**Subject:** Re: Reflections on Shakespeare & Catching Up

Dear Luke,

It’s wonderful to hear from you, and thank you for sharing your theatre outing—I can almost picture the moonlit forest of A Midsummer Night’s Dream come alive onstage! Your description of Oberon and Titania’s chemistry makes me wish I’d been there.

I haven’t seen a live Hamlet performance in a while, but I recently streamed a contemporary production set in a dystopian cityscape. The director emphasized the political machinations you mentioned, casting the Danish court as a media-savvy bureaucracy. It added a whole new layer to Hamlet’s “To be, or not to be” quandary—really worth a look if you haven’t come across it yet.

On my end, I’ve been delving into Macbeth—specifically the interplay between ambition and guilt. I found an essay arguing that Lady Macbeth’s famous “Out, damned spot!” scene actually casts her as both victim and villain, which sparked a lively discussion in my reading group. Have you encountered any readings that recast Shakespeare’s female characters in surprising ways?

Your quote-of-the-day script sounds brilliant—please do add me! I’d love to receive snippets from Sonnet 18 (“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?”) or even from Twelfth Night; I have a soft spot for Viola’s wit. Getting that little burst of Bard in my inbox would brighten my mornings for sure.

Outside of Shakespeare, things are good here in Oxford: I’ve settled into a new flat near the Bodleian Library, and I’m teaching an informal workshop on verse speaking to undergrads. It’s exhilarating to watch them breathe new life into familiar lines.

Thanks again for writing, Luke. I look forward to our ongoing exchanges—both in prose and in iambic pentameter!

Warmly,  
Leo Bennett