

SHAKESPEARE

So! Nigel. What are you and that brother of yours working on? A tragedy? A comedy? A tragic attempt at a comedy?

(to the crowd) See what I did there?*(THEY don't laugh enough)* SEE WHAT I DID??

Oh, man, he's so paranoid. Always has been. Even when I was a lowly actor in his sad little troupe, he was so insecure. Of course, with you as his partner, he has even more reason to be. I've read your sonnets. It's good. Quite good. I'd love to read more.

(feigning surprise) Oh - is that your folio?

HE points to Nigel's leather notebook

Would you like me to give it a looky-loo? What am I saying? Of course you would! I'm Shakespeare!

NICK

New idea... new idea... we need a new idea. We gotta think bigger! We have to innovate. The world is changing. I recently heard about a man who has a toilet that flushes. He pulls a lever and it gets whooshed down a pipe... and then into the street. And that's what we need. Something new. Ugh. Shakespeare's the problem. Why did I ever suggest he become a writer? I was just trying to get him out of our troupe because he was so annoying.

BEA

There would've been meat, but the landlord came by demanding the rent—took our last shilling right out of my hand. Then I was gonna surprise you with some mutton—but sheep are fast.

We've been through this, we do not touch the money box! *(Beat)* That's what we're saving for. A better life. A simple cottage in the country, for all of us. You, me, a couple of kids... Now, I know it's been a while since we've put any money in there, and that's why I was thinking—I should get a job. This is the nineties! We've got a woman on the throne and by the year 1600, women will be completely equal to men. Ooh! I just thought of the perfect job for me. I could be in your play!

PORTIA

Oh, Nigel! You made it! I had to climb out the window, but I don't think anyone saw me...

Speak up a little....Let me help you... *(reads poem with Nigel)* "And to the stars will fly elusive dove; to heaven's gate with my eternal-love!"

It was beautiful. Will you write me another? Not straight away. But—this is what you should be writing, words that feel true to you. Write from your heart. It will move others as it has moved me.

Your brother doesn't approve of us. Oooh! Does that make us star-crossed??

BROTHER JEREMIAH

As if theater wasn't heinous enough, you've now added music—which leads to dancing... which we Puritans cannot abide. So you listen to this, Master Bottom. If you continue promoting this filth, I will throw you in the stocks and have the mob throw cabbages at you!

NOSTRADAMUS

Do I hear a need for future seeing? If seeing is what you need, then I can help you. If help is what you need, then I can see you. If neither is what you need, then I can foresee you leaving very shortly So—am I hired? Actually, I know I will be, I'm just being polite.