

**THE BEN GREET
SHAKESPEARE FOR YOUNG
READERS AND AMATEUR
PLAYERS. AS YOU LIKE IT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649066100

The Ben Greet Shakespeare for Young Readers and Amateur Players. As You Like it by
William Shakespeare

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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FOR YOUNG READERS AND AMATEUR PLAYERS



TOUCHSTONE

"I'll rhyme you so eight years together"

The Ben Greet
Shakespeare
For Young Readers
and Amateur Players
As You
Like It



Saratoga City, New York
Doubleday, Page & Company

A FEW GENERAL RULES OR CUSTOMS OF ACTING

THE letters *R* and *L* indicate the position of players on the stage facing the audience. *R 1*, *L 1* are the entrances nearest the front. *Go up* means from the audience; *go down* is toward the audience. *R C* is the right side of the centre, — and so forth.

When the characters enter, the person speaking generally comes second.

Do not huddle together; do not stand in lines; and do not get in such angles that you cannot be seen by the sides of an audience.

Stand still — keep the leg nearest the audience back, gesticulate seldom and with the hand farthest from the audience. Do not point to your chest or heart when you say *I*, *my* and *mine*, nor to your neighbor when saying *thou*, *thy*, and *thine*, unless absolutely necessary.

Try to reverse the usual acting of the present day and eliminate the personal pronoun

as far as possible (Shakespeare does it all the time). Occasionally the pointing gesture is necessary — but seldom.

Do not try to say more than six words, or at most eight, in one breath. Careful punctuation and accent are harmonious and necessary. Whatever you do, sound the last two or three words of the line or sentence: dropping the voice is the worst fault of our best actors. Do not speak to your audience or at your audience, but with your fellow actors, remembering, of course, that you have invisible listeners, and that the last man in the house wants to hear and see.

Do not imitate our star actors. Try to be natural, spontaneous, and original. At the same time, keep control of yourself and your emotions. To appear to be, and not really to be the character you are acting, is, perhaps, the perfection of the art.

Don't fidget your hands and feet — forget them, and let them be where the good Lord has placed them.

These few hints will be useful for all plays. I shall give more intimate notes as we go along.

The diagrams show the positions, entrances, etc.

The plays are cut to the length of an ordinary performance. Lines can be restored or further cut, if desirable, always remembering that a play given on what we will always call the Shakespeare stage should be given more rapidly, with no pauses between scenes or between entrances and exits, and with possibly only one intermission (of perhaps five minutes), as near as possible halfway through; and most of the plays can be acted in their entirety in about three hours, some of them in much less time — one or two of them take much more. If we cannot quite reduce ours to the happy medium of two hours, we must get as near it as possible. It is better to send your friends away wanting more, than to have them go home yawning! This is a word to the wise.

As to stage setting, it can be done in lots of ways: with scenery, or with screens, or curtains, or in the open air. Strange as it may appear, the plays of Shakespeare are equally effective whichever way we may choose to give them. I imagine most good plays will bear that test.