



# The Reckoning of Kit & Little Boots

By Nat Cassidy

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Christopher 'Kit' Marlowe, *a playwright*  
Gaius Germanicus 'Caligula' Caesar, *a madman*

Thomas Kyd, *Marlowe's roommate*  
Tiberius Caesar, *an emperor*

William Shakespeare, *a rival*  
Augustus Caesar, *an emperor*

Francis Walsingham, *a spy*  
Julius Caesar, *an emperor*

Anne Marlowe, *Kit's sister*  
Agrippina, *Caligula's sister*

Dorothy Marlowe, *Kit's sister*  
Drusilla, *Caligula's sister*

(NOTE: with the exception of Marlowe and Caligula, each pair of roles is portrayed by the same actor, respectively)

(ALSO NOTE: you are HIGHLY encouraged to cast this play without any fidelity towards ethnicity or gender - please, oh, please, go crazy!)

SETTING

Elizabethan England.  
English accents for all characters

TIME

30 May 1593

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*The Reckoning of Kit & Little Boots*, by Nat Cassidy, received its World Premiere on June 6, 2008 at the Gallery Players Theatre in New York City. It was produced by the Gallery Players and Engine37 with the following cast and crew:

Director: Neal Freeman  
Stage Manager: Emily Paige Ballou  
Set Design: Hannah Shafran  
Costume Design: Ana Marie Salamat  
Lighting Design: John Eckert  
Nat Cassidy as Marlowe  
David Ian Lee as Caligula  
Anna Olivia Moore as Anne/Aggripina  
Andrew Firda as Walsingham/Julius  
Keith Foster as Shakespeare/Augustus  
Lara Stoby as Dorothy/Drusilla  
Alex Herrald as Kyd/Tiberius

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## PRESS

"Caligula is a fab character, and an irresistible one... But fun in its way as this all is, the heart of Cassidy's play—and the best parts of it—have nothing to do with the Roman emperor. Marlowe is the play's protagonist, after all, and it is what he learns from his experiences ... that really fuel this *Reckoning*. ... Cassidy contemporizes Marlowe's existence without in any way diminishing it. ... Cassidy nails what's universal about a character like Marlowe ... One thing's certain: there's talent aplenty on display here. Cassidy is clearly a young theatre artist to watch."

—Martin Denton, *nytheatre.com*

"An incredibly fun show about the death and legacy of Christopher Marlowe (sort of) and his failed attempt to write a play about Caligula ... The Reckoning of Kit & Little Boots is a very inventive and funny play that gives Marlowe the Charlie Kaufman treatment."

—James Comtois, *Jamespeak*, #6 in his "Top 10 of 2008"

"A great comedy!"

- *Chicago Magazine*

"A winter season must see ... *The Reckoning of Kit & Little Boots* laces together bawdy humor and historical speculation with charming measure ... Using sharp humor and adventurous thinking, Cassidy's story ultimately pays homage to Marlowe's tremendous talent. ... The skill on display is beyond commendable and consistent in its entertainment factor. ... A manically funny delight ... full of passionate questioning ... *The Reckoning of Kit & Little Boots* is a golden affair."

- Brian Kirst, *Sights and Sounds Magazine*

"RECOMMENDED. ... A production both intellectual and visceral, whereas so often we have to choose one or the other."

- *Dueling Critics*

"Caligula is a spicy character, filled with sarcasm and bombastic energy, yet still manages to draw sympathy from the audience ... There's a perfect balance between truth and irony ... Overall, Cassidy's take on Marlowe's life is pleasantly refreshing. His characters are all filled with spunk, and it is a great take on an often forgotten Elizabethan playwright. The struggles of power, religion and murder are always welcomed in tragic productions, and Cassidy managed to balance them all in a slightly perfect drama. ... Cassidy brings together everything audiences could want in a play."

- Kristen Torres, *Loyola Phoenix*

"The acting, staging, the glimpses of humor and the sheer likeability of Marlowe, Caligula and several of the other characters make it easy to get lost in their Elizabethan world. ... Skirts the edge of Monty Python spoof and meaty drama ... This is a great pick for any anglophile, history buff, or lover of historical fiction. TROK&LB manages to be fun and serious, lighthearted and full of gravitas. Wonderful performances and a sharp script with a modern edge keep everyone on their toes."

- Beth Dugan, *EDGE*

### A NOTE REGARDING STYLE

*The Reckoning of Kit & Little Boots* is a period piece, but, as should be fairly obvious upon reading the first few lines, it isn't a stylistically "correct" one. As far as style is concerned, the play is meant to be two things: very contemporary and very British. The script is written to be performed in what I can only describe as "contemporary Britcom." For reference, I'd recommend watching *Spaced* (and all other Simon Pegg/Nick Frost vehicles, such as *Shaun of the Dead* and *Hot Fuzz*), *Peep Show*, *That Mitchell and Webb Look*, and the UK version of *The Office* (listening to Ricky Gervais' now-classic podcast wouldn't hurt either). There's an essence to that subgenre that's hard to describe, but spot on for what this play requires: a sort of frantic, articulate, bemused, high-speed absurdity that still maintains an emotional resonance. Inversely, much like with Monty Python's *Holy Grail*, the comedy will play better if the costume design is as period-accurate as possible.

I was asked once the play is so flagrant in its disregard to a "correct" classical style (and I put correct in quotations, because, to borrow a phrase from Gielgud, style only means knowing what play you're in), and the answer was simple: these men weren't verse-drenched beruffed aesthetes. They were dirty, vulgar, brawling, ale-swilling, whorehouse-patronizing Londoners with wicked senses of humor. They were also confused, shortsighted, occasionally stupid young men, wrestling with the same things we deal with today. And so, the play is essentially meant to subvert the preconceptions of the Elizabethan era by being, at once, more *and* less accurate.

### ALSO

Any "/" indicates that the next speaker can and should begin their line.

OPTIONAL PROLOGUE

*(Can be read by the actor playing MARLOWE, while putting on his costume, or by anyone else.)*

Welcome, all: good evening. Thanks for coming.  
 I hope this finds you in the best of moods—  
 An earnest hope, for in that happy mood  
 You'll be best suited for apologies.  
 You see, our tale tonight's a tricky thing  
 To tell: a biography of special men  
 Whose lives did never truly intersect.  
 Forgive my struggling verse, it just seemed right  
 Given the nature of our struggling hero,  
 The poet, playwright, and the sometimes-spy,  
 Known to his friends as Kit, to us as Marlowe.  
 A man beyond his time, for best and worst.  
 The roommate of the playwright Thomas Kyd;

*THOMAS KYD enters and waves.*

The Bard of Avon's rival and his friend;

*SHAKESPEARE enters and waves. He and KYD exit.*

And, overall, dissatisfied with life.  
 In his own words, he's nothing more than just  
 A lover of tobacco and of boys.  
 His plays are good, perhaps a bit bombastic,  
 And in the search for some material  
 That could engender greater interest in  
 His work, he comes across a manuscript  
 That tells about the life and times of one  
 Of history's greatest fiends, Caligula.  
 In what could be coincidence or fate,  
 Poor Kit will meet a similar demise,  
 And reach his end before his third decade,  
 Through ventilation by a stranger's knife.  
 These incidents are for the most part true,  
 So worry not about your grasp of time,  
 Elizabethan plays, or history,  
 And watch instead what our poor author gives  
 These simple players in these simple scenes  
 In an attempt to bring men back to life.  
 So, cell phones off, sit back as best you can,  
 Forgive this lengthy intro and enjoy  
 Our search for artful reasonings and truths,  
*The Reckoning of Kit and Little Boots.*

## ACT ONE

*Lights up on an empty stage. A moment. Then, from offstage, we hear a blood-curdling scream. CHRISTOPHER "KIT" MARLOWE, dressed in Elizabethan garb, stumbles onstage. His hand is pressed to his eye, blood gushing out from between his fingers. There is a horrific stab wound just above his eye (which remains on KIT's face for the entirety of the play). He drops, attempts to stand, and collapses. He is in tremendous pain, his breath is ragged. His body twitches ... then stills. Another moment.*

*A heavenly flourish. Another man strides on, illuminated, supremely confident and not just a little insane. CALIGULA. He is dressed in an immaculate white tunic. He stands above MARLOWE, arms spread wide. Perhaps he adds a few heavenly Ahh-ahhhs before he speaks, and his voice is reverbed.*

CALIGULA

BEHOLD MORTAL (ahh-aaahh!): you stand on the threshold of eternity! Do you feel it? You are subsumed by all that is forever, refracted by the essence of the psyche! Do you hear it? The tide of souls is crashing in your ears. Do. You. *SEE* it? The face that stares back at you is that of the divine! (Ahhh-ahh!) Consider yourself lucky, tiny human, that your fragile mind is now able to cope with  
Are you even listening to me?

MARLOWE (*Face down on the ground*)

No.

CALIGULA (*a shocked whisper*)

You bitch. Trying to set the mood.

*MARLOWE sits up with a groan.  
Explores his wound.*

MARLOWE

My head hurts.

CALIGULA

Well, you did get stabbed in it. Fairly common side effect. Don't pick at it, you'll get all infected.

*MARLOWE stops picking at his wound.*

MARLOWE (*Weakly; flummoxed*)

Right.

So

I

CALIGULA

Speak up. This is your moment, poet. Say something profound and incisive about your life's cessation!

MARLOWE (*a hushed realization*)

I've been stabbed in the face.

Why? How??

CALIGULA

Probably a knife!

*(Joining him on the floor.)* Oh, look at you. I remember my own assassination like it was yesterday. They had to stab me some thirty times, you know. More than the great Julius himself!

MARLOWE

Okay

CALIGULA

Face, chest, balls—and each time, I would shout, “I am still alive!” Stab! “I am still alive!” Stab! “I am still alive!!!” Stab, stab, stab! Ahh, Kit! You’ve gotta make your own fun!

MARLOWE

Get off me.

CALIGULA

But you know what the best part was? After such a hectic, stressful life, I got to lay back in that warm geyser of my own blood and really take pride in the fact that I made people care.

MARLOWE

They stabbed you in the cock.

CALIGULA



Assassination is the crowning achievement of a life well lived. You should know this; your Barabas, your Faustus, they couldn't just slip away without some final reckoning.

MARLOWE

That's an apt way to phrase it.

CALIGULA

I have my moments.

MARLOWE

It's just ...

CALIGULA

Hmm?

MARLOWE

Aren't you upset?

CALIGULA

About what? The //stabbing?

MARLOWE

The play. Us. We won't get to finish what we started.

CALIGULA

Isn't that what we're doing?

MARLOWE (*honestly*)

I  
I don't know. I'm so

CALIGULA

Aw. Would it help if we had a flashback about it? Maybe 2 hours with a quick break to pee? Put it all into perspective? I can do that, after all. I am a god.

MARLOWE (*having heard this a million times*)

Alright, stop. Not today, please.

CALIGULA

Why not today?

MARLOWE

Look, if I'm stabbed, if I'm done, this just proves my point. There is no god, there is nothing after death, only

CALIGULA (*arms wide*)

Haaaay



*From the other side, KIT'S other sister, ANNE, enters and takes CHRIST'S other arm. She is slim, almost serpentine, but also warm and loving.*

ANNE

No one's there to hear it, Kitters. There's no one there to hear it. There's no one there to hear it. (Repeats.)

*SIR FRANCIS WALSHINGHAM, middle-aged and severe enters. He wears a gaudy hat that overshadows his face.*

WALSINGHAM

Can I show you something, Christopher? I want to show you something, Christopher. (&c.)

*WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE enters riding on a broomstick horse and holding lots of paper. He circles around the three figures addressing KIT.*

SHAKESPEARE

"A HORSE, a HORSE, my KINGdom for a HORSE! A HORSE, a HORSE, my KINGdom for a HORSE!"

*Another Elizabethan playwright, THOMAS KYD, slovenly and unkempt, walks in. He is clutching a large, loose bundle of papers and eating something gross. Circling around everybody, SHAKESPEARE finally bumps into him and the papers fly EVERYWHERE. They scatter about the figures in the center.*

KYD

Morning, sweetpea. You alright, you look like you been stabbed in the face.

MARLOWE

What? (Looking at all the papers on the floor.) What's all this?

KYD

All what? (MARLOWE indicates the papers everywhere.) Oh! All these //pages?

MARLOWE

Yes, all these pages.

KYD

The pages. Right. Sorry, sorry. *(He starts picking up the papers, slowwwly. He groans, deeply hungover. MARLOWE sighs.)* Go easy on me, son, bit of a rough night last night.

MARLOWE

You've been having a rough night for the past six months.

KYD

Can't complain.  
*(So hungover.)* Ugh.

*KYD gives up and sits on the floor. Goes back to eating. The figures recede to the UPSTAGE wall.*

MARLOWE

What, you're not

*MARLOWE gives an angry groan and begins picking up, as well.*

KYD

*(Like an old woman.)* Testy buttons. *(Beat. With a mouthful of food.)* You know what your problem is, Marlowe?

MARLOWE

Besides living balls-deep in your filth?

KYD

You're perfectly incapable of recognizing when something else is likewise perfectly incapable of changing to fit your liking.

MARLOWE

Mind giving us a translate?

KYD

Here we are, faced with two opposable forces: my, let's say, inattention to detail, and your, let's say, bombastically overbearing ballgrindery. Time and experience have clearly proven I am incapable of change and yet there you remain, a stubborn old fool cursing at the tides for their constancy.

MARLOWE *(staccato, aghast)*

Are you fucking—there's—paper—there's—it's

*KYD tosses any pages he's holding up in the air.*

KYD

It's okay to live a little on the messy side!  
And! Maybe! If you loosened up those standards, you'd live a little longer.

MARLOWE

I think I loosened my standards plenty when I agreed to live with you.

KYD

You might even get laid once in your life.

MARLOWE

I have no trouble getting laid.

KYD

How long's it been, then?

MARLOWE

Why don't you go fuck yourself, then? How's that?

*KYD (fanning himself)*

Ooooh!

MARLOWE

I am working on a new script, Thomas, I don't like to get distracted with, with //that sort of

KYD

Oh, see, there it all is, right in a nutshell. Right in your //nutshells

MARLOWE

What?

KYD

Do you know how many of those pages I've masturbated into? Those you're holding even! Every time I set down to write! Because that's what writing is, brother, it's *rrraawwr*. Why do you think my *Spanish Tragedy* is such a hit? Such a colossal hit? Such a massive, massive hit?

MARLOWE

Over-familiar plots, pedestrian verse, paper-thin characters, absurd emotional shifts?

KYD

Exactly! Look, you're a great writer, indisputably, but

MARLOWE

Why is this happening, I only asked you to

KYD

you do too much with this (*indicates his head*)! You might enjoy things a bit more if you used that part of you that already looks like a pen, know what I mean?

MARLOWE

Yes I know what you //mean

KYD

Your cock.

Remember: *Acta est tracteris ad captandum vulgus!*

MARLOWE

*Intendo io: quell mi bastera.*

KYD

*Frustra laborant quotquot se calculationibus fatigant pro inventione quadraturae circuli.*

MARLOWE

JUST. CLEAN. YOUR. SHIT. UP.

*KYD starts picking up the remaining few papers on the floor.*

MARLOWE

And then do me a favor and burn down the building since it will never feel clean again.

KYD

Oh, I was kidding. Most of this is research, actually.

MARLOWE

Research? All this?

KYD

Hey, if you had a smash as big as mine, son, you'd understand the pressure. (*Beat.*) Shit, sorry, that sounded

MARLOWE

No, no, you're the expert apparently

KYD

I'm swinging between two ideas. This one's my favorite: (*he hands MARLOWE a few pages*).

MARLOWE

*Historia Danica*, by Grammaticus. (Another page.) *Histoires Tragiques*.

KYD

Yeah, a Danish prince, a murdered father, a usurping uncle. Murder, madness, (*takes the pages back, rubs them on his crotch*), *raaawwwrrrr*.

MARLOWE

Another revenge tragedy?

KYD

"Another revenge tragedy?" Oh no, I'd hate to have another fucking triumph on my hands! But, I dunno, I've also got a mate over at the docks who's got his hands on some crazy rare translations about the Roman emperors, Caesar and that whole shitpicnic? I'm gonna check 'em out, but this Danish tragedy's feeling the wettest. Maybe that's what I'll call it, too. *The Danish Tragedy*.

MARLOWE

Ha! Yeah.  
Oh god, you're not joking.

KYD

Look, I'll finish cleaning all this up in a tick, I swear, I just gotta kip out a bit first. I'm fucking knackered. Three barmaids last night. In a row. At least I think they were barmaids. (*He sniffs two of his fingers, then offers them to KIT.*) Does this smell like horse to you? (*He leaves, chuckling. Then, from offstage:*) Oh, shit. Kiiit? The cat knocked over the chamber pot again.

MARLOWE

For fuck's saaaaaaaake!

*He looks down, watches the cat walk by, kicks it. SFX: cat screaming. DOROTHY MARLOWE comes down from upstage. Small lighting shift.*

DOT

Keep shouting like that! Yeah! Tell the whole world what a baby you are.

ANNE

What's the racket out there?

DOT

Annie, we're in the back room. Quiet down, Christopher, please!  
I can't fucking stand that noise!

*ANNE comes down, as well.*

ANNE

Good lord, Christopher, what are you on// about?

DOT (*shouting over the noise*)

Stupid little baby was trying to climb up the window to watch  
the procession outside and he fell on his face and now he won't  
stop *waaaaaah, waaaaaah!*

ANNE (*hands over her ears*)

Oh, Kitters, shhhhhh. You're okay, you're only makin' it worse!

DOT

Yeah, on the rest of us!

ANNE

Shut up, Dot.

DOT

Shut up? I'm the one who was watching him, I'm the one who'll  
get strapped when Da' gets home. You're the man of the house,  
Christopher, start acting like it!

ANNE (*stroking KIT*)

Crying doesn't do a bit of good, Christopher! Not when there's  
no one around to hear it. Understand?

DOT

Ugh, let's leave him alone, maybe he'll cry himself to death.

ANNE (*letting go*)

No one's around to hear it, Christopher. You understand? No one.

DOT

And if you tell father about this, I swear I'll make it ten  
times worse.

*They both start offstage. KIT'S  
hand drifts to his wound.*

DOT

And stop touching that, you'll get an infection.



*They exit. CHRIST comes down and hands KIT a pad and feather pen. CHRIST exits.*

MARLOWE (an invocation)  
*Settle thy studies, Marlowe, and begin  
 To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess.  
 Having commenced, be a divine in show,  
 And live and die in Aristotle's works.*

*He looks at the blank page.*

MARLOWE  
 Umm ... (he makes a long, drawn out fart noise.)

*He paces. SFX: a cat screams. He starts, lifting his foot up. The cat runs out of the room.*

MARLOWE  
 For fuck's sake, Thomas!

*He paces some more.*

MARLOWE (cont'd)  
 Alright, come on ... clock striking twelve, "O my Christ!—rend not my heart for naming of my Christ" ... What are you trying to say? (He hits his head with his hand.) Ow!

*Inspiration strikes. He writes, stressing the pentameter.*

MARLOWE (cont'd)  
*"O soul, be chang'd into small water-drops,  
 And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found!  
 O, mercy, heaven! look not so fierce on me!"*  
 Um ... snakes and serpents, no, trochaic inversion—  
*"Adders and serpents, let me breathe a while!  
 I'll burn my books!—O Mephistophilis!"*  
 Look at that, a nice Christian moral. There's no one there to hear you. (Shouts offstage.) How's that for simple, Thomas? (No answer.) T— ... Probably still at the Mermaid. Good for him, I'm sure he's had a rough year, doing nothing but gloating. (Beat. Sigh.) It's not that I'm jealous! That play is, is great. And it's not like I'm, you know—*Tamburlaine* was huge. *Faustus* and *Jew of Malta* are both going to be big. *Dido* did ... I dunno, they just don't seem to be ... resonating? Is that it? Who cares?

MARLOWE sighs, then slips his hand down his pants, about to give in and masturbate. SHAKESPEARE speaks, coming down to KIT, two mugs in hand. KIT reacts guiltily, jumping into the next scene.

As SHAKESPEARE comes down, the other actors enter as Elizabethan taverngoers. There should be no hint of their other characters (with the exception of WALSINGHAM, subtly in character, who takes an interest in what is being said). SHAKESPEARE hands MARLOWE a mug. They toast. MARLOWE seems the slightest bit distracted.

SHAKESPEARE should give the impression of someone a bit thick and bumbling, but entirely well-meaning: a working-class savant.

SHAKESPEARE

I mean, I know the feeling, Kit. But he hit on something with *Spanish Tragedy* and maybe that's something we're all gonna benefit from. Y'know? When the tide rises, it's gonna lift, y'know, every

MARLOWE

Ship. Right.

SHAKESPEARE

Ha. Shipwright.

MARLOWE

I heard someone the other day say we were living in the Age of Kyd and my shit almost threw up vomit out of my dick.

SHAKESPEARE

Well, let me ask you a question.

MARLOWE

*Sed contra audentior ito.*

SHAKESPEARE

Said what?

MARLOWE

Shoot.

SHAKESPEARE

Ah. Well, who is it you're writing for?

MARLOWE

Who am I writing for?

SHAKESPEARE

Yeah. Who's your audience? Who you trying to reach?

MARLOWE

What? I dunno, who are you writing for?

SHAKESPEARE

My kids.

MARLOWE

Your kids.

SHAKESPEARE

Mmhmm.

MARLOWE

You wrote the scene in which two men rape a young girl and then cut off her hands and tongue *for your kids*?

SHAKESPEARE

Well, I don't mean I write *every little tiny detail* for them. I mean, I ... picture their faces when I write. Listening. Like: I can't think of my wife, 'cuz I don't know what she likes. I can't think of the Queen, 'cuz I'd just piss my pants all the time. I can't think of the people I fuck 'cuz it'd get too *thhbblpt*. I can't think of, like, London 'cuz it'd get too *raawwr*. So I think of my kids. What would entertain them? What would, uh, uh, happysmartify ... them, y'know?

MARLOWE

Sure

SHAKESPEARE

But I mean, I just try to write fun stuff. I'm not looking for, uh, y'know—(*he makes motions with his hands*).

MARLOWE

The future? Posterity?

SHAKESPEARE (*nodding*)

—Posterity, right. I mean. Not like they'll be remembered once they're done, I only hope each play I write is fun! Hey, look at that.

MARLOWE

Good job. (*He drinks.*)  
Well, I don't have kids, so I guess I'm fucked.

SHAKESPEARE

No! I mean, like, why'd you fall in love with Tamburlaine?

MARLOWE

Fall in love with Tamburlaine? Oh, God, you don't hump your manuscripts, too, do you?

SHAKSEPEARE

No!  
No.

MARLOWE

Why would I be in love with Tamburlaine

SHAKESPEARE

You spent all the time writing him

MARLOWE

That's not love, dude. I *used* Tamburlaine to show how fragile societies are, and how romanticizing the common man as some sort of noble creature capable of greatness is apocalyptic horseshit. No offense.

SHAKESPEARE

But did you *enjoy* Tamburlaine?

MARLOWE

It's a great play

SHAKESPEARE

As a *person*.

MARLOWE

Will.

SHAKESPEARE

Kit.

MARLOWE

Look. Here's a question for you: *why* do you write? Not for whom, but *why* do you even bother? You could do anything!

SHAKESPEARE

To, I dunno, show human life

MARLOWE

WILL! LOOK AROUND YOU! (*Pointing.*) Human life, human life! There's fucking human life everywhere! It's shoved in our bloody faces every second of every day! You write plays, you have an opportunity, the obligation to send out a message. A theme, a moral. Something *bigger* than fucking human life.

SHAKESPEARE

I guess—

MARLOWE

What's the point of holding the mirror up to the masses, when you could be taking them by the hair and showing them something greater? Did I ever tell you about a friend of mine from university? Francis Kett?

SHAKESPEARE

Nuh-uh.

*They are starting to get drunk.*

MARLOWE

He was a good guy, Kett. Beautiful guy. Kett and Kit, we were a good match. Better than Kit and Kyd.

SHAKESPEARE

Kit, Kett, Kyd ...

MARLOWE

He was one of the only people I could ever see eye to eye with (*Drunkenly gestures to his wound, touches it, briefly notices it's there.*) on things, all the big no-nos. D'you know what happened to him?

SHAKESPEARE

Nuh-uh.

MARLOWE

Couple years ago he was tied to a plank of wood and set on fire. They called him a heretic. Know what he did?

SHAKESPEARE

Nuh-uh.

MARLOWE

He said, "Christ wasn't divine, he was just a good person." Burned at the fucking stake. For that. I mean, it's fucking 1593 and we still act like it's the inquisition!

SHAKESPEARE

Jeez. So, you're saying you write for him, then? His memory?

MARLOWE

No.

No, I write for them that burned him alive. Yeah. Every play I write, I wanna grab those stupid motherfuckers by their stupid fucking agendas and shout in there face I see how fucking thin they really are and there are more and more of us every day saying FUUUUCK GOODDDD FUCK FUCKING FUCKS WHO CAN'T TELL FUCKING COMMONPLACE MYTHOLOGY FROM GOSPEL TRUTH and hey what did you think about *Doctor Faustus*?

SHAKESPEARE (*also trying to shush him*)

What? Jeez, Kit

I

Wait, d'you mean as a person?

MARLOWE

As a play.

SHAKESPEARE

Oh. Um. It's good! Like *Dido* good. I can't wait to see it on its feet. That part where they kick that pope in the butt!! Haha!

*Beat.*

MARLOWE

And as a person ... ?

SHAKESPEARE

... I mean, it's a tough character, Kit, I can tell! Mephistopheles is a laugh and a half. I just, I dunno, wonder *if* the doctor's not a bit ...

MARLOWE

Stoic.

SKAHESPEARE

Bombastic and overbearing. I mean I'm sure //on stage, it will-

MARLOWE

Well, I mean, there is only so much you can do with that kind of character, you know. He's supposed to be bombastic and overbearing. As long as you get the message of the play. You got the message of the play, right? (*SHAKESPEARE nods.*) Good. Faustus is Ned's problem, then, not mine. (*Beat. Sigh.*) What are you working on these days?

SHAKESPEARE

Well, actually, reading *Faustus* got me thinking ... I thought I'd finally get around to giving Dickie 3 his own spin.

MARLOWE

Dickie 3, eh?

SHAKESPEARE

Yeah. My own play about a demon.

MARLOWE

Huh. Well, there's a lot of fun you can have there. The phony piousness, I'm sure Lizzie'll be chuffed to see you take the Yorks //out back, too-

SHAKESPEARE

No, no, no, that's all

I'm just excited to figure out what it's like to be a madman.

MARLOWE

Right. Well, if you need any help again, I'm sure I still have stuff left over from those edits of Hanky 6.

*SHAKESPEARE opens his mouth to respond and vomits all over his shirt.*

SHAKESPEARE

Right. Time for me to go.

*SHAKESPEARE stumbles out. MARLOWE is alone on stage. He is lit by a bare special. Under the following, CALIGULA walks on, unlit. MARLOWE looks at his beer.*

MARLOWE

*(Calling after him, teasing.)* You're legless! *(Alone.)* "Did you fall in love with Tamburlaine?" I am surrounded by fucking nutbags? *(Beat.)* Come to think of it, I don't recall Will being that ... precocious. Actually, none of this feels particularly ... accurate. The time is ... what? Disjointed? Out of ... order? There's a phrase there, can't quite find it. But things feel off. *(His hand drifts to his wound.)* Maybe I'm coming down with something. An infection. A brain fever.

CALIGULA

Something's missing.