THREE WITCHES PERFORMER
Double, double…

THREE WITCHES PERFORMER
…toil and trouble.

THREE WITCHES PERFORMER
Fire burn...

THREE WITCHES PERFORMER
…and cauldron bubble.

FEMALE PRESENTER
I hate witches.

THREE WITCHES PERFORMER
Thanks very much.

FEMALE PRESENTER
They just sort of freak me out a bit. Of course they’re only actors, but in Elizabethan times…

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
Actors? Are you sure?

FEMALE PRESENTER
Yes Will, they’re doing your play mate.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
I knew that.

FEMALE PRESENTER
But in Elizabethan times, most people genuinely believed in witchcraft, making their presence on stage truly terrifying.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
Sorry, could we do this somewhere else? Just, it’s scary.

FEMALE PRESENTER
You see, back then people didn’t know much about science and stuff. Rather than the internet, their belief in magic helped them explain the things they didn’t understand.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
So what about the terrible storm Prospero’s Sorcerer whips up in The Tempest? How does your modern thinking explain that?
FEMALE PRESENTER
A volatile combination of intense high and low atmospheric pressure?

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
You sound ridiculous.

FEMALE PRESENTER
I sound ridiculous.

MALE MEMBER OF PUBLIC
Nice hat mate.

FEMALE PRESENTER
I blame the parents.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
I blame the fairies.

FEMALE PRESENTER
Shakespeare’s plays captivated audiences by reflecting their beliefs and superstitions of the time. From spells in The Tempest to fairies in A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
Anybody would think I knew what I was doing.

FEMALE PRESENTER
Of course there are beliefs from Shakespeare’s time that some people still buy into today, like walking under ladders.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
Oh, oh don’t do that. Huh!

FEMALE PRESENTER
Or spilling salt.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
Are you actually insane? She’s totally out of control.

FEMALE PRESENTER
And even today people believe in fate; the idea that our future is somehow predetermined. Like Shakespeare’s doomed lovers, Romeo and Juliet.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
It was written in the stars.

FEMALE PRESENTER
It was written in your script.

FORTUNE TELLER
You’ll meet a strange man from the past.
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
She’s good.

FEMALE PRESENTER
Hamlet, Julius Caesar, Macbeth; all featured one thing Elizabethans really believed in, ghosts. Restless spirits doomed to walk the earth to atone for their sins or demons out for revenge? You’d think we’d know better by now, but some people actually think this theatre is haunted.

[LOUD SCREAMS]

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
It’s all in your head mate; along with a bit of help from you guys obviously. Nice one. Hanging with me witches.