncles for their fathers' deaths, but both avoid it. Simba physically runs away from his pride's lands while Hamlet stays in Denmark, but mentally runs from sanity while searching for answers. In the end both characters get their revenge, although Simba's fate is far better than Hamlet's untimely death. The change makes sense. What child wants to see the good lion die?

Looking at the villains, Scar and Claudius are very much the same. Both killed their brother in order to take over the kingdom. In taking over the kingdom, both enjoy their new powers, but at the same time lead their kingdom to war and ruin. Scar does not take Sarbi, Simba's mother, as his queen like Claudius does with Gertrude, but at the same time it is curious to note that Sarbi still remains Queen of the animal kingdom. Both villains even go so far as to confess to the murder they committed, Scar does so braggingly to Simba in their final battle and Claudius confesses to god, which Hamlet overhears. And in fit endings for villains, both die.

Even the less important characters mirror each other. One can certainly compare *The Lion King's* Timon and Pumba to *Hamlet's* Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Both pairs of friends offer comic relief and unknowingly move the plot along, reminding the protagonist of his duty to his father. Timon and Pumba, however, remain true friends and stand by Simba throughout the work, unlike Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who unwittingly attempted to deliver Hamlet to his death. The dead Kings mirror each other in the sense that they both ruled over peaceful and happy kingdoms and after their deaths appear to their sons to deliver a message implying that their deaths need to be avenged. And lastly there are the queens, Sarbi and Gertrude. Both maintain their queenly status throughout, but neither has the power to expose the truth, and both cause emotional distress to their sons.

These comparisons suggest that despite being nearly 400 years apart, *The Lion King* is a modern version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In the 1990s every child knew *The Lion King*; it was like today's *Harry Potter* or *Twilight*. Most didn't know that as they watched they were getting their first lesson in Shakespeare. If college students go back and view this childhood staple, especially after reading *Hamlet*, they are likely to understand the plot far better than they would have. Who needs *Cliffnotes* when they've got Disney?



Sonnet 130



For more handwritten sonnets go to <http://wp.stockton.edu/night-shakes/sonnets-the-old-way/>

## Results of the Cosmo Quiz

If you chose mostly A's: You're the ultimate shrew! How froward! Just like Katherina from *The Taming of the Shrew* you are completely untamable, except by your perfect match. While you may suffer stresses from your family and ignorant neighbors, you receive life and all its experiences with utmost misery and think most people are nuisances. Try to find a guy that's just as bold as you are—and don't be afraid to show him your wild side! If he's right for you, you'll tame each other.

If you chose mostly B's: You're slightly shrewish. Like Beatrice from *Much Ado About Nothing*, you are independent and self-governing. While you may think that love's not the thing for you, don't shut yourself out completely. Listen to your friends talk and see if they can find you a good match. Don't be scared to embrace love's brilliance! You might see yourself smile!

If you chose mostly C's: Why did you take this quiz? You don't even fit into any of Shakespeare's plays. You're a total Ben Jonson type, like Celia from *Volpone*. You enjoy going to church and staying inside to hide your beauty. You would do almost anything for your husband when you're married, but be sure to stay away from con-artists (they're not your type). While you're a very sweet person, try to embrace your wild side and get yourself in a situation where some nice young man will save you.

## Shakespeare in Feudal Japan: Kurosawa's Revision of King Lear

By Mike Stein

On December 22, 1985, the cinematic masterpiece by the legendary director Akira Kurosawa titled *Ran* opened to American audiences. The title translates to *chaos*, or *revolt*; very befitting for a film based on William Shakespeare's tragedy of *King Lear*. Although the film follows the main premise of Shakespeare's play, Kurosawa took many liberties in making the film unique and fresh for modern audiences. Even if you have never read a play by Shakespeare, Kurosawa's *Ran* will be an invigorating cinematic experience that will leave certain scenes in your memory for days, if not years, to come.

Shakespeare's original version of *King Lear* had a cast of about two dozen roles, which is quite a decent

amount for one of his plays. Kurosawa recruits hundreds of extras, fourteen-hundred to be exact, to stage enormous battle scenes; scenes that Shakespeare could never have performed in his Globe Theater. Kurosawa puts a unique twist to the Shakespearean classic, tying the classic tragedy to the Feudal Era of Japan.

The setting coincides perfectly with *King Lear's* storyline, as Lord Ichimonji prepares to give his crown to his eldest son, but divide his land into three sections for each of his sons to rule over. Shakespeare's version describes three daughters. Otherwise, Ichimonji is *Ran's* equivalent of King Lear and, like Lear, is eventually betrayed by his two older sons and left to rely on his youngest whom he himself banished. Many of the main characters transfer from *King Lear* to *Ran*. Kyoami, Lord Ichimonji's fool and court jester, takes on a much more important role in Kurosawa's vision. He remains beside the king until the end of the film and is perhaps the most loyal subject the Lord has by his side. Kurosawa includes many iconic lines from the fool in *King Lear*, but adds more of a prophetic importance to the character. The Lady Kaede is also memorable, as she bullies her husband into taking all power away from the Ichimonjis, much like the Duke of Cornwall in Shakespeare's original.

It took Kurosawa ten years to finish the process of filmmaking, overcoming many difficulties including increased vision problems and the death of his wife of forty years. American audiences sadly did not make *Ran* a huge box office success, but it was unanimously respected by critics for its cinematography, set design, and a phenomenal cast of brilliant actors. It is approximately 162 minutes in length, quite lengthy compared to today's standard film, but worth every second. Kurosawa mastered the art of adapting his own blend of Shakespeare to film several times, not only with *Ran*, but also adapting *Macbeth* to Feudal Japan in 1957's *Throne of Blood*. His films, much like Shakespeare's plays, will live on and serve as immortal foundations of art. Kurosawa understood and helped to prove that Shakespeare's plays have a sort of universal appeal that anyone in any culture can relate to, given the right context and setting.

## Hamlet: The First Emo Kid

By Whitney Benedetto

Few people know that William Shakespeare's character Hamlet is quite possibly the first ever recorded "emo" child. If you don't know what emo is, it's a nickname given to a stereotyped group who generally wear a lot of black, walk about as if a dark cloud shrouds their very existence, and seem to have a fondness for both natural hair oils and greasy hair products. Emo is short for emotional, as those who fit the category are often very in touch with their negative emotions, and go to great pains to display them for all to see, sometimes with a touch of volatility.

There is no argument that many of the people associated with this "emo" label are indeed suffering with some inner turmoil. The group as a whole, however, receives a lot of negative attention for the way in which they go about handling their troubles. After all, most of us go through a sad or depressing, or even horrible event at some time in our lives, but most of us don't allow that blip in our timeline to color our attitudes toward life in general.



Well, we'll see't. Come, madam wife,  
sit by my side, and let the world  
slip, we shall ne'er be younger.

*Taming of the Shrew,*  
at the close of the  
Induction scene



That sir which serves and seeks for gain,  
And follows but for form,  
Will pack when it begins to rain,  
And leave thee in the storm.  
But I will tarry; the fool will stay,  
And let the wise man fly:  
The knave turns fool that runs away;  
The fool no knave, perdy.

*King Lear* II, 4  
SONG OF THE  
FOOL TO LEAR



Hamlet was written by William Shakespeare in the early 1600s, long-before emo was remotely cool. Yet, Hamlet is the picture of emo, as described by his mother:

Good Hamlet, cast thy knighted colour off,  
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.  
Do not forever with thy vailed lids,  
Seek for thy noble father in the dust.  
(Act I, scene 2, 68-71)

Hamlet's mother is saying what every person would like to say to the emo kids they come across—"Shut up, get over it, and move on!" Of course, Queen Gertrude is Hamlet's mother, and so she puts it a little more kindly than that. And it is no surprise that Hamlet responds the way he does, seeing as he must set the pace for all emo kids to follow:

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected havior of the visage,  
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,  
That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,  
For they are actions that a man might play;  
But I have that within passeth show,  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.  
(Act I, scene 2, 77-86)

Translated, Hamlet has just said: "Sure, some guys might pretend to be all emotional and sad, but I really am Mom! It's not just my clothes and behavior and face that are sad, it's on the inside too."

Of course Hamlet has every right to be upset. He has recently lost his father, and his mother is now married to his uncle. Oh, and before the night is out he will learn from his father's ghost that this uncle is a murderer and a cad. So yes, let's give Hamlet a little credit, and allow him to feel the feelings he's feeling so strongly.

Just when you thought Shakespeare's writing was filled with crusty old characters who had no connection to your own life, Hamlet proves you wrong. Think about poor him next time you spot an emo kid, and think about what he or she might be dealing with. Just don't ask them if they've seen any ghosts recently. That would just be rude.

## Shakespeare in Rock n Roll (a selection)

"Titus Andronicus Forever," Titus Andronicus	"Celebrity Skin," Hole
"Midsummer Night's Scene," Octopus Syng	"I Ain't No Romeo," Spike
"Dear Ophelia," Abney Park	"I Ain't No Romeo Blues," Mike Luczak, HC3, and Byron Jones
"Shakespeare," Akala	"I'm No Romeo," Billy Stewart
"I Bet You Look Good On the Dance Floor," Arctic Monkeys	"Romeo and Juliet," Indigo Girls
"40 Dogs (Like Romeo and Juliet)," Bob Schneider	"Thane of Cawdor," from the album <i>Thane to the Throne</i> Jag Panzer
"Fire," Bruce Springsteen	"Three Voices of Fate," Jag Panzer
"Casanova," Gerald Levert	"Tragedy of Macbeth," Jag Panzer
"Check Yes Juliet," We the Kings	"MacBeth," John Cale
"Cherish," Madonna	"Midsummer Night's Scene," John's Children
"Thy Unused Beauty," Cosmofonics	"Summon the Devil," Lana Lane
"No Romeo," Dannii Minogue	"Prospero's Speech," Loreena McKennitt
"Don't Fear the Reaper," Blue Öyster Cult	"Romeo Had Juliette," Lou Reed
"Romeo," Donna Summer	"Romeo and Juliet," Mark Knopfler
"I'm No Romeo," E.M.D.	"The Sharpest Lives," My Chemical Romance
"The King Must Die," Elton John	"Ophelia," Natalie Merchant
"Miss Macbeth," Elvis Costello	"Cruel To Be Kind," Nick Lowe
"Opheliac," Emilie Autumn	"Dominion," Ophthalamia
"Poem: At What Point Does a Shakespeare Say," Emilie Autumn	"My Sweet Prince," Placebo
"Fire," The Pointer Sisters	"A Pound of Flesh," Radical Face
"Get Over It," Eagles	"Exit Music (For a Film)," Radiohead
"Althea," Grateful Dead	"Pound of Flesh," Regina Spektor
"Desolation Row," Bob Dylan	"Renegade," Jay Z & Eminem
"Join Me In Death," HIM	"Romeo and Juliet," My Chemical Romance
	"Romeo and Juliet," The Killers

## Shakespearean Insults

I do desire we may  
be better strangers.

I shall laugh myself to  
death at this puppy-  
headed monster!

Take you me for  
a sponge?

You peasant swain!  
You whoson malt-  
horse drudge!

Here, thou incestuous,  
murderous, damned  
Dane. Drink off  
this potion!

Thou whoson zed!  
thou unnecessary letter!

A knave; a rascal; an  
eater of broken meats;  
base, proud, shallow,  
beggarly, three-suited,  
hundred-pound, filthy,  
worsted-stocking  
knave; a lily-livered,  
action-taking knave, a  
whoson, glass-gazing,  
super-serviceable finical  
rogue; one-trunk-  
inheriting slave; one  
that wouldst be a bawd,  
in way of good service,  
and art nothing but the  
composition of a knave,  
beggar, coward, pandar,  
and the son and heir of  
a mongrel bitch: one  
whom I will beat into  
clamorous whining, if  
thou deniest the least  
syllable of thy addition.

"Sonnet 20,"  
Rufus Wainwright

"Sonnet 29,"  
Rufus Wainwright

"Sonnet 43,"  
Rufus Wainwright

"Limelight,"  
Rush

"If Music Be The  
Food Of Love,"  
Samantha Fox

"Rock 'n' Roll Romeo,"  
Sammy Hagar

"Act III Scene 2  
(Shakespeare),"  
Saul Williams

"Shakespeare's Tragedy,"  
Kaitlyn Vandever

"Someday I'll Be  
Next To You,"  
Wilson Phillips

"Sister Moon,"  
Sting

"Shakespeare,"  
Susan Cagle

"Love Story,"  
Taylor Swift

"Every Poet Wants to  
Murder Shakespeare,"  
The Bad Examples

"Ophelia,"  
The Band

"Be is for Brutus,"  
The Hives

"No Romeo,"  
The Mitguards

"No Romeo,"  
The Pussybats

"Just Like Romeo  
and Juliet,"  
The Reflections

"Shakespeare's Sister,"  
The Smiths

"Cordelia,"  
The Tragically Hip

"Ophelia,"  
Tori Amos

"The Greatest Man  
That Ever Lived,"  
Weezer

"Sigh No More,"  
David Tennant &  
Catherine Tate

"We Go Together,"  
David Tennant &  
Catherine Tate

"Billy S.,"  
Skye Sweetnam

"Ariel,"  
October Project

"Small Town Moon,"  
Regina Spektor

"The Hard Way,"  
The Kinks

"I am the Walrus,"  
The Beatles

"Full Fathom Five,"  
Dan Adams

"Where the Bee Sucks,"  
Ben Whishaw



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