

# Newsletter #3

May 14 – May 27, 2020

[www.syp.nlsr.org](http://www.syp.nlsr.org)

 [www.youtube.com/c/SYPkolkata](http://www.youtube.com/c/SYPkolkata)

Dear Readers,

Do you feel Shakespeare is all words and no action? To give you some idea of action scenes in Shakespeare, we have set the theme of this newsletter on '**fighting**', in honour of World Wrestling Day (May 23) which falls in this period. Have fun reading this newsletter. Health caution: Please don't fight!

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## SHAKESPEAREAN INSULTS!

*Compiled by Archik Guha (Team Supervisor, SYP)*

Angry with someone? Want to hurl insults and puzzle them with the meaning? Try out these insults from Shakespeare's plays:

**Disfurnish** – *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

**Barbary cock-pigeon** – *As You Like It*

**Away, you three-inch fool!** – *The Taming of the Shrew*

**Candle-waster** – *Much Ado About Nothing*

**Lily-livered boy** – *Macbeth*

**Cream-faced loon** - *Macbeth*

**His wit's as thick as a Tewkesbury Mustard** – *Henry IV, Part II*

**Poisonous bunch-backed toad** – *Richard III*

**Elvish-marked, abortive, rooting hog** – *Richard III*

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## ABOUT SYP

SYP was formed in 2016, commemorating the 400<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of Shakespeare. Although the group started out to perform drama, SYP has, in the span of a few years, expanded to other forms of performance activities, including performing for the screen on YouTube.

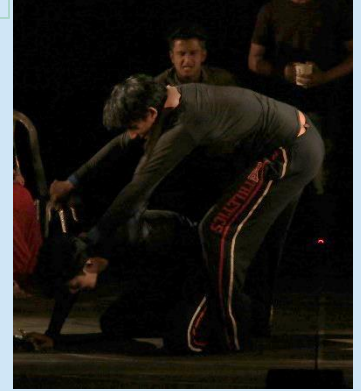
SYP doesn't just perform Shakespeare's plays. Our performance is Shakespearean. We also take up works by others.



**Subscribe** to our YouTube channel:

[www.youtube.com/c/SYPKolkata](http://www.youtube.com/c/SYPKolkata)

# Hold, Enough!

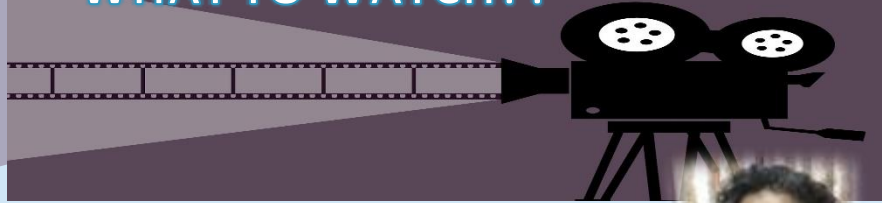


Romeo and Juliet (2017)



## The Lion King

## WHAT TO WATCH??



### Movie Review by Srishti

Bhowmick, Event Manager, SYP



Hey there, movie buffs! Yes, you read it right. *The Lion King* is indeed a Shakespearean Adaptation, and that too, of a very famous one, *Hamlet*. A striking difference between the two is that while *Hamlet* has a tragic ending, *The Lion King* celebrates triumph over evil and ends in a joyous spirit. Oops, that was a spoiler, I guess!

Nevertheless, the struggle for power is indeed a prominent theme in both the stories. Be it man or the king of the jungle, one must remember one's limits and the ones who don't, they receive their dues of fatal blows, just like the manipulative and cunning uncles – Claudius and Scar.

Simba and Hamlet both have a never-ending streak of bravery and live life with principles. So, once they discover that their uncles have usurped the throne by killing their fathers, nothing stops them from taking revenge.

The animated adaptation has also shown a beautiful love story ensuing from a strong bond of friendship between Simba and Nala, yet Hamlet and Ophelia hardly get a

chance for their happily ever after. Remember the famous soliloquy of Hamlet, "To be or not to be"? You must notice its presence in moments of Simba's exile, as he walks the path of discovering his true self. You will definitely notice the absence of numerous tragic deaths in *The Lion King*, unlike, *Hamlet*, as the creators have opted for a child-friendly depiction. But one thing goes without saying, both of our heroes never fail to assume their rightful duties as brave sons of their glorious fathers.

## FEATURED TESTIMONIAL



Kaustabh Adhya, Member, 2016-2017

“

My journey with the theatrical world and SYP has been very short, but still, I can say that SYP has had a great impact on my extra-curricular life. Before joining SYP, I had a great fear of stage performances, but SYP helped me in overcoming this fear, for which I will be ever-grateful.

Working with the team was always fun (other than the "punishments") – it helped me know more about Shakespearean works and of course, about acting.

I had to leave the group because of my schedule, yet I never miss a chance to watch the SYP productions.

”



## Directing Fight Scenes in Shakespeare

by Dr. Nilanko Mallik, Founder-Director, SYP

Fight scenes in any drama act as tourist attractions. The gorier it gets, the better it seems to be appreciated. The popularity of fight sports such as WWE and UFC, surfing over debates on whether or not the former is staged, speaks about the appeal of fights to the crowd. In Elizabethan times, the popularity of revenge tragedy suggests, perhaps to an even more blood-thirsty audience of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that the death of the hero (with other casualties) just makes the drama more appealing.

Leave it to the Bard to give what the audience wants – not just in tragedy, but in comedy as well! Think about



SYP Hamlet (2016), Hamlet vs Laertes.  
Pic by Swapnil Karmakar

the wrestling scene between Charles and Orlando in *As You Like It*, or the fight between Arcite and Palamon over the girl they desire in *Two Noble Kinsmen*. Or the duel between Cesario and Andrew, followed by Toby and Antonio, and a while later, Andrew, Toby vs Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*. Engrossingly entertaining. Contrasted with Macduff vs Macbeth or Laertes vs Hamlet, which is, of course, filled with trepidation, and a desire for someone to die (a desire in which the audience seems to participate).

Ultimately, it comes down to the director (in the absence of Shakespeare) to present the fight scenes in a manner which the audience will find appealing. Having directed a few Shakespeare's plays for stage and the digital media, my personal experience has been rewarding. More so, as I have choreographed the fight scenes myself.

The biggest difficulty is posed when actors need to fight with swords and the production is modern. *Romeo + Juliet*, starring Leonardo di Caprio, did a great job in its modern presentation, but scenes where actors draw their guns and call them "swords" kind of ruin the otherwise excellent production. SYP's *Hamlet* (2016) saw Hamlet and Laertes fight with ninja swords, thus turning fencing swords into martial arts weapons, while still being modern in its setting. In 2017, SYP set out to perform selected scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* for YouTube, and the fight between Tybalt and Romeo was a fist-fight and a grappling match, making it more plausible than people drawing swords or guns to kill each other. *Macbeth* (2019) has seen the most fight scenes, and SYP included a few fights which are traditionally not presented to be so (refer to newsletter #1, 'Directing Shakespeare in 21<sup>st</sup> Century'). In addition to all the main fights, the production saw Malcolm and one of his managers fighting off the murderers while on their way to reclaim the office. Fleance too, doesn't just run away. He has his part in the fight scene, and he is not a baby. Most interestingly, Ross and Macduff have a friendly go at each other while conversing.

Directing fight scenes is important from the point of view of the stage and the location, for the fight scenes may be restricted (or gain certain advantages) by factors of location. While rehearsing, it is best for the actors to revise the steps slow. Traditional Indian drama (and cinema) shows most fight scenes in slow motion, but that concept is fast-changing, thanks to the influence of western movies. Audiences enjoy fast action on stage, and although it requires more practice, fast action makes the acting all the more believable, and takes away the superciliousness that slow-motion imparts on fight-scenes.

Light and sound are essential aspects of directing fights on stage, as is camera movement if one has to record the fight scenes for screen production. If characters need to speak, it is essential that they do so during pause in the fight, for if the characters fight and speak at the same time, audience will not be able to make such sense of what is said. Music should not be too loud at any time during stage performance (except perhaps, at the end of the performance), but sadly, that is something which is beyond the scope of the directors in India.

As any director will testify, the sound system, the stage setting, and the technicians who control the sound system, all seem to have a mind of their own, which they reveal during the live performance, much to the dismay of every director. The lights should bring out the natural setting of the scene; it need not bring out the theme of the fight; that should be left to the actors and the music.



## World Wide Web Review



*Sounak Datta, Member, SYP*

**In this newsletter, I'm gonna mention three articles on fight scenes in Shakespeare.**

### 1. Title: The Cut and Thrust of Shakespeare: A Fight Director's View

URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/may/09/shakespeare-fight-director-plays-henry-v>

**What the article is about:** The article is an interview of the fight director/choreographer Terry King, by Andrew Dickson on 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. According to the director, Shakespeare, in his drama has just mentioned "they fight". He does not mention any specifications about their ways of fighting. This gives great chance to the directors and actors to portray their own imagination. In his career of 30 years, Terry King has choreographed many fight scenes, and says that fight scenes are not only a part of tragedy but also of comedy. The whole article clearly shows Shakespeare's fight scenes from the director's point of view, and how the audience would appreciate different types of fights.

### 2. Title: Elizabethan Street Fighting

URL: <https://www.folger.edu/shakespeare-unlimited/elizabethan-street-fighting>

**What the article is about:** The article is a transcript of a podcast conversation that takes place as part of Folger Shakespeare Library's 'Shakespeare Unlimited', this being Episode 24. Michael Witmore, Folger's director, and Rebecca Sheir, discuss about Elizabethan street fighting with guests Vanessa McMahon and Casey Caleba. They discuss various street fights, and scenes of public violence, like the ones in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *As You Like It*, and places the fight scenes of Shakespeare with historic rules that came up in the times of Shakespeare, to analyse the scenes better, and give the readers a historic understanding.

### 3. Title: Fight Scenes

URL: [https://theladykillers.typepad.com/the\\_lady\\_killers/2013/10/fight-scenes.html](https://theladykillers.typepad.com/the_lady_killers/2013/10/fight-scenes.html)

**What the article is about:** This is a blog article written by Carole Price. It discusses in detail the relationship between Shakespeare's plays and fight scenes. It mentions the names of plays where fight scenes play a crucial role in building up the momentum of the plot. It says the plays just not portrays real battles but also battle of cleverness.

The writer quotes from the fight scene of *Romeo and Juliet* - between Montague and Benvolio - and says while stage fighting can be dangerous, rules can prevent accidents.

The writer also says through such fierce fight scenes, Shakespeare shows the "dark side" of human nature, as he very well understands jealousy, rage, anger and revenge.

In conclusion, the article cautions what authors should keep in mind while writing action scenes—that modern day fights don't always involve swords. The fights can and should be made exciting. The characters' emotions and temperament have an impact by heightening the action.



# PUZZLE TIME!!

Find names of prominent Shakespeare's characters, known for fight-roles, hidden in this maze of alphabets. Answers will be revealed in the next issue! Words can be left-right, right-left, up-down, down-up, diagonal (in any manner). Need help? Here are clues to help with the characters!

Q	W	A	R	C	I	T	E	O	R
O	T	C	Y	H	U	I	D	O	P
G	A	A	S	A	D	N	F	G	M
I	H	S	J	R	A	K	L	A	A
R	S	S	S	L	W	D	C	F	C
E	Z	I	R	E	X	B	C	V	D
D	B	O	R	S	E	N	M	Q	U
O	W	D	E	T	R	T	Y	U	F
R	N	I	H	O	P	A	S	D	F
A	G	H	S	E	T	R	E	A	L

Undisputed wrestling champ, who loses to an untrained young man.

He feels that if he dies fighting, the world will have better space for someone else.

Think he's drunk? He can still fight!

Deceived by his friend to duel with someone else, just as the friend wants some fun.

Deceived by his friend to fight with someone else, and dies as friend stabs him.

He fights with the tip of his sword poisoned.

He wrestles with his friend over a girl – and wins.

He is Valour's favourite.

He will fight, kill and behead...only if he has a personal grievance.

Take a screenshot of this puzzle, solve it by marking the names and save the image. Send your image by email to [newsletter@syp.nlsr.org](mailto:newsletter@syp.nlsr.org) and we shall mention the names of the first 10 correct entries in the next newsletter! Mention 'Newsletter 2 Puzzle' in the subject line and state your name, school/college, class (and year, for college).

## Newsletter #2 Solution:

P	O	I	D	N	U	M	D	E	U
Y	T	R	E	W	Q	A	L	K	J
A	H	G	K	C	O	L	Y	H	S
N	L	F	D	S	A	V	M	N	U
H	B	O	I	A	G	O	V	C	I
O	C	X	N	Z	S	L	F	G	D
J	J	C	A	S	S	I	U	S	U
N	K	L	O	R	O	O	W	E	A
O	L	I	V	E	R	D	F	G	L
D	H	J	K	L	Z	X	C	V	C

Resolves to get his brother out of his way, then his father...so that he can claim a post unopposed. (Edmund)

He wants to be repaid to the exact pound! (Shylock)

Makes his wife steal for his schemes. (Iago)

Manipulates someone into killing a great leader. (Cassius)

Almost everyone in the household of the Duchess hates him! (Malvolio)

Kills his brother to come to power, marries soon after. (Claudius)

He does much...for nothing. (Don John)

Fellow-conspirator in trying to assassinate the magical Duke. (Alonso)

Wants to get his brother killed by a professional wrestler. (Oliver)



## *Fight-Scenes in Shakespeare*

Yash Burman, Member, SYP

Take a look at major fight-scenes in Shakespeare's plays...enjoy!

<i>Drama</i>	<i>Act and Scene No.</i>	<i>Contestants</i>	<i>Reason</i>	<i>Winner</i>
<b>MACBETH</b>	Act 5 Scene 5	Macbeth vs Macduff	Many reasons, but chiefly to avenge the death of his family, whom Macbeth had killed by assassins.	Macduff. NOTE: He also beheads Macbeth!
<b>ROMEO and JULIET</b>	Act 3 Scene 1	Tybalt vs Mercutio	Tybalt challenges Romeo to a fight for gate-crashing their party; Romeo makes peace, but Mercutio, a friend of Romeo, takes up the challenge and fights Tybalt.	Tybalt, due to interference, who tries to separate the two fighters, and Tybalt stabs Mercutio in that chance. In the drama, Benvolio carries Mercutio to treat his wounds, but he dies.
<b>ROMEO and JULIET</b>	Act 3 Scene 1	Tybalt vs Romeo	On receiving the news of Mercutio's death Romeo vows revenge on Tybalt who soon reappears. Romeo and Tybalt engage in a duel.	Romeo, who kills Tybalt, and then runs away.
<b>ROMEO and JULIET</b>	Act 5 Scene 3	Romeo vs Paris	Juliet fakes his death to avoid getting married to Paris. Paris comes to the graveyard to mourn, and meets Romeo, who also thinks Juliet is dead. The two fight as rival lovers.	Romeo, of course. Come on...the dude killed the cousin of Juliet a while back...you think a weepy lover stands a chance?
<b>HAMLET</b>	Act 5 Scene 2	Hamlet vs Laertes	Laertes blames Hamlet for the death of his sister, Ophelia (Hamlet's GF). Hamlet's uncle Claudius plans to get Hamlet killed, and asks Laertes to fence with him and stab him with poisoned tip.	Hamlet, who happens to get a jab from the poisoned sword, then takes the sword and really wounds Laertes, who dies earlier. But Hamlet too, dies soon after...so winners, I guess?
<b>OTHELLO</b>	Act 2, Scene 3	Cassio vs Roderigo, Montano	Iago gets Cassio drunk; Roderigo tells him to be dutiful, and Cassio strikes him down. Montano comes to stop Cassio, and a fight ensues.	Cassio, as he wounds Montano. However, the fight is interrupted, as Othello comes.

<b>OTHELLO</b>	Act 5, Scene 1	Cassio vs Roderigo and Iago	Iago instigates Roderigo to kill Cassio at night. Iago waits at the back. He stabs Cassio in the leg from the back.	Cassio; Roderigo is wounded, and killed by Iago to prevent discovery.
<b>TWELFTH NIGHT</b>	Act 3 scene 2	Viola (Cesario) vs Sir Andrew Aguecheek	Viola disguises as a male (Cesario) to serve Duke Orsino as a page. Duke Orsino sends her to Olivia to propose for him. Olivia falls in love with Cesario. Sir Andrew Aguecheek, who also desired Olivia, becomes jealous, and instigated by his friend, challenges Cesario to a duel.	No one...as the fight is interrupted by the arrival of Antonio, who then fights with the friend of Andrew – Sir Toby, but even that fight is called off, as officers arrive on the scene and arrest Antonio.
<b>AS YOU LIKE IT</b>	Act I Scene 2	Orlando vs Charles	Frustrated with the ill-treatment of his elder brother, Orlando decides to take it out at a wrestling contest. Charles is the champion – a pro wrestler – against whom all contestants try their strength, and are badly defeated. Orlando doesn't pay heed and enters the ring, even though he knows he may die.	Surprisingly, Orlando!
<b>THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN – Shakespeare and Fletcher</b>	Act 5, Scene 3	Palamon vs Arcite	Palamon and Arcite, two Theban noblemen, fall in love with the same lady, Emilia, who is the sister of Duke Theseus of Athens. A wrestling match is arranged, where the winner will marry Emilia, and the loser will face death penalty. Arcite prays to Mars to give him victory while Palamon prays to Venus to give him his love.	Both prayers are answered. Arcite wins the wrestling match, but dies in a riding accident, and Palamon gets to marry Emilia.





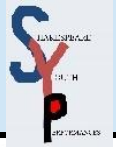
## SYP Comics Time!

### As You Like It – Charles vs Orlando

Drawing and Colours: Ayush Roy, Ad-Hoc Member, SYP

Words: Nilanko Mallik (based on Shakespeare's text)

Plot: Orlando, a young man frustrated from manual work and deprivation at the hands of his elder brother, decides to take out his frustration by entering a wrestling match against a pro wrestler, Charles. In our modern version, this becomes a "No-Holds Barred" wrestling match, as Charles has been breaking ribs without suffering penalty. Orlando enters the ring...



As You Like It – Comic scene representation of Orlando vs Charles...contd.

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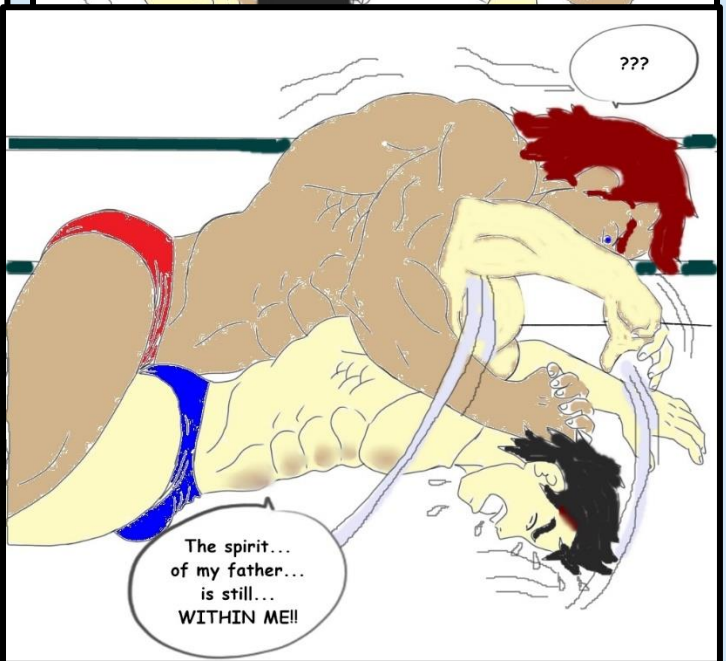
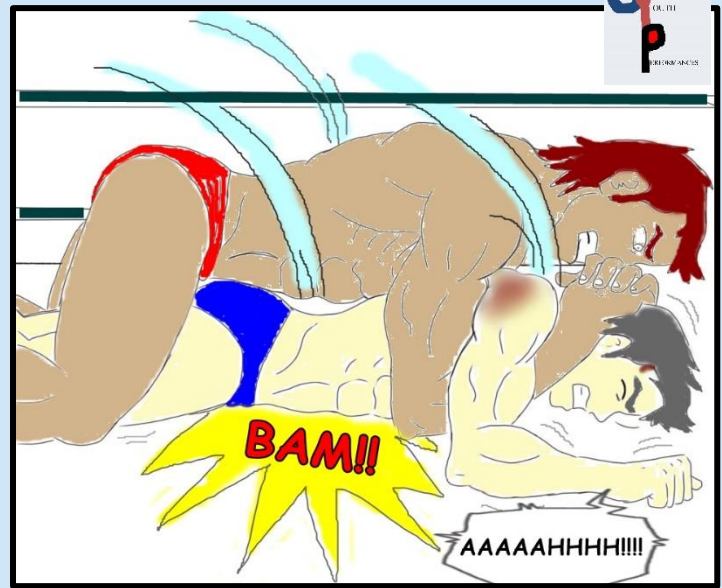


As You Like It – Comic scene representation of Orlando vs Charles...contd.

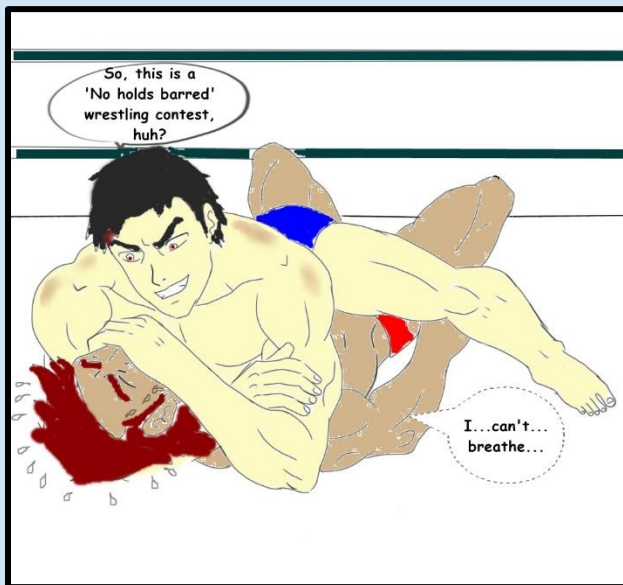
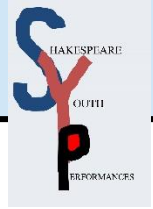
3/3



As You Like It – Comic scene representation of Orlando vs Charles...contd. 4/5



*As You Like It – Comic scene representation of Orlando vs Charles...contd. 5/5*



***Orlando Wins!***