

“The Complete Works of William Shakespeare [abridged]”

Please Choose ONE excerpt and ONE Shakespeare OR excerpt #3 (includes Shakespeare)

EXCERPT #1:

D: Allow me to introduce myself. My name is _____. When I was in kindergarten, I saved up my pennies and this [Picking up the book.] is the first thing I bought. This—for those of you who have never seen one before—is a book. [Opens cover, leafs through pages.] Ink printed on sheets of paper, bound in leather. No battery. No touch-screen. You can't take a selfie with it. It is simply a book. But not just any book. It's The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, which, for me, is the best book in the history of books. Sure, it's violent and racist and sexist and jingoistic and patriarchal. But it's no worse on those fronts than the Bible. And the plots make a lot more sense. And there's even more cross-dressing, so . . . definitely better. Now, this strange room that you are all sitting in is called a 'theater.' It's the place where the words in this book come to life. Where the magic happens. Ah, the history of the [Name of theater.] Who can forget that one-night-only staged reading of American Psycho - The Musical? Or the Sunday matinee when Spongebob had a major costume malfunction of his squarepants?

[The above can be customized to suit the unique history of this theater.]

And now, tonight, in this very theater . . . the stage manager tells us we have to be out in two hours. Seriously, we got a good deal on rent but there's a guy doing an adult puppet show in the late slot, and he's already backstage and he scares me. But fear not—although the time we have is short, the feat we will attempt is impossible. Tonight, my partners and I will attempt to capture the magic, the genius, the towering grandeur of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE!

EXCERPT #2

A: Okay . . . [Reading from phone.] William Shakespeare. William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, War-wick-shy-ur. [Swipes.] The third of eight children, he was the eldest son of John Shakespeare, a locally prominent merchant, and Mary Arden, daughter of a Roman. [Swipes.] Catholic member of the landed gentry. In 1582 he married Anne Hathaway. [A is confused and looks to D.]

D: Different Anne Hathaway.

A: That's a shame. [Reads.] Shakespeare arrived in London in 1588. [Swipes but doesn't find his place; swipes again.] There, with his provincial charm and folksy wit, he quickly became a popular figure around the U.S. Capitol. [Stops. Swipes back to double-check. Swipes forward again.] After dominating Michael Douglas in a debate, winning the highest office in the land, and totally nailing his role in Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure . . . [Swipes, hesitates.] ... Shakespeare issued the Emancipation Proclamation on New Year's Day 1863, thus freeing the slaves. [to DANIEL.] I never knew that before! [DANIEL gestures to him to wrap it up. ADAM reads rapidly.] Although Shakespeare modernized the economy, won the Civil War, and built a transcontinental railroad, he was sadly assassinated at the Globe Theater in 1864 by an actor with a cannon. [Swipes.] He lies buried in a log cabin in Stratford. [Swipes.] Although there's also a huge monument to him at the mall. [To audience.] Thank you.