

ALICE. *As You Like It.*

JAGGARD. Well. With my eighteen we could print the lot then, couldn't we?

HENRY. Your... eighteen?

JAGGARD. That's right. My eighteen plays by William Shakespeare have been printed. By me. So though you managed to shut down my last attempt to publish your friend, I stand here willing to forgive that slight and forge ahead with a complete collection.

HENRY. No. No—

JAGGARD. William Jaggard, at your service.

HENRY. *OH FOR GOD'S SAKE.*

ALICE. Henry.

HENRY. GET OUT, YOU DOG.

JOHN. *Henry,*

HENRY. He comes here to forgive us? *To forgive us?*

ISAAC. No, please, I can explain—

JAGGARD. You stopped my presses, you cost me coin. I could sue you for damages—

HENRY. You stole those plays, which you had no right to print nor call will's!

JAGGARD. Poets don't have rights, not to their names and not to their work. It's business, friends, no harm in it.

JOHN. There is harm in deceit; there is always harm in that.

ISAAC. Yes, and we only want to make it right—

JAGGARD. What we want to make is a deal, a partnership between us to create a volume of plays by—

HENRY. NO. Again and again NO.

JAGGARD. If you want to do this, you cannot do it without me.

HENRY. We can and will. We don't need your filthy business.

JAGGARD. What about the plays to which you have no rights?

ALICE. You said poets don't have rights.

JAGGARD. Well printers *do*. And lawyers. And investors, and those are the ones you really don't want to fuck with.

JOHN. We'll get the rights from honest men who want the first and only *authorized* version of Shakespeare—as in the actual author.

JAGGARD. And how much of that work is there without your friend's *Hamlet*? Dear old Smethwick owns it and *Romeo and Juliet*, gave me the rights to both. What about *Much Ado*? That's Aspley's title, already on board. The *Richards*, the *Henrys*, crowd favorites all and all mine, and who will buy your collection without them? I wouldn't.

ISAAC. *Father, please.*

JAGGARD. Let me be frank:

I know you don't have the funds to do this. I do. I know you don't have the means to print. I do.

You don't have the rights to all the plays, but I have already brought together a syndicate of owners to invest in this folio's production. Suddenly you have money; rights, texts, presses, and nothing in your way but... an old blind man asking to be friends. So. Is there a deal to be made, gentlemen?

*Pause.*

HENRY. Have you ever seen a play of his? Ever?

JAGGARD. Aye. *Pericles* I believe. Didn't really move me.

*That makes Henry furious.*

HENRY. You son of a—

ISAAC. Father, we should go.

ALICE. Yes, I think you'd better leave, Master Jaggard.

JOHN. We'll consider your proposal.

ISAAC. Thank you, sirs.

HENRY. NO WE WILL NOT.

JAGGARD. You should. Until tomorrow. When I start printing *HALF The Collected Works of William Shakespeare*. Good day. *(To Isaac.) Isaac.*

*William and Isaac Jaggard leave.*

ALICE. Well. We have just confirmed that *that* man is a leech.

HENRY. A scheming, dog-hearted liar with terrible taste.

JOHN. Also with... funding. Presses. Experience.

HENRY. No, John. We cannot consider it, not for a moment.