

START OF READING:

Pennyman: No, sir. Like any good actor we speak only what is writ, and only when we are told.

Philip: Are you trying to tell me, Mr Pennyman, that those silences were scripted?

Pennyman: Yes sir. Written by the skilled fist of Master Shakespeare.

Philip: Pray, how is it possible to script what is not said?

Lewis: *(Producing a script)* In this case, sir, Mr Shakespeare has simply written, "Pause".

Pause

Philip: *(Taking the script)* Pause!? For how long?

Lewis: He doesn't say.

Pennyman: Perhaps he is leaving that in the capable hands of the actor.

Philip: I doubt he'd be so stupid. I will suggest he stop wasting ink on words an audience cannot see or hear.

Ralph Shakespeare enters. He is in his late twenties. He wears his hair in a pony tail and has immaculate facial hair. He is in shabby Elizabethan dress.

Ralph: When people stop leaving words unsaid I will stop writing them. Until then I will write the world as I see it, and have the world see itself as I write it.

Philip: You are late, Mr Shakespeare.

Ralph: Forgive me. I was with the county clerk. I had him pen the last act, of which I am justly proud. Have you performed the first act?

Pennyman: Part of it.

Ralph: Which part?

Lewis: *(Searching in the script)* "Aye but there is bitterness. Certainly there is."

Ralph: Just before the pause?

Pennyman: Well, during the pause.

Philip: That's right, it was during the crippling and agonizing silence that followed the equally as crippling and agonizing dialogue.

Ralph: The prose was not to your liking?

Philip: If it were prose I may well have liked it. This was a clamor of rhetoric and repetition.

Ralph: We have different opinions on what constitutes prose, it would seem. What would you have preferred me write?

Philip: “Now is the winter of our discontent.” “What light through yonder window breaks?”
“To be or not to be, that is the question.” This, Master Shakespeare, is fine verse. It’s perfect.

Ralph: It’s bollocks. If it’s long-winded tales of fairies and magic and ghosts and mistaken identities you desire, then see a play by William Shakespeare. But if you want to see theatre stripped to its foundations; a raw, bold, new theatre, then see a play by me...Ralph Shakespeare.

Philip: Your brother is genius, Ralph.

Ralph: He is a capricious braggart.

END OF AUDITION READING