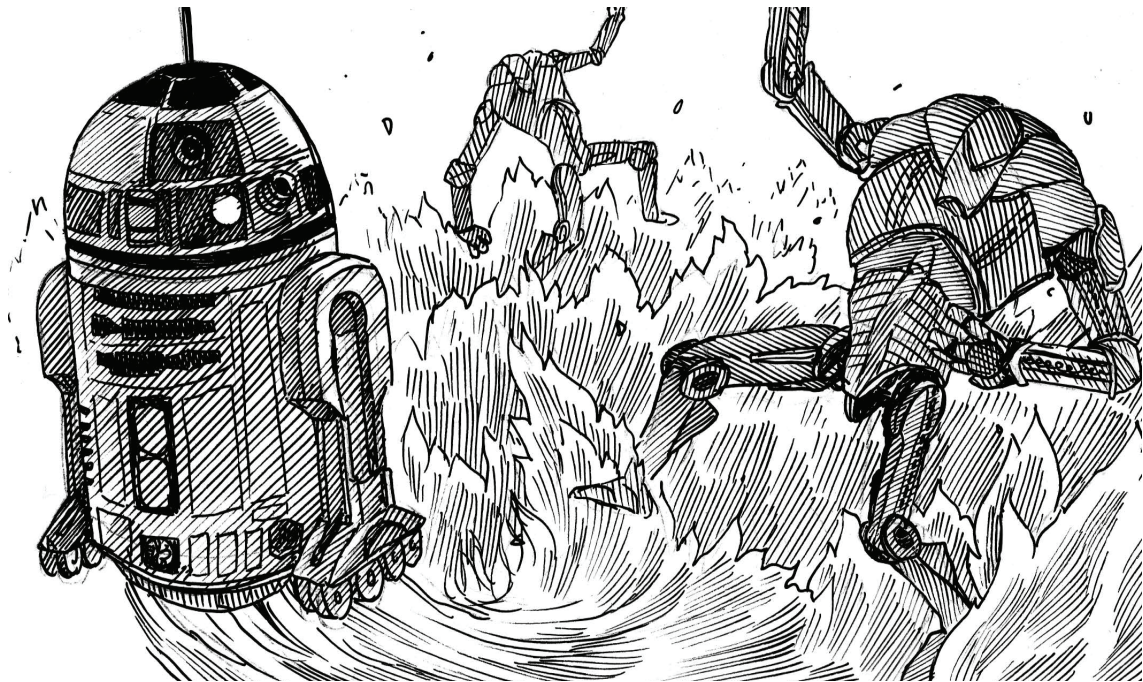


# WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE EDUCATORS' GUIDE



By Ian Doescher

## INTRODUCTION

This guide offers a brief introduction to Shakespeare and the elements that *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge* has in common with his plays. First, here are some quick and easy elements you'll find in Shakespeare's plays, all of which can be found in *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge*.

- Each play is in five acts. This was the usual structure of plays in Shakespeare's time, which drew on the earlier tradition of ancient Roman plays, many of which also had five acts. There can be any number of scenes within each act. When you are referring to a specific act, scene, and line from that scene, the typical convention for Shakespeare is something like II.iii.45—which means Act 2 (represented by II, the upper case Roman numerals), scene 3 (represented by iii, the lower case Roman numerals), line 45. I use the same references for lines in *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge*.
- Minimal stage directions. Shakespeare left it to his plays' performers to determine who should do what on stage. *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge* follows this convention, though ultimately it has more stage directions than a Shakespearean play would, to make the action sequences clear.
- Rhyming couplets at the end of scenes. A rhyming couplet is two adjacent lines of verse that rhyme, like "Unto the Jedi temple I repair, / And shall my final destiny meet there." Shakespeare often ended his scenes with a rhyming couplet as a simple way to mark a narrative shift, similar to a final cadence in music. I followed the convention in *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge*.
- Language that is meant to be spoken, not just read! Shakespeare wrote his plays to be performed by actors he knew in local London theaters. They were not at first intended to be put in a book and assigned as reading, though this is how most modern students first encounter Shakespeare. If your students are trying to read a Shakespeare play for the first time, encourage them to gather around with some friends and read the book out loud together. The words will make more sense when they hear their rhythms and cadences. As a result, students will be less caught up in the old-fashioned language and more engaged in the quick and witty dialogue, beautiful metaphors and clever jokes.
- Characters sometimes have *asides*. An aside is a line spoken so the audience can hear but the other characters on stage (supposedly) cannot. Often, an aside explains a character's motivations or inner thoughts, or a background situation the audience wouldn't otherwise know. These days an aside in theater is sometimes called *breaking the fourth wall*, that is, the imaginary divide between stage and audience. Asides in Shakespeare tend to be fairly short.
- Characters also make long speeches by themselves, known as soliloquies. They are similar to asides in that they often explain why a character is acting a certain way, but they occur when the character is alone on stage. In general, soliloquies are longer than asides.

## THE LANGUAGE

Shakespeare's old-fashioned language can be one of the hardest hurdles to jump when you're getting started. Here are some things to know about the language of Shakespeare's time.

Shakespeare wrote in *iambic pentameter*, which is a line of poetry with a very specific syllabic pattern. An *iamb* has two syllables—the first is unstressed (or soft) and the second is stressed (or emphasized). An iamb sounds like “da-DUM,” as in the following words:

defend “de-FEND”  
consult “con-SULT”  
beyond “be-YOND”  
across “a-CROSS”  
forsooth “for-SOOTH”  
Naboo “Na-BOO”

Pentameter means there should be five iambs in a line, so iambic pentameter is a line of ten syllables: “da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM.” Here's a classic line, with the unstressed part of each iamb in regular text and the stressed part of each iamb in bold: “I'd **rather** be a **hammer** **than** a **nail**.” So, in other words, the five iambs in this line are (1) I'd RATH- (2) er BE (3) a HAM- (4) mer THAN (5) a NAIL.

Shakespeare uses iambic pentameter for most of his characters most of the time, but there's also an element of class involved. In other words, most of Shakespeare's characters speak in iambic pentameter, but some speak in prose (normal speech) when Shakespeare wanted to set them apart as lower class. Dogberry in *Much Ado about Nothing* is a textbook example (in *William Shakespeare's The Phantom of Menace* and *The Clone Army Attacketh*, Watto also misuses words much like Dogberry). That said, no one is speaking in prose in *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge*.

Shakespeare also sometimes breaks the rules of iambic pentameter. The most famous Shakespearean line of all actually has eleven syllables: “To **be** or **not** to **be**, that is the **question**.” That last “-ion” is known as a *weak ending* and is common in Shakespeare. It's also common that Shakespeare will slip two unstressed syllables into a space where there should be just one, or he'll leave out a syllable entirely. As much as we associate Shakespeare with iambic pentameter, he broke the rule almost as much as he observed it. By comparison, *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge* uses stricter iambic pentameter than Shakespeare himself used.

The final—and maybe most important—thing to say about iambic pentameter is that it's one of those things students should know about and then not be too worried about. If the whole idea of meter and stressed and unstressed syllables leaves *them* feeling stressed, they should just read Shakespeare's lines out loud and forget about the meter. Have them pay attention to the punctuation, and let it guide their pauses. Whatever happens, no one should feel it necessary to pause at the end of each line of Shakespeare. Unless there is a comma, a period, or some other punctuation—or some other break in the meaning—each line should follow immediately after the preceding line.

Here are some lines from *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge* (II.i.17–24):

Anakin:

Nay, thou for thine own beauty art the cause,  
For thou art both the flower and the sun,  
Which bringeth light, sans hesitance or pause,  
And makes thee flourish such that thou dost stun.                      20  
My love is but the witness to this growth,  
Mine heart is but observer to your beauty.  
This love, this heart, they are for thee, yea both—  
Thou mayst command them unto any duty.

This speech from Anakin illustrates a few different points:

- First, as noted above, the punctuation should guide how these lines are said, not the actual ends of the lines themselves. Obviously, in lines 23–24, “This love, this heart, they are for thee, yea both—/Thou mayst command them unto any duty” is a single thought that happens to be split across two lines by an em dash. Any line that doesn’t end with punctuation or the sense of which isn’t complete should roll right into the next line.
- These lines follow the rules and rhythm of iambic pentameter with the exception of lines 22 and 24, which have weak endings. I think one can hear the rhythm most clearly in line 18: “For thou art both the flower and the sun” (For **thou** art **both** the **lower** and the **sun**).
- Students may wonder: What happens if a word has more than two syllables, since an iamb calls for only one stressed syllable? Does every word in the English language really only have a single syllable emphasized? Those are important questions. When it comes to multisyllabic words, it’s important to figure out first which syllable has the main emphasis. Here are three examples of three-syllable words, each with an emphasis on a different syllable:

senator (emphasis on first syllable)  
regardless (emphasis on second syllable)  
Tattooine (emphasis on final syllable)

This can get even trickier with four- and five-syllable words. The basic pattern in most words is that you figure out which syllable should be emphasized, and then see if another syllable has a minor emphasis. The word *Imperial* is a good example. The main emphasis is on the second syllable, **Imperial**. In iambic pentameter, it makes sense for the first iamb to be **Imper** and the next iamb to be **ial**. So -al at the end of the word *Imperial* has a secondary stress that fits the meter nicely. (To give you an idea of how these decisions are made... if you read carefully you’ll notice that throughout *William Shakespeare Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge* I use the word “Skywalker” variably—sometimes as if the main emphasis is on the first syllable (**Skywalker**) and sometimes as if the middle syllable gets the main emphasis (Sky**walker**). I did this because Skywalker is a challenging word. It’s a compound word, and if you break it into two words it has two stressed syllables at the front—**Sky walker**. To put it in iambic pentameter means having to pick a syllable to stress, so I did what (I hope) Shakespeare would have done, stressing the syllable one way when it suited certain situations and the other way in other situations.

All those -est and -eth endings: In general, the -est (or -st or just -t) ending is used with the pronoun *thou*, like “thou shalt” or “thou wouldst” in Anakin’s speech, meaning a singular *you*. The -eth ending (or “doth”) is used for *he* or *she* or a neutral (but always singular) *it*, for example: “which bringeth light.”

Words that would normally end in -ed, like the word *armed*, spelled in Shakespeare as *arm’d*: The reason these words are printed this way is that in Shakespeare’s time, the -ed was sometimes actually pronounced, so instead of pronouncing the word “armed” as “armd” (as we do now), they would have pronounced it in two syllables, “arm-med.” When such a word was to be shortened because of the meter, the word was turned into a contraction, “arm’d.” Often, in modern editions of Shakespeare—and in *William Shakespeare’s Tragedy of the Sith’s Revenge*—if there’s a word ending in -ed is supposed to have the -ed pronounced as a separate syllable, it will appear with an accent over the e: “armèd.”

On thees and thous:

- thou = you (as the subject of a sentence, like “thou art,” “thou mayst”)
- thee = you (as the object or of a sentence, like “they are for thee”)
- thy = your (before a word starting with a consonant, like “thy thoughts”)
- thine = your (before a word starting with a vowel or sometimes an h, like “thine honor”)
- ye = you (as the subject of a sentence for more than one person, like “ye people”)

A final note about Shakespeare and language: When in doubt, students should look up words they don’t know in the dictionary and even write the definitions in the text next to them if it helps. Most good Shakespeare editions have footnotes that explain unusual words (like *fardels*) or a glossary of terms at the end. This will help students when reading the text aloud doesn’t do the trick.



## SHAKESPEAREAN REFERENCES IN *WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE*

Some good news: if your students have read *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge*, they've already read some Shakespeare. *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge* makes direct reference to several lines in Shakespeare's plays. Here's a guide to where you can find Shakespearean references in a galaxy far, far away.

### *Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2 and Henry V*

*William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge* borrows from the history plays *The Life of Henry the Fourth, Part Two* and *The Life of Henry the Fifth* (more briefly known as *Henry IV, Part 2* and *Henry V*) in terms of structure. *Henry V* has a grand story to tell—the English defeat of the French in famed battles such as Harfleur and Agincourt, and King Henry V's rise to power over two kingdoms. But how could such a sweeping tale be told on a small stage, in the days before movies or computer animation? Shakespeare handles this by using a Chorus at the beginning and throughout. The dramatic device of a Chorus—which goes back at least to early Greek drama—is a narrating character who is not involved in the action and is voiced either by a single person or by a group. The Chorus helps explain what is happening, particularly when the action is too grand to be depicted literally on the stage.

When I began writing *William Shakespeare's Star Wars®*, I was faced with a dilemma: how do I show the action of *Star Wars* in a play with minimal staging opportunities? I decided early on to take a page from Shakespeare and add a Chorus to the play, to explain the visual elements that a theater audience wouldn't necessarily be able to see. In that way, my Chorus functions in the same way as Shakespeare's Chorus in *Henry V*.

In the prequel trilogy, including *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge*, I introduced the character of Rumor, who offers the prologue of *Henry IV, Part 2*. Although the Chorus offers the prologue and epilogue to *William Shakespeare's The Clone Army Attacketh*, it is Rumor who appears throughout the play to talk about how she is creating confusion and mayhem to move things along.

Just for the challenge and the fun of it, the Chorus speaks in sonnets at the beginning and ending of the play, and the Rumor speaks in rhyming sets of four lines called *quatrains* (with lines 1 and 3 rhyming and lines 2 and 4 rhyming). Each of Rumor's lines are also acrostics—the first letter of each of Rumor's lines, read from top to bottom, creates a unique message.

Recommended film version: Kenneth Branagh starred in and directed the 1989 film version of *Henry V*, with Derek Jacobi as the Chorus.

#### HENRY V

##### *Prologue, 1–4*

##### *Prologue:*

*O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend  
The brightest heaven of invention!  
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,  
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!*

#### WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

#### TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

##### *Prologue, 1–4*

##### *Chorus:*

*"War!" is the cry that doth through space resound:  
The good Republic faces bold attack  
From Dooku, he whose evil doth abound.  
Yet heroes rise as each side fighteth back.*

## HENRY IV, PART 2

Prologue, 1–5

Rumor:

*Open your ears; for which of you will stop  
The vent of hearing when loud Rumor speaks?  
I, from the orient to the drooping west,  
Making the wind my post-horse, still unfold  
The acts commenced on this ball of earth.*

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

## TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

I.i.1–4

Rumor:

*The players are in place, regard our scene:  
Here Rumor shall begin her trickery.  
E'en as the Jedi draw to Palpatine,  
Forsooth, they'll meet a well-known enemy.*

At one point in *Henry IV, Part 1*, Falstaff urges young Prince Hal (the future Henry V) not to hang a thief when he becomes king. In a brilliant moment of wordplay, Hal replies, “No, thou shalt,” twisting the meaning of *hang* to imply that Falstaff will be hung *as* a thief. Anakin and Obi-Wan have a similar exchange—in this passage, Obi-Wan and Anakin have been referring to Obi-Wan's lightsaber as his *friend*, and they have the following exchange in which Anakin is referring to his lightsaber and Obi-Wan is referring to Anakin turning on (i.e., betraying) Obi-Wan:

## HENRY IV, PART 1

I.ii.62–63

Falstaff:

*Do not thou, when thou art king, hang a thief*

Prince:

*No; thou shalt.*

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

## TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

I.i.205–206

Anakin:

*Do not, when you are scared, turn on your friend.*

Obi-Wan:

*No, thou shalt.*

## Henry VI, Part 1

Just as *Henry V* tells the story of the king securing France as part of the British realm, the three plays of the *Henry VI* cycle reveal how France was lost again under a much weaker monarch beset by the machinations of his foes, Henry VI.

Recommended film version: the BBC's 1983 version is one of the few.

As *Henry VI, Part 1* begins, we find several dukes and earls leading the funeral procession of Henry V, who has just died. Bedford orders even the sky itself to recognize what a dark day it is. Palpatine uses a similar order at the beginning of *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge*, but he does it to welcome the dark:

## HENRY VI, PART 1

I.i.1

Bedford:

*Hung be the heavens with black,  
yield day to night!*

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

## TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

I.i.1

Palpatine:

*Hung be the heav'ns with black  
yield day to night!*

## Hamlet

*The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* is Shakespeare's most famous play. It tells the story of Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, whose father has died and whose mother Gertrude has married his uncle Claudius (Hamlet's father's brother). In the opening scenes, the ghost of King Hamlet returns to tell Hamlet that he was actually murdered by his brother, so that his brother could marry Hamlet's mother and take the throne. The tragedy unfolds as Hamlet tries to figure out the best way to avenge his father.

Recommended film versions: Kenneth Branagh's 1996 version is good if you want to see Hamlet played sane, Mel Gibson's 1990 version is good if you want to see Hamlet played mad (I prefer Branagh).

Claudius calls two of Hamlet's old friends from school, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to Elsinore (the Danish court) to keep tabs on Hamlet. In a moment of transparency, Hamlet tells them he has been out of sorts (though he hides the reason from them). Anakin, confused by Palpatine's advances, says the same thing to Padmé:

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

II.ii.295–296

Hamlet:

*I have of late—but wherefore I know not—  
lost all my mirth...*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

II.vi.21–22

Anakin:

*I have of late—but wherefore I know not—  
Lost all my mirth, and feel I've lost my road.*

Shortly thereafter, a group of traveling actors comes to the Danish court. Hamlet will eventually use them against Claudius—to perform a scene much like Claudius's murder of King Hamlet—and Palpatine does the same thing, using actors to portray the tale of Darth Plagueis and push Anakin even closer to the dark side. When the players first arrive, Hamlet asks them for a speech. Palpatine and his players have a similar conversation.

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

II.ii.433–435

First Player:

*What speech, my good lord?*

Hamlet:

*I heard thee speak me a speech once,  
but it was never acted, or if it was,  
not above once...*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

II.iv.9–11

Player 1:

*I can, for 'tis my trade. What speech, my lord?*

Palpatine:

*I heard thee speak me a speech once, but 'twas  
Ne'er acted; or, if 'twas, not above once...*

"To be or not to be, that is the question," is, as I said above, probably Shakespeare's most famous line. It begins Hamlet's soliloquy in Act III, in which he questions what is useful about life and why human beings don't just kill themselves. He realizes it is the fear of what may come after death—"the undiscover'd country"—that makes people prefer to stay alive rather than die and take their chances on the afterlife. I borrowed a couple of well-known phrases from the "To be or not to be" speech in *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge*. You can see the whole speech below with the parts I referenced highlighted.

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S  
TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

III.i.55-87

Hamlet:

To be, or not to be, that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep—  
No more, and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks V.ii.26  
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation Vader:  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep— —Ha! Aye, there's the rub.  
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub, V.ii.12  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come, Medical Droid:  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil, The lady shuffles off this mortal coil...  
Must give us pause; there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life:  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin; who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pitch and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action.

### **Julius Caesar**

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar tells the story of the famous Roman leader, the man who helped kill him (Brutus) and the friend who eventually co-ruled in his place (Marc Antony).

Recommended film version: you can't beat Marlon Brando as Marc Antony in the 1953 film version.

Caesar has been warned not to venture forward to the senate by a soothsayer—the famous “Beware the ides of March” warning. Caesar, though, is proud and scoffs, saying essentially that a coward is already dead. Anakin uses this line when Count Dooku asks if he is a coward.

*THE TRAGEDY OF JULIUS CAESAR*

*II.ii.32–33*

*Julius Caesar:*

*Cowards die many times before their deaths.  
The valiant never taste of death but once.*

*WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE’S*

*TRAGEDY OF THE SITH’S REVENGE*

*I.i.278–279*

*Anakin:*

*Cowards die many times before their deaths;  
The Jedi never taste of death but once.*

## ***Othello***

*The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice* is a tragedy about jealousy, with a truly evil villain.

Othello, a Moor living in Italy, is married to Desdemona. Iago, a soldier who is very evil but also very trusted by Othello, convinces Othello through deceit that his fellow soldier Cassio is having an affair with Desdemona. Othello enters a slow descent into near madness, throwing his relationship with Desdemona into a storm that will ultimately take their lives.

Recommended film versions: Laurence Fishburne as Othello and Kenneth Branagh as Iago in the 1995 version can’t be beat. There’s also a modern retelling of the play called simply *O* from 2001, which puts a good spin on the tale.

Desdemona and Othello travel separately to Cyprus, where Othello has been stationed. Othello lands after Desdemona after a stormy voyage and says he wishes all storms ended with such a sweet sight. Anakin says the same thing upon seeing Padmé after fighting a battle against General Grievous.

*OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE*

*II.i.183–186*

*Othello:*

*It gives me wonder great as my content  
To see you here before me, O my soul’s joy!  
If after every tempest come such calms,  
May the winds blow till they have wakened death!*

*WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE’S*

*TRAGEDY OF THE SITH’S REVENGE*

*I.ii.71–74*

*Anakin:*

*It gives me wonder great as my content  
To see you here before me, O, my joy!  
If after ev’ry battle come such calms,  
May these wars wage till they have waken’d death!*

At one point, Othello declares his love for Desdemona and then says—with a harrowing foreshadow—that chaos will come should his love for Desdemona ever diminish. Anakin uses the same declaration of love to Padmé:

OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE

III.iii.90–92

Othello:

*Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul  
But I do love thee! and when I love thee not,  
Chaos is come again.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S  
TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

II.iii.77

Anakin:

*Perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee...*

In the terrible scene when Othello comes to kill Desdemona, she realizes what he is going to do before he does it. They have a painful dialogue, which I gave to Darth Vader and a Jedi youngling, who also realizes he is about to be killed:

OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE

V.ii.26–33

Othello:

*If you bethink yourself of any crime  
Unreconcil'd as yet to heaven and grace,  
Solicit for it straight.*

Desdemona:

*Alack, my lord, what may you mean by that?*

Othello:

*Well, do it, and be brief, I will walk by.  
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit.*

Desdemona:

*Talk you of killing?*

Othello:

*—Ay, I do.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S  
TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

IV.iii.4–8

Vader:

*Have you said all your orisons this night?*

Youngling 1:

*Alas, my lord, what do you mean by that?*

Vader:

*I would not kill your unprepared spirits;  
No, heav'n forbend! I would not kill your souls.*

Youngling 1:

*Talk you of killing?*

Vader:

*—Aye, I do. And shall!*

## ***Romeo and Juliet***

*The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* is a famous story of two rival families and the young woman and man from each of those families who fall deeply in love. It doesn't end well.

Recommended film versions: Baz Luhrmann's 1996 movie starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes is a fast-paced, fun modern take. Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* is also based on *Romeo and Juliet*.

Romeo and Juliet spend the night together after they are married, and in the morning—though he should be leaving—he tells her he has far more reason to stay than to go. Anakin uses the same line with Padmé, not wanting to keep their love secret:

THE TRAGEDY OF ROMEO AND JULIET

III.v.23

Romeo:

*I have more care to stay than will to go.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

I.ii.99

Anakin:

*I have more care to stay than will to go...*

**Macbeth**

The title character of *The Tragedy of Macbeth* is a close companion and courtier of the Scottish King Duncan. Macbeth is led via his own ambition, fortune-telling witches and a devious wife to murder the king. Macbeth is a play full of ghosts and witches and visions—it has a reputation among actors and stage crews for bringing bad luck, so many people who work in theater have a superstition about saying the word “Macbeth” anywhere near a playhouse. (In conversation, they call it “the Scottish play.”)

Recommended film version: the best might still be Orson Welles's 1948 *Macbeth*.

When Macbeth begins to consider killing King Duncan, he gives a famous speech about whether or not he should do it (“If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly...”). In that speech, he talks about “this bank and shoal of time,” a phrase I borrowed for Darth Sidious:

THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH

I.vii.6

Macbeth:

*But here, upon this bank and shoal of time...*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

III.iv.138

Sidious:

*'Tis here, upon this bank and shoal of time.*

After Macbeth becomes king, he quickly becomes paranoid about losing his kingdom to Banquo and his sons. At the end of a soliloquy, he challenges fate to come what may. Anakin uses the same line as he and Obi-Wan prepare to battle General Grievous and his droids.

THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH

III.i.70–71

Macbeth:

*Rather than so, come fate into the list,  
And champion me to th'utterance.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

I.i.431–432

Anakin:

*— Come Fate into the list,  
And champion me to the utterance!*

## *King Lear*

*The Tragedy of King Lear* is the story of an old king who tries to divide his kingdom among his three daughters. In the opening scene, his first two daughters Goneril and Regan—who turn out to be rotten—give him the ego-stroking he craves before he grants them their inheritance. But his good, youngest daughter, Cordelia, refuses to lavish praise on Lear just to receive her part of the kingdom. Lear, in his rage, sends her into exile and splits his kingdom into two parts for Goneril and Regan instead of three. Thus begins the tragedy, which ends with Lear's madness and death (not to mention the deaths of all of his daughters and a handful of other people).

Recommended film version: Laurence Olivier played King Lear in the 1983 BBC version. The cast and crew were in tears as they watched Olivier perform Lear's death scene, because Olivier himself was old and unwell.



When Lear begins to go mad, he finds himself with his Fool in a raging storm. In the midst of the storm, he declares his innocence with words Darth Vader uses when he is pursued to Mustafar by Padmé (and Obi-Wan).

THE TRAGEDY OF KING LEAR

III.ii.59–60

King Lear:

*I am a man more sinn'd against than sinning.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

V.ii.9–10

Vader:

*I am a man more sin'd against than sinning.*

### *Titus Andronicus*

*Titus Andronicus* is a revenge tale and has a well-deserved reputation as Shakespeare's bloodiest play. Titus is a Roman warrior who refuses emperorship and is beset by enemies who do terrible things including raping his daughter and cutting off her hands and tongue, conspiring to kill Titus's sons, and tricking Titus into cutting off his own hand for his sons' ransom. To take revenge, Titus kills the queen's sons and bakes them into a pie, which he serves to their parents. In the last act of the play, people are dropping like flies, including a horrid moment in which Titus kills his own daughter. Seriously, it's a rough play.

Recommended film version: if you can stomach it, the 1999 version starring Anthony Hopkins as Titus and directed by Julie Taymor is a wonderful telling.

When Titus is in the midst of his woes, he says maybe he should tell his sorrows to the stones. When Anakin is refused the rank of Jedi Master even though he is allowed on the Jedi Council, he is similarly bereft.

THE TRAGEDY OF TITUS ANDRONICUS

III.i.37–47

Titus:

*Therefore I tell my sorrows to the stones,  
Who, though they cannot answer my distress,  
Yet in some sort they are better than the tribunes,  
For that they will not intercept my tale.  
When I do weep, they humbly at my feet  
Receive my tears, and seem to weep with me;  
And, were they but attired in grave weeds,  
Rome could afford no tribune like to these.  
A stone is soft as wax,  
tribunes more hard than stones;  
A stone is silent, and offendeth not,  
And tribunes with their tongues  
doom men to death*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

II.ii.173–183

Anakin:

*If I did tell my sorrows to the stones,  
Who, though they cannot answer my distress,  
Yet in some sort are better than the Council,  
For that they will not intercept my tale:  
When I do weep, they humbly at my feet  
Receive my tears and seem to weep with me;  
And, were they but attired in grave weeds,  
Coruscant could afford none like to these.  
A stone is soft as wax, the Jedi harder,  
A stone is silent and offendeth not,  
Whilst Jedi by decrees doom me to shame.*

## Cymbeline

The tale of *Cymbeline* is the story of an ancient British king, Cymbeline, and the various intrigues that go on with his wife, Queen Cloten, their daughter Imogen and her beloved Posthumus. The play is often considered among Shakespeare's tragedies: it is also sometimes characterized as a romance.

Recommended film version: the BBC made *Cymbeline* in 1982. There's a modern version starring Ed Harris and Ethan Hawke that also is fun, if you can get over the violence.

At one point Imogen takes a potion that simulates death (like Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*). Cymbeline rages to the heavens in his grief. Anakin does the same thing after he finds out Palpatine is a Sith Lord.

### THE TRAGEDY OF CYMBELINE

IV.iii.3–4

Cymbeline:

—Heavens,  
How deeply you at once to touch me!

### WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

### TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

III.ii.138–139

Anakin:

— O heavn's  
How deeply you at once do touch me! Fie...

## Coriolanus

*Coriolanus* is the story of a Roman general named Caius Marcius and later called Coriolanus. He is a typical Roman elitist who finds common people loathsome. Though eventually elected as consul, he is then banished from Rome and leads an attack against it. In the end, he forms a peace treaty with Rome but is killed—it's a tragedy, after all—for his betrayal.

Recommended film version: Ralph Fiennes and Gerard Butler star in a 2011 version.

At one point, Coriolanus reflects on Menenius, who loves Coriolanus but whom Coriolanus has just sent away. Anakin reflects on Mace Windu similarly.

### CORIOLANUS

V.iii.8–11

Coriolanus:

—This last old man,  
Whom with a crack'd heart I have sent to Rome,  
Lov'd me above the measure of father,  
Nay, godded me indeed.

### WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

### TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

III.iv.134–137

Anakin:

Alas, what have I done? This noble man,  
Whom with a crack'd heart I have sent to death,  
Lov'd me above the measure of a father,  
Nay, Jedi Master he made me, indeed.

## *Timon of Athens*

*Timon of Athens* tells the story of an Athenian gentleman, who lavishly gives all his possessions to his friends. Not realizing the dire straits his finances are in, though, Timon eventually loses everything and ends up alone in a cave. It's a riches-to-rags story.

Recommended film version: The BBC 1981 version of *Timon of Athens* is the best in a short list.

Timon, living in a cave and going a little crazy, declares in a conversation with some bandits that everyone is a thief, including the moon. Anakin—now Darth Vader—says the same thing, declaring himself to be like the inconstant moon.

### *TIMON OF ATHENS*

*IV.iii.436–437*

*Timon:*

*—The moon's an arrant thief,  
And her pale fire she snatches from the sun...*

### *WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S*

### *TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE*

*III.iv.202–203*

*Vader:*

*—The moon's an arrant thief,  
And her pale fire she snatches from the sun.*

## *Antony and Cleopatra*

*The Tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra* is the story of what happened to Marc Antony later in life, as he began an ill-fated love affair with Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt.

Recommended film version: the 1972 version starring Charlton Heston and Hildegard Neil is a bit campy but worth the watch.

In the beginning of the play, Cleopatra asks Antony how much he loves her, and he declares that if love can be counted, there must be something wrong with it. After Anakin becomes Darth Vader, he uses similar sayings to explain that he has become a Sith for Padmé.

### *THE TRAGEDY OF ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA*

*I.i.14–17*

*Cleopatra:*

*If it be love indeed, tell me how much.*

*Antony:*

*There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.*

*Cleopatra:*

*I'll set a bourn how far to be belov'd.*

*Antony:*

*Then thou must needs find out new heaven,  
new earth.*

### *WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S*

### *TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE*

*IV.v.7–10*

*Vader:*

*I cannot say how much I love my love;  
There's beggary in th'love that can be reckon'd.  
To set a measure how far love doth reach,  
Then must thou needs find out new galaxies.*

## *Troilus and Cressida*

*The History of Troilus and Cressida* is aptly named because it's unclear whether the play is strictly tragedy or comedy. Many online resources consider it a tragedy, but my *Riverside Shakespeare* puts it with the comedies. The play takes place during the Trojan War. Although it is named for the Trojan lovers, it in fact tells the story of all the big players—Agamemnon, Priam, Ajax, and Hector (who dies as the play ends).

Recommended film version: the BBC's 1981 version.

As Troilus and Cressida woo each other, she teasingly says, "In that I'll war with you," and he responds that it's impossible to choose between two rights. Anakin, having become Darth Vader and killed Darth Sidious's Trade Federation enemies, uses these words to contemplate what he has become.

THE HISTORY OF  
TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

III.ii.172

Troilus:

*When right with right wars who shall be  
most right!*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S  
TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

IV.vi.96

Vader:

*When right with right wars who shall be  
most right?*

## *Much Ado About Nothing*

*Much Ado About Nothing* tells the story of two sets of couples: Hero and Claudio, who are natural lovers, and Beatrice and Benedick, who are both sharp-tongued and have sworn off love. All ends well, but not before Beatrice and Benedick are tricked into loving each other (by overhearing their friends say that each loves the other) and Claudio and Hero are saved from a huge misunderstanding—engineered by the villain Don John—that nearly results in Hero's death.

Recommended film versions: Kenneth Branagh's 1993 *Much Ado* is still my favorite—it was one of the things that turned me on to Shakespeare in the first place. Joss Wheedon's 2012 version is also required viewing.

When Benedick overhears Claudio, Don Pedro and Leonato saying Beatrice loves Benedick, he declares it must be a trick since they heard it from Hero. Obi-Wan, in a more serious situation, realizes that Order 66 is real when he hears two clone troopers discussing it.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

II.iii.330

Benedick:

*This can be no trick: the conference  
was sadly borne; they  
have the truth of this from Hero...*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S  
TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

IV.iv.25–27

Obi-Wan:

*O misery! Yet this can be no trick:  
The conference was sadly borne; I have  
The truth of this from the Commander's lips.*

After Hero has been falsely accused of being untrue to Claudio, Benedick asks Beatrice if she truly believes Claudio is Beatrice's enemy. She responds with a resolute yes, as does Anakin when Mace Windu asks him if he is certain Palpatine is a Sith.

*MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*

*IV.i.321*

*Beatrice:*

*Yea, as sure as I have a thought or soul.*

*WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S*

*TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE*

*III.iv.20*

*Anakin:*

*Yea, as sure as I have a thought or soul.*

While waiting for Hero's betrayers to be brought to justice, Hero's uncle Antonio counsels her father Leonato to be patient, and Leonato uses a line about the difficulty in being patient in pressing circumstances. Obi-Wan borrows the line when he and Anakin are trapped in a ray shield on General Grievous's ship.

*MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*

*V.i.35–36*

*Leonato:*

*For there never was yet philosopher  
That could endure the toothache patiently.*

*WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S*

*TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE*

*I.i.385–386*

*Obi-Wan:*

*There never was a Jedi Master could  
Endure the toothache patiently, my friend.*

Toward the end of the play, Benedick comforts Beatrice, who is still distraught over what has happened to Hero. His words are comforting, while similar words in Darth Vader's mouth to Padmé are just a little creepy.

*MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*

*V.ii.93*

*Beatrice:*

*Serve God, love me, and mend.*

*WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S*

*TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE*

*IV.v.46*

*Vader:*

*Serve our high chancellor, love me and mend.*

## ***The Merchant of Venice***

*The Merchant of Venice* is considered a comedy because it ends with (most) everyone happy and the lovers Lorenzo and Jessica uniting. However, it is a difficult play because of the presence of Shylock, a Jewish merchant who is stereotypically and unfairly painted as a villain. Throughout the play, Shylock is vilified and, finally, forced to convert to Christianity.

Recommended film version: try the 2004 version with Al Pacino in the part of Shylock.

In getting Antonio out of his debt to Shylock—the debt of a pound of flesh—Portia makes a famous speech about the quality of mercy. As Vader lies dying, he considers begging Obi-Wan for help but realizes that he does not deserve that mercy.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

IV.i.184–186

Portia:

*The quality of mercy is not strain'd  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

V.ii.195–197

Vader:

*For mercy would I beg, if I did but  
Deserve its quality, which is not strain'd  
But droppeth as gentle rain from heav'n.*

**As You Like It**

*As You Like It* tells the story of Duke Senior, whose throne is taken away by his brother Duke Frederick. The rightful Duke Senior begins living in the Forest of Arden with his followers, until he is finally restored to his throne.

Recommended film version: the Kenneth Branagh-directed version from 2006, set in Japan.

The Duke and others, in the forest, are feeling low and request a song of Amiens. The song he sings is a melancholy song. Obi-Wan sings the same song of lament as he takes Padmé away from Mustafar, having left his friend Anakin for dead.

AS YOU LIKE IT

II.vii.174–181

Amiens:

*Blow, blow, thou winter wind,  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man's ingratitude;  
Thy tooth is not so keen,  
Because thou art not seen,  
Although thy breath be rude.  
Heigh-ho, sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly,  
Most friendship is feigning, most loving more folly.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

V.ii.280–288

Obi-Wan:

*[sings:] Blow, blow, thou winter wind,  
Thou art not so unkind  
As our ineptitude,  
Thy tooth is not so keen  
Because thou art not seen,  
Although thy breath be rude.  
Most friendship is feigning,  
Most wisdom is vain,  
Heigh-ho! Sing heigh-ho!*

## The Sonnets

In addition to plays, Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets and a handful of other poems. A sonnet—as a poetic form—always has 14 lines (just like a limerick has 5 lines and a haiku has 3). Shakespearean sonnets are in iambic pentameter and have the following rhyme scheme: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG. (That is, lines 1 and 3 rhyme, lines 2 and 4 rhyme, and so on—lines 5 and 7, 6 and 8, 9 and 11, 10 and 12—and then the final two lines rhyme.) As I said above, I took the idea of the Chorus from *Henry V* one step further and made the Chorus' lines rhyme. I also wrote the Chorus's opening prologue and closing epilogue for *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge* as Shakespearean sonnets.

### WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE

Prologue, 1–14

Chorus:

*“War!” is the cry that doth through space resound:  
The good Republic faces bold attack  
From Dooku, he whose evil doth abound.  
Yet heroes rise as each side fighteth back.  
Droid leader Gen’ral Grievous, he most vile,  
Hath enter’d—a new player on the scene.  
With movement swift and unexpexted guile  
He hath made bold to kidnap Palpatine.  
Whilst o’er the capital, e’en Coruscant,  
The Sep’ratist droid army tries to flee,  
Two Jedi are dispatch’d upon a jaunt  
To set the hostage Palpatine full free.  
In time so long ago begins our play,  
In vengeful galaxy far, far away.*

## SHAKESPEAREAN DEVICES IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S STAR WARS®

In addition to direct references to various plays, *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge* contains a handful of literary devices that are used by Shakespeare as well. Here's a sampling of them.

### Anaphora

The literary device *anaphora* is the same opening of a line that is used repeatedly over the course of several lines. An example from Shakespeare's *The First Part of Henry the Sixth* is shown here, as well as two examples from *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge*:

HENRY VI PART ONE

II.iv.11–15

Warwick:

*Between two hawks, which flies the  
higher pitch,  
Between two dogs, which hath the  
deeper mouth,  
Between two blades, which bears the  
better temper,  
Between two horses, which doth  
bear him best,  
Between two girls, which hath the  
merriest eye—*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S  
TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE  
V.ii.84–88

Vader:

*Now peaceful currents run because of me,  
Now freedom doth resound upon the flow,  
Now justice have I brought unto the deep  
Now quick security doth chart my way,  
Now am I admiral to Empire new.*

## Songs

Shakespeare's plays are full of songs. Sometimes playful, sometimes mystical, sometimes sorrowful, songs can appear at unexpected moments and often break from the rhythm of iambic pentameter. As mentioned above, Obi-Wan has a song in *William Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Sith's Revenge* as he grieves for his friend. Here's a sample of a song from *Othello* alongside Obi-Wan's song.

OTHELLO,  
THE MOOR OF VENICE  
IV.iii.40–56 (selections)

Desdemona:

*The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,  
Sing all a green willow;  
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,  
Sing willow, willow, willow.  
Her salt tears fell from her, and soft'ned  
the stones,  
Sing willow... willow, willow...  
Sing all a green willow must by my garland.  
Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve...  
I call'd my love false love; but what said  
he then?  
Sing willow, willow, willow.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S  
TRAGEDY OF THE SITH'S REVENGE  
V.ii.280–288

Obi-Wan:

*[sings:] Blow, blow, thou winter wind,  
Thou art not so unkind  
As our ineptitude,  
Thy tooth is not so keen  
Because thou art not seen,  
Although thy breath be rude.  
Most friendship is feigning,  
Most wisdom is vain,  
Heigh-ho! Sing heigh-ho!*