

Newsletter #5

June 11 – June 24, 2020

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Dear Readers,

The month of June celebrates not just Fathers' Day (3rd Sunday), but also Pride Month. This newsletter is devoted to Father characters in Shakespeare, but colour setting has been set to acknowledge the varieties of our human race, for indeed, it is not possible to go through the works of Shakespeare and not acknowledge the cause of all gender communities.



FATHERS' WORDS OF WISDOM...

Compiled by Archik Guha (Team Supervisor, SYP)

Here are some words of advice from Shakespeare's father characters!

There's no art to find the mind's construction in the face – Duncan (*The Merchant of Venice*)

Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice – Polonius (*Hamlet*)

Neither a borrower nor a lender be – Polonius (*Hamlet*)

Brevity is the soul of wit – Polonius (*Hamlet*)

Nothing will come of nothing – King Lear (*King Lear*)

When we are born, we cry that we are come

To this great stage of fools – King Lear (*King Lear*)

**The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray us
In deepest consequence.** – Banquo (*Macbeth*)

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ABOUT SYP

SYP was formed in 2016, commemorating the 400th 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.



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SYP Father Figures!

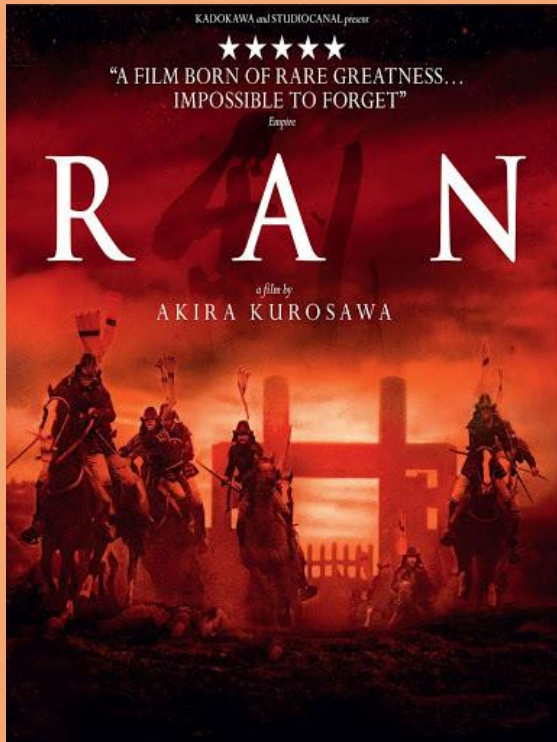




Ran



WHAT TO WATCH??



Movie Review by Srishti Bhowmick,
Event Manager, SYP



'Great minds think alike'. Or should I say, 'History repeats itself'? And as much baffling as the quotes are, I have this one movie to serve as an example of both. The great Japanese director Akira Kurosawa, inspired by the life of a Japanese feudal lord Mori Motonari created the film '**RAN**' which translates to 'chaos'. But in the pre-production days, he found a striking similarity of the drama of William Shakespeare's '**KING LEAR**', based on the life of the historic king. Interesting isn't it?

Note the cruelty and insolence of Taro (Goneril) and Jiro (Regan) towards their own father Hidetora Ichimonji (King Lear of Britain) as they grab every single chance to embarrass their father who only sought to keep his title of the Great Lord and a few attendants. They fall far from their sugar-coated

words of loyalty and unprecedented love for their father when they attack old Hidetora and don't care a dime about the old man as he wanders through the Azusa plains as a madman with none but his loyal jester. The two evil descendants find their rightful justice in death. The youngest son, Saburo, mirrors Shakespeare's Cordelia as he goes upon war to restore his father's honour accompanied by the faithful Tango (Earl of Kent) but is engulfed by the cold hands of death even before Hidetora gets to ask forgiveness.

The agony of Lear could never be more alive than in Hidetora's eyes. The dark clouds that encompass those green meadows tell a tale of the death of the grief-stricken father who became a pauper from the Highness in a handful of days

Though conceived in a separate mind, this screenplay leads your mind back to the Bard's King Lear every single time.

Oops! I think I have given away too many spoilers for this movie! All, right, let me add one element of suspense: it's based on King Lear, but Kurosawa successfully weaves elements from another Shakespearean drama in this film. Can you guess? Well, you will need to watch the film for that.



Duncan – The Father and Father Figure

by Dr. Nilanko Mallik, Founder-Director, SYP

Tradition portrays Duncan as an old king, with beard long enough to rival Merlin. This is particularly true of school performances, where students are taught that Duncan is a gentle king. I once witnessed a reputed college presentation by undergraduate students of English, which portrayed Duncan as the “meek” king, seeking “peace” instead of quarrel. Macbeth, in contrast to Duncan, is portrayed as young and vibrant.

Historically, Duncan and Macbeth were cousins, as they shared a grandparent. If Duncan is old and senile, Macbeth should not be younger than a late middle-aged man. Perhaps most are beguiled by the one line



SYP Macbeth (2019), Duncan (third from left), played by Agnidip Dutta. Photo: Anik Saha.

uttered by Lady Macbeth, “Hath he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done it”, and so, most overlook the historical evidence and plenty of other textual clues which tell us that Duncan and Macbeth are times apart.

Duncan has two young boys, as Macbeth says towards the end of the play, “I will not yield to kiss the ground before young Malcolm’s feet”.

Coming to his character trait. He is not the meek and gentle ruler as readers and directors like to imagine. He has zero tolerance towards rebels. After hearing the narrative of Macbeth killing Macdonald, he says, “O valiant cousin!” and later, orders the execution of Cawdor. He cannot afford another rebellion, and does not wish to see a rebel live. This is clearly understood when he asks Malcolm, “Is execution done on Cawdor?”. The eldest son is not used to the ruthless killing, and declares how Cawdor sought pardon at the end of his life, and died so as to rouse pity. It is then that we get the first glimpse of Duncan as a father who wants to train his offspring. He advises his son not to be deceived by appearances. “There is no art to find the mind’s construction in the face”, he cautions. It is tragic irony (characteristic of Shakespeare) to make Duncan fall prey to this. But it is clear he warns his eldest son not to trust so easily, particularly on the basis of looks.

When Macbeth and the others arrive and Duncan officially names him Cawdor, that is not the only title he bestows. He names his eldest son his heir, and makes him “Prince of Cumberland”. This tells he has his family as the first priority. He has just survived a rebellion. He needs to name his heir – what if something were to happen to him in future? He secures his family line on the throne. Too bad Malcolm and Donalbain both flee. If they had not fled, Macbeth would surely have had a hard time finding ways to kill them both without making him look suspicious. So, in a way, the sons didn’t really understand that going away would only ensure that the throne slips from their direct family line. They had their reasons, of course, but it would have been difficult for Macbeth to murder both of them in broad daylight, with all the others near them. If they had stayed, Malcolm would have become the king, just as Duncan would want.

Coming back to the part where Duncan names Malcolm as his heir. He does a few other things. He tells Banquo doesn’t deserve less than Macbeth, but only gives him an embrace. No extra title for him. Duncan also says that he would give positions to others too, that the titles, “like stars, shall shine on all deservers”. Yet, the only two titles he gives are to Macbeth and his eldest son, his eldest son getting the best title available. Both family members. So, again, Shakespeare shows Duncan to be a king who can appease others with his talk, but he looks towards his own family. He should definitely get Father of Shakespeare’s Plays Award.



Father Characters in Shakespeare

Debopam Das, Senior Member, SYP

Take a look at this chart, which gives an overview of most father characters in Shakespeare's plays - what they do, and what happens to them.

Name of Daddy	Name of Play	Daddy of	What Daddy does	What happens to Daddy ultimately
Polonius	Hamlet	Ophelia	Spies on daughter, urges her to misbehave with Hamlet, pokes his nose in their relationship	Killed by Hamlet while listening to conversation between mother and son
Egeus	A Midsummer Night's Dream	Hermia	commands his daughter Hermia to marry Demetrius, and vows to kill her if she refuses.	Unable to fulfil his wish...daughter marries the one she wishes – Lysander.
Leonato	Much Ado About Nothing	Hero	Desires his daughter's death upon hearing false reports of her infidelity and lack of chastity	
Baptista	The Taming of the Shrew	Katherine (Kate) and Bianca.	Imprisons his younger daughter and forces his elder daughter to marry an abusive suitor	
Egeon	The Comedy of Errors	Antipholus of Ephesus and Antipholus of Syracuse	gives his two identical twin sons the exact same name; condemned to death in Ephesus for violating the ban against travel between the two rival cities.	He is saved, as he is united with his family, and one of his sons is now a citizen of Ephesus.
Titus Andronicus	Titus Andronicus	Lucius, Quintus, Martius, Mutius and daughter Lavinia	kills one son, disowns two others, and kills his raped and mutilated daughter.	Titus Andronicus also dies in the end, killed by Saturninus who is then in turn killed by Titus' last remaining son, Lucius.
King Lear	King Lear	Regan, Goneril and Cordelia	Divides his kingdom to his daughters on the basis of who loves him and by how much.	Dies of Grief upon knowing the death of Cordelia.
Leontes	The Winter's Tale	Mamillius and Perdita	Imprisons his wife and disowns his daughter, claiming she's a bastard.	Re-united with his family.
Prospero	The Tempest	Miranda	Castaway from his kingdom, he seeks revenge while in an island. PS: He knows magic.	Breaks his staff and goes back to his kingdom.

Duncan	Macbeth	Malcolm and Donalbain	The good King of Scotland, model of a virtuous, benevolent, and farsighted ruler.	Macbeth murders Duncan in his sleep with a dagger
Macduff	Macbeth	Name Not mentioned in the play	Macduff is a quiet man who is respected when he speaks and has loyalty to his country. He flees Scotland in order to assist Malcolm, King Duncan's son and heir, in developing an army to overtake Macbeth	Kills Macbeth for the death of his family.
Shylock	The Merchant of Venice	Jessica	A Jewish merchant living in a Christian city, he comes across as greedy, jealous and vengeful. Daughter runs away, taking his money.	Sad at loss at every angle, forced to become a Christian.
Duke Senior	As you like it	Rosalind	Having been banished by his usurping brother, Frederick, Duke Senior lives in exile in the Forest of Arden with a number of loyal men.	His brother gives him back his kingdom, and he returns happily.
Duke Frederick	As you like it	Celia	Duke Frederick is the brother of Duke Senior and the usurper of his throne. Frederick is a forceful ruler, who often seems to assert his power just because he can.	Gives back the dukedom to his brother and becomes an exile by choice.
Brabantio	Othello	Desdemona	Enraged that his daughter has married Othello (showing racism) in secret. Blames Othello for "witchcraft".	Shocked that Desdemona supports Othello...feels betrayed...wishes lifetime of misery to Othello.
Lord Capulet	Romeo and Juliet	Juliet	Rich; Rival of Montague; wants his daughter to marry Paris while she is still in her teens!	Deeply in mourning as daughter dies; ends enmity with house of Montague; decides to build memorial statue jointly.
Lord Montague	Romeo and Juliet	Romeo	Rich; rival of Capulet; clueless that his son is a lovebird. Pleads for the life of Romeo after he kills Tybalt.	Grieved at the death of Romeo; gives up enmity with Capulet; decides to build memorial statue jointly with Capulet.



Shakespeare – The Father

Yash Burman, Member, SYP

Most of us know Shakespeare as a great playwright and a poet, but his role as a father often goes unrecognised. Let us explore, with Father's Day falling in the time-period of this newsletter, Shakespeare as a father.

Shakespeare became a father when he was just nineteen years old! He was blessed with a daughter, Susanna, and two years later, with a couple of twins - Judith and Hamnet. Shakespeare had to leave for London for his career as a playwright, but he visited his family in Warwickshire frequently, often for 2 to 3 months at a stretch. His wife Anne managed their day to day lives while Shakespeare was busy with his works. Shakespeare's relations with his son and daughters are unknown to us. Hamnet died at a very early age, and some speculate that Shakespeare wrote Hamlet after that, reversing the role of a grievous father to a son (Hamlet) who is unable to cope with the loss of his father's life. Not all agree, though. Shakespeare's early plays, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* depict the rebellious nature of teenage daughters and their nature to defy the orders of their fathers. The reason behind Shakespeare's deep knowledge of the feelings and emotions of teenagers might be his own daughters. It is noteworthy that his daughter Judith was a teenager when he wrote *Merchant of Venice* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, both exploring the emotions and decisions of rebellious daughters, leaving fathers raising their hands in despair. We would probably never know for sure if Shakespeare's daughters were his inspiration for such great works of art. In three plays - [Pericles](#), [A Winter's Tale](#) and [The Tempest](#) Shakespeare portrayed old men stuck in stale, corrupt world, refreshed and redeemed by innocent and young girls. Was this his idea of himself as a grandfather (he became so in 1608 when Susanna gave birth to Elizabeth)? We'll never know!

References: <https://www.nosweatshakespeare.com/blog/shakespeare-father-day>

<https://www.nosweatshakespeare.com/resources/family/shakespeares-children/>

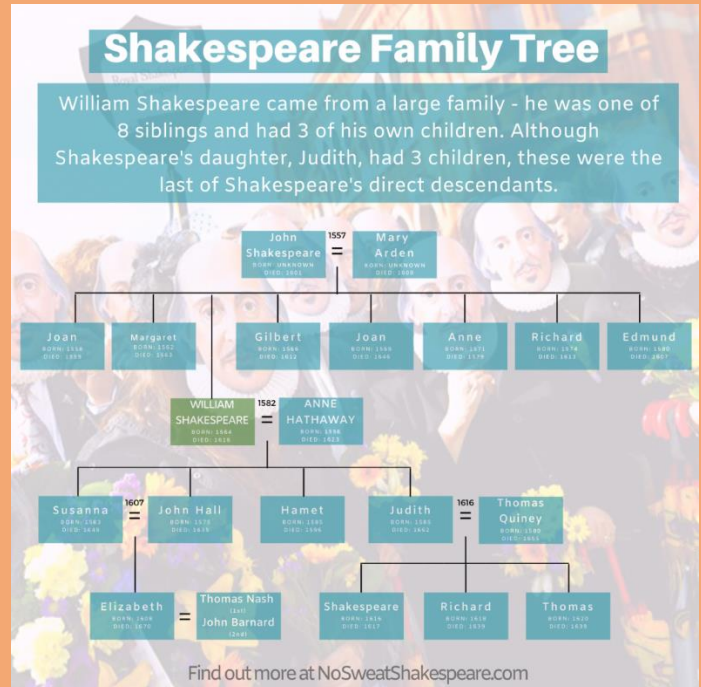


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PUZZLE TIME!!

Find names of prominent Shakespeare's father characters, 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!

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

This father realises too late which daughters have his best wishes in their hearts.

He feels his daughter has been bewitched to marry.

His daughter comes to him in disguise, and doesn't reveal her identity till the end.

He wants no one to rival his daughter, but daughter runs away.

His son is exiled for killing his brother-in-law.

This father feels thoughts can be hidden.

This father stays for years with his daughter in an island, before they are both able to return.

He is full of preaching, but does not practise what he preaches.

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 and we shall mention the names of the first 10 correct entries in the next newsletter! Mention 'Newsletter 5 Puzzle' in the subject line and state your name, school/college, class (and year, for college).

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

Newsletter #4 Solution:

Suggests disguising soldiers with branches and leaves. (Malcolm)

He was not delivered from his mother's womb. (Macduff)

Banished to a forest by his younger brother. (Duke Senior)

Goes to the woods on her own...on a fine midsummer night. (Helena)

Gets the head of an animal while in the woods. (Bottom)

He can cause tempests. (Prospero)

A cave-man, per se, but also, the rightful owner of an island. (Caliban)

Old servant who accompanies young master to a forest, and almost dies. (Adam)

He has a change of heart after a close encounter with death in the forest, in which his younger brother saves his life. (Oliver)

Magical being, trapped inside a tree. (Ariel)

SYP Comics Time!

As You Like It – Duke Senior Consoles His Followers

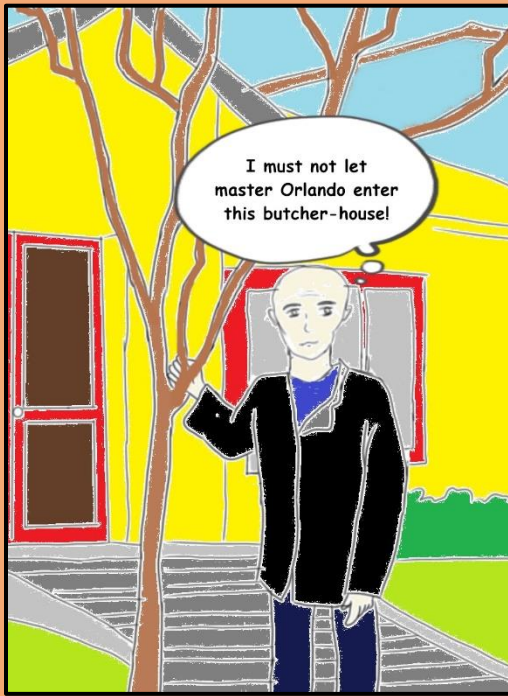


Drawing and Colours: Ayush Roy, Ad-Hoc Member, SYP

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

Plot: Oliver learns about the victory of Orlando, and becomes more jealous than ever. He wants to set fire to the place where Orlando would sleep at night. Adam, the faithful servant, decides to warn Orlando.

1/2





SYP COMICS – As You Like It – Adam warns Orlando 2/2



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Please email newsletter@syp.nlsr.org with the subject 'Prospective Article for Newsletter'. Mention the topic and the outline in the body of the email, and state your present designation and affiliation.

We will get back to you if your interest matches with our needs.

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