

The Tragedy *of* STEVE



by Vincent M. Weaver

Foreword by Hairold Weaver, GP



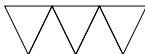
THE TRAGEDY
of
STEVE

THIRD EDITION

by

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Summary: An attempt to overthrow the leader of Earth backfires in tragic fashion.

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[1. Steves – tragic 2. Rutabagas – ornamental

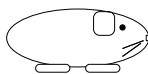
3. Drama – Shakespearean] I. Title

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to KRW, ESW and KMW
who have kept me busy

In memory of Chipper, Hairold, Leonard,
Susie and Butterfinger



Some Quotations

**From *Catch 22*,
the book that got me a 5 on the AP English exam.**

“You’ve got flies in your eyes. That’s probably why you can’t see them.”

—Yossarian

“I’d rather have peanut brittle crumbs on my face than flies in my eyes.”

—Havermyer

Appropriate quotes

“You have too much free time.”

— Everyone

“Time we enjoy wasting is not wasted.”

— Steve, senior yearbook quote

“Time you enjoyed wasting is not wasted time.”

— T. S. Elliot

Fabricated Quotes about *The Tragedy of Steve*:

“We haven’t read it.”

— The JC *Patriot*

“We haven’t either.”

— The Baltimore *Sun*

“Best [only] play I’ve ever written.”

— Vince Weaver

“According to the JC Handbook students may not write Shakespearean tragedies without a \$50 permit.”

— John Carroll Administration

Foreword from the First Edition

by Hairold Weaver, G.P.

Saddeningly, hardly anyone writes Shakespearean tragedy anymore. Some attribute this to the death of Shakespeare, others to lack of interest. Personally I attribute the discrepancy to the difficulty of writing in iambic pentameter.

This first edition play is great fun. It is especially well written, considering the author is an aspiring engineer. I have attempted to footnote the play, documenting obscure terms and references as I saw necessary.

The play starts out with cryptic language, as do Shakespeare's plays. The language grows simpler as the play goes on. This is primarily to show the trend of increasing confusion, a literary device known as Weavarian Reverse-Entropy. Another reason for this effect is the play was started 6 months before it was finished with large gaps in between.

Watch the syllable count of all the different speakers. They are consistent throughout. Steve, of course, always has 13 syllables per line, a sure sign of doom. Note Scott, a true demagogue, speaks in Demagogic verse. Watch for the many references, to Hamlet, Henry V, the Simpsons, GI Joe, They Might be Giants, and the Bible. Also this is probably the only play in the world that contains the word "doofus." I was going to highlight all the puns, irony, and references but then I realized this makes it too easy for all the students writing papers on this play.

Maybe in a later edition.

Hairold Weaver, Guinea Pig [1992-1998]

THE TRAGEDY OF STEVE

[Dramatis Personae

Scott, Governous Terra

Steve, Semi-governous Terra

Erin, Wife of Steve

Vince, Governous Lunar

Lizabeth, Wife of Vince

Mree, Minion of Scott

Boy as himself (from Henry V)

John, kitchen worker

Gus, a girl

Charcoal, Yrbk, Sugar: Aliens

Young Seward: Really lost (from Macbeth, if you must know)

Crowds, Mobs, and other amassments of people

]

[Any resemblance between the above characters and actual people, living or otherwise, is entirely co-incidental, except, of course, unless the author intended for the character to mimic a real person]

Act I

Scene 1

Governor's Quarters, Lunar Capitol, Moon.

Lizbeth and husband Vince are in room

LIZBETH	[<i>Frantic</i>] Husband come quick! See the message the computer has sent to me!	
VINCE	Aye! My wife! You receive this mail Electronic'ly every day. Why this novelty now?	5
LIZBETH	Understand you do not; Come quick You must; I am so excited My word order has inverted!	
VINCE	I am here; there's no need to fear. Please show me what excites you so!	10
COMPUTER	Ahh, Mr. Governor, Leader of the Moon. I am glad to see you have finally come. I am a renegade computer program. From a mass of silicon was I given The breath of life by some forgotten hacker. Strange works are afoot. I have decided now To give you notice about grave disaster. Abandoned by humanity I have been.	15

I owe you what is less than nothing at all.
 However I have been compelled to see you
 And give you the following simple advice.
 “Before a million seconds have passed away
 The commander of the great sphere will be dead.
 His ill-fated successor shall take control,
 Which will cause much grief, fear, and gnashing of
 teeth.”

This is all I can say
 I must now go away
 This humanness has made me feel flawed.
[exit computer program]

LIZBETH What an ungrateful brute! How completely rude!
 While we provide him with electricity
 And build and maintain his entire domain
 He considers us humans to be flawed.

VINCE We are flawed with much more than our
 Original sin, so we should
 See the truth in the things he says.
 As he is true to say that we
 Are flawed, maybe he is right too
 With his very vague prediction.
 I will inform my good friend Steve
 Noble vice-dictator of Earth
 To see if there is any cause
 To see truth in this program’s curse.
[exuent both]

Scene 2

*The scene begins in room of vice-dictator
 Steve, in Bel Air, Maryland, Capitol of the*

Dictatorship of Earth. Steve is currently over-dramatizing his problems

STEVE A dark shadow has fallen across the face of Earth.
 An evil presence much worse than anyone can see.
 My duty is to protect the innocent people
 Vice dictatorship has many responsibilities.

ERIN Calm down! Calm down! Why are you so distressed! 5
 Why are you suddenly so concerned?

STEVE I allowed a demon to achieve power unscathed.
 Thinking him good, I allowed him to move up unchecked
 Our savior unified the world, but at what great cost?
 I cannot stand idly by while our sphere collapses. 10
 The evil Scott must be removed from power today!

Video Phone Rings... Steve Answers

 Oh Vince, it is you. What do you want my lunar
 friend?

VINCE All hail to Scott our demagogue
 And to his subordinate Steve.
 Although a living hunk of rock 15
 Is what a computer may seem,
 A generous mineral has seen
 To foreshadow things that may come.

STEVE What mind altering drug are you taking my friend?
 You have worked too hard to achieve your frontier
 outpost. 20
 A computer that thinks? What next? A murderer of
 kings?

VINCE You have jumped the gun a little
 Yet ironically you are right.
 A sentient abacus has said
 That a great leader soon shall fall 25
 And his doomed successor likewise.
 You, being second in command,
 I believed that you might believe.

30 STEVE What nonsense you believe just because of machines.
 Has your toaster also seen these visions of terror?
 Was warning given to you by your washing machine?
 Are your fluorescent lights sending you Morse code
 signals?

VINCE This conversation tires me. You will leave me now.
 There is a tragic flaw I see
 35 In all you say and all you do.
 Pride is it! You have been warned.
 These things I've told you may be true,
 Some day you may regret it too...
 [*Click. Steve hangs up*]

40 ERIN My dear, who was that? Was it a salesman?
 The scourge of the time, they constantly call
 Selling graves and goods or asking for gold,
 While calling at six as dinner grows cold.
 Hopefully demagogue Scott's decree stays
 That all who make the grave error of this
 45 Heinous occupation shall be hangéd.
 A capital idea, I should say.

STEVE Have I not told you not to mention that cretin's name!
 I rue the day I made that large contribution to
 That doofus's revolutionary campaign fund.
 50 In the middle of my plans to set everything right
 That lunatic Vince calls and babbles useless non-
 sense.
 "A great leader shall fall" he claims his computer
 says.
 If this were the demagogue I would be truly glad
 But he talks of the tragedy of the successor.
 Go! Leave now! Depart! For now I must plan the
 55 future.
 [*exit Erin*] That mockery, Scott, a farce of a great
 dictator.
 His policy lousy, His purges ineffective.

The world is no better since the time of his conquest.
 He will die! He must die! He must not live! He will
 die!

And obviously I would be a good successor. 60
 My skills are high, my intelligence too. I would be
 Justified in this coup. If only I could see
 The future before it happens! Oh Nostradamus!
 I will meditate until the answer comes to me.

Scene 3

Vince at home on Moon

VINCE	Computer program, are you there? I have great respect for you now. But my friend Steve will not heed you. He is a good man; firm in his Beliefs. He will do what is right. 5 I am not sure of this Scott guy, But things on Earth are ripe for change. Change is good, but it can be bad If it is in the wrong way.	
COMPUTER	<i>[Suddenly]</i> Lunar governor you are as wise as Steve. 10 You shall be rewarded for your helpfulness. True, you are indecisive and your timing Is bad, yet these all can be overcome quick. You will have your time; it will be glorious You have done your duty; Now I will do mine. 15 A storm is coming; beware the eye deceives. When it is over you will have your life, A greater gift I cannot imagine. Right now I will take over contact with Steve. <i>[Exit Computer]</i>	
VINCE	So, to be forewarned is to be 20	

Forearmed and knowing is half of
 The battle; In the dark I will
 Trust the computer and worry
 For what might befall my friend Steve.

Scene 4

*Steve's Home. Vice-Dictator's Mansion,
 Bel Air*

ERIN My husband has been in there for hours.
 I hope that everything will work out.
 What is this? Why beckons the computer?
[Erin bursts into Steve's Room]

STEVE Wife? How dare you interrupt my secret planning
 now?

ERIN Well excuse me, but a sentient program wants you
 now.

STEVE Eh? Is it some trick? Maybe I should talk to this
 thing.

Maybe a human runs it and can offer some help.
 Please leave "us" alone, for I don't wish to seem in-
 sane.

[exit Erin]

COMPUTER O.K. fool machine, What is it that you want to say?
 Steve, before long you shall be the new tyrant.
 None of this world shall be able to stop you.
 The most evil one shall be killed, and then, in
 His place an honorable one will make peace.
 I will go distant now and watch the play;
 A comedy of fools is humanity.

[exit Computer]

STEVE I hoped he would come. My plan has borne fruit
 perfectly.

A stealthy program of mine has gauged his intellect
Of the recently departed soothsaying program.
He speaks the truth! How great indeed is this turn
of fate.

“The most evil one shall be killed” Indeed he will. 20
The murder of Scott will be done before too long
And I, “an honorable one, will make peace.”

Act II

Scene 1

*New Earth Headquarters. John Carroll School,
Bel Air*

SCOTT	What a day it is. A pretty April day. The facilities are nice When it's not hot or cold. Climate control no good is.	5
MREE	Sir I have today's business. Who do we torture today? Who do we kill? Who must die? Dictatorship is great fun.	
SCOTT	Calm down my young protégé Torturing takes much time. We must start small and then grow. We learn from the German We must, my protégé.	10
MREE	Sir, you have some visitors Illegal aliens, they Wish to help you in your goal To subdue the planet Earth.	15

20 SCOTT What? What? Aliens?
What nonsense speak you of?
I do not comprehend you.

Do I have foreknowledge
Of these you call aliens?
25 MREE They requested discretion
Concerning their detection
They have an offer to make
Our puny planet.

*Enter Charcoal, Sugar, and Yrbk, three
aliens. They are all female, or whatever
passes for female on their planet. They
are all evil.*

CHARCOAL Greetings demagogue
We greet you well

30 SUGAR We come from afar
With much to tell.

YRBK Yes, we have come to offer you assistance
In the ruling of this planet that you rule
Justice, Freedom, and Fairness we will espouse.
35 This world will prosper under our partnership.

SCOTT What? What say you? Arrrr...
I share my reign with none.
Justice? Freedom? Fairness? Nein!
I espouse none of that.

40 Oppression is my name! Arrrr!!!
YRBK [*aside*] He thinks too much like us to be any help.
We will find other means to gain control here.
[*to Scott*] We honorably retract our offer sir.
We will leave now. Perhaps we will meet again.

45 SCOTT What? Meet you again?
You are vile creatures, you.
I can sense only evil.
Now be gone now, you freaks.

Earth is better off again.
[exuent]

Scene 2

Steve's Room

STEVE	The world crumbles around me. How can it be fixed? Truth and justice and happiness must be restored. The totalitarian regime must be removed.	
ERIN	Your husbandship, some weird beings are here!	
STEVE	Weird beings? They sound like friends of you and not of me.	5
	But if friends they be, send them to me, hastily. <i>[Enter Yrbk, Sugar, and Charcoal]</i>	
SUGAR	Hi! We come in Peace Greetings we bring.	
CHARCOAL	If you do not talk Then we will sing.	10
YRBK	Sing indeed! We have important matters here. Your leader Scott is most unfit for the job. We wish to bring democracy and freedom To all who inhabit this lowly spheroid.	
STEVE	Where have you been? I've needed you so! I can trust you?	15
YRBK	We come with noblest intentions, good sir.	
STEVE	The best kind. We must now plan and plan Scott's final end Because it will be for the good of all humankind.	
YRBK	Yes, your name will be remembered always. Now we must get Scott when he's unprepared. We will poison him while he dines on food. Yes, we can taint that which he would imbibe. We will make it appear botulism.	20

STEVE Yes, this could work! I am sure the success rate is
high.
25 An interplanetary dinner is tomorrow.
The plan to alarm the refrigerators was dropped,
The alcoholic beverages will be guard free.
Yes, I can gain you access to the kitchen tonight.
Scott always gets the expensive imported beer.

30 YRBK Our two planets become one and we thank you.
This freedom will benefit your planet.

STEVE Yet, I do wonder, why you wish the evil one dead?
You seem eager to kill this man you do not know.

YRBK We see in you the qualities of good.
35 A good planet leader is an ally.
An evil one can lead to destruction
Of two races possibly by war.
We only wish peace and co-existence.

STEVE Your motives seem true. I will trust your good dis-
cretion.
40 Meet me in the kitchen at oh-one hundred hours,
Where we will do the grimm but necessary evil.
If all goes well, then we should escape from this Scott
free!

YRBK It will be so, future world demagogue.
[*exit Steve*]
Now Sugar, Charcoal and Yrbk the brave.
45 How appropriate are these English words,
These the Anglicized versions of our names.
We offer them sugar to appease them
Yrbk is meaningless, as are their lives
And resistors we will burn to charcoal.
[*exuent*]

Scene 3

Kitchen. JC Cafeteria, Demagogue Building. Evening. Before dinner. Gus and John (kitchen employees) are working

GUS	“Bring the beer. Bring the beer. The beer cannot wait.”	
	I almost wish the beer be poisonous, Being ordered around by Scott, who has no patience.	
JOHN	Surely you do not wish this. He is a good and noble	5
	Demagogue, though demanding.	
GUS	Yes, demanding a good slap across the face. I wish I had the authority to hit But soft, what is this? The royal beer is wrong.	
	Not yesterday I put it on the top shelf!	10
JOHN	Ahhh, you worked long that day. You remember what is not. Can beverages up and move?	
GUS	I kid you not. Maybe we should look further?	
SCOTT	[from outside] Arrr! I want my beer. The rich foamy liquid. That quenches my thirst. I desire it now.	15
	Sluggards, bring quickly my beer!	
JOHN	Ahh, you should do as he says. Maybe it will do him good. Your imagination is Figmenting some delusions. [exuent]	20

Scene 4

*In the dining hall (the old JC cafeteria)
Vince, Boy, Lizbeth, Mree, Steve, Erin and
Scott are all seated at a table, eating and dis-
cussing.*

SCOTT So, lunar leader,
 Are you pleased with my reign
 And the proposéd treaty?
 And who are these people
5 You have brought with you, leader?

VINCE Much has been accomplished on this
 Diplomatic visit to Earth.
 My contingency consists of
 Boy, A most noble and brave servant
10 And Lizbeth, my beautiful wife.

BOY Methinks it an honor to meet you.
 Betwixt these walls is a great leader.

MREE Yes, Scott is grand. Let's toast him.
 [*Gus arrives with beer*]

SCOTT Mree, my great servant,
15 As always your timing
 Is impeccable. Let's toast
 Before I become toast.
 We will drink to the servant.

STEVE [*Aside*] The irony in this sequence is astonishing.

20 MREE As says Scott, to the servant!
 [*All toast*]

SCOTT Something is not right.
 This beer has a weird taste.
 I do not feel well my friends.
 What is this that takes place?
25 Mmmmm... poison beer... argh ug argh

[*thus dies Scott*]

MREE A doctor! A doctor! Quick!

[*everyone tries to help*]

BOY I have medical training. He's dead.
Save the beer he drank! Tests we must run!

MREE I am not evil, yet this
Evil has befallen me! 30
No! No! Scott my master's dead!
As a father he raised me.
Through thin and thick he guided!
What will I do without him?
What will he do without me? 35
I will join him in his fate.
[*She grabs his beer and drinks it*]

VINCE No! The dying must end here, now!

MREE Goodbye and thank you, friends.
I have done what was required.
[*thus dies Mree*]

VINCE No! That such a beautiful life was cut short, 40
Dead, as if written by some insane author?

STEVE No time must be wasted. This tragic turn of events
Is horrible, yet life must continue. How awful.
The cause of this heinous event will be exposéd.
I now assume power as ascribed in our world's laws! 45

BOY I have analyzed the poison beer.
A microscope shows the scope of death.
A toxin from a bacterium
Has proven lethal to the monarch.

LIZBETH What company makes this liquid? 50
The brewery should be destroyed!

STEVE An excellent idea, ma'am. It will be my first
Act as demagogue. Order must be restored at once.
Everyone, clear this dying room. Vengeance will be
mine.
I must cope with this great loss. I must inform the

world.

55

VINCE [*Aside*] Something is not right about this.
Maybe the shock has dulled my wit.

[*Exeunt all but Gus*]

GUS I was going to inform Steve of the movement
Of the royal beer from its appointed place
But something leads me not to trust him right now.
Well maybe the lunar man can advise me.

60

[*exit*]

Act III

Scene 1

Press room in the bomb shelter of Demagogue headquarters, early the next day.

STEVE People of the world, I regret to inform you of
A tragic event. Late yesterday at a state meal
Our chief demagogue Scott met an untimely demise,
As did his chief minion, Mree. Despite this tragedy,
We must continue life, for it stops for no man. 5
As vice demagogue I have assumed control of Earth.
I am grieved about his death and an inquiry
Will be made. All hail Scott! Demagogue of our
planet.

STEVE [*much weeping and gnashing of teeth from the press*]
[*aside*] What fools these journalists be! They are fi-
nally free!
Free from the oppression that had plagued us for so
long! 10
And yet they weep for their dead oppressor. Oh what
fools.
I must maintain the mask of grief myself, lest they
learn

It was I who caused Scott's untimely end.
 To gain credibility, I must damage Scott's.
 The memory of his reign must be overshadowed.
 He will be remembered as the knave that he was!
 [*to crowd*] It was in Scott's will that he asked one
 final request.
 He wished to be remembered unconventionally.
 In remembrance, wear a rutabaga in your hat!
 [*confused mumbling from the press*]
 Yes, I know it is queer, but it was his final wish.
 [*aside*] Maybe this vegetative act will undermine him.

Scene 2

In kitchen. Vince and Gus. At night.

VINCE	Hello? Is anybody here? I received a message to meet Someone here. Well here is the meat Salted and smoked, but who is it That has requested my presence?
GUS	Ahh, my lunar leader, sir. It was I.
VINCE	Ahh, that such a young pretty face Should have such a concernéd look. Rendezvousing with strange women What would my wife think about this? But, Arr, I am digressing quick. Why do you wish to speak with me?
GUS	Oh, I'm a horrible person. Are you mad? I was not sure whom to turn to as this point.
VINCE	Mad? No I'm certainly not mad. Crazy? Maybe, but no, not mad. I'm sure you're a good person. An intelligent one too, I'd

Wager. Please, Please, calm yourself down.
 GUS I am so affected that I cannot eat. 20
 VINCE Halt! You must pacify yourself!
 Eat? Eat! You must always eat food.
 Without nourishment you will waste
 Away into something less than
 A ghost. And yet Ghosts have substance. 25
 Food nourishes the body and
 Also the spirit. It gives life.
 It adds flavor and spice to a
 Cruel, bland, and harsh world. Eating is
 One of the few joys allowed us 30
 As we shuffle on this mortal
 World. Without food we would soon starve.
 From thought of food to food for thought
 May I ask the blatant reason
 For your summoning here of me? 35
 GUS The night fore last, that fateful night of Scott's death
 I was working in the kitchen area.
 Trouble was brewing for his beer was wrong.
 Mispositioned from where it should have been placed.
 I wished to investigate further, but Scott, 40
 In his reckless desire to quench his thirst,
 Demanded the drink at too hasty a speed.
 Although labeled an accident and blamed on
 The brewer, I have my doubts and suspicions.
 At night this kitchen is insecure. 45
 A crafty traitor could easily sneak in
 And covertly poison the demagogue's beer.
 These thoughts I did ponder, when Lo, I did hear
 Vice demagogue Steve rambling off to himself
 A habit he frequently engages in. 50
 But in eavesdropping I was horribly shocked!
 I could not believe my auditory nerves.
 Quoth Steve "With the poison beer imbibed, I will

55 Have no trouble saving the world from that swine”
 That is what he said, less or more, and I was
 Shocked and scared and unsure of whom to turn to.
 I have confided to you. Hopefully I can
 Trust you when all other leaders are corrupt.
 VINCE The things you have said are heavy.
 60 I must contemplate them some more.
 You have done the right thing to tell
 I must go now and make sense of
 These horrible things you have said.
 And if they are true, then God help
 65 Us one and all. Thank you, maiden,
 If anything else happens, just call.
 [*Exit Vince*]
 GUS I have done the deed. I hope I was right.
 [*Exit*]

Scene 3

Steve's Room

STEVE Rutabaga! Rutabaga! How I curse that word!
 I am mocked in every hat by a rutabaga!
 Great Scott! If someone so evil can gain such a cult,
 I should have no problem when they see how good I
 am.
 5 Surely I have shot an arrow over my house and
 I have hit myself in the back of the head. Darn the
 Orbital mechanics and the laws of that Newton.
 I must implement my plans now and hope for the
 best.
 [*Enter aliens*]
 CHARCOAL The time is ripe
 10 We have returned now.

SUGAR It is time to
 Reap what we have sown.

YRBK Yes, Sugar is right, I fear. Now the time has
 Come to pay the piper. Truly your leadership
 Is noble and exalted, but suggestions we have 15
 That we believe you should consider right now.
 [*Hands book of demands over*]

STEVE What form of nonsense is this? Of what are you
 talking?
 These ideas of yours are ridiculously dumb!
 Look at these! Removal of Social Security!
 Mandatory Conscription for women! An end to 20
 All unauthorized creative thought? Are you crazy?
 What's this last one? Mandatory slavery for all
 Able bodied Terrans? I cannot implement these!

YRBK Ahh, but you will. We killed Scott for you, you see?
 You owe us big. And if you are reluctant 25
 To repay us, there is always the darkest
 Kind of correspondence, not authorized by
 The postmaster general and government.

STEVE Blackmail?!? But you wouldn't! I trusted you com-
 pletely!

YRBK All is fair in love and world domination. 30
 We used you, as well as your compatriots.
 Because of your help in betraying your world
 We might retain you as a figurehead. But all
 This pends on how much help you will offer.

STEVE I will not! I can not! I refuse to acknowledge. 35

YRBK Remember that you, too, are expendable.

STEVE Can I phase it in gently and retain some power?
 [*aside*] I have dug a hole, jumped in, and pulled it in
 after.
 I can only hope that in buying time I will think
 Of some way out of this horrendous situation. 40
 [*normal*] Can I inform the public tomorrow at high

noon?

YRBK

That is acceptable. Just remember that
Resistance is futile. Our invasion force
Hovers ready to strike if anything bad
Occurs, or if you try to double cross us.
[*Exuent*]

45

Scene 4

To crowd outside castle, from balcony. Next

Day

STEVE

My fellow Terrans! I have some news that may shock
you.

Aliens from beyond have come to our lonely world.
Coexist, we will, in harmony and happiness.

[*Murmuring in crowd*]

STEVE

Please, Please, do not panic. Do not be alarmed.
I have met with these beings and found them honor-
able.

They have come during a time of need and offered
help.

I have agreed to let them help us in governing Earth.

REPORTER 3

[*Reporters 1 and 2 could not make it*]

You would allow aliens

So soon after Scott's

Demise? Why these rutabagas

Are still fresh!

[*Murmurs of agreement*]

STEVE

The aliens know much, much more

Their technology is far, far more superior.

They have scores of innovations they will implement.

Give them time and judge them not before they have
acted.

5

10

15

Thus has Steve spoken; All who hear me will now
obey.

[*aside*] I wish there was another way out of this quandary.

Act IV

Scene 1

Mob in front of Demagogue Headquarters.
One week later

RIOTER 1 We must see Steve!

RIOTER 2 Steve we must see!

RIOTER 3 See Steve we must!

ERIN [*Bursting out*] What us this? Is there an echo out
 here?

What do you knaves want? What do you fools need? 5
Do you have a problem with my husband?

RIOTER 1 Yes, I do.

RIOTER 2 Same here.

RIOTER 3 Ditto.

[Yells of approval from the mob]

ERIN Well my husband is tired and busy.

Ruling the world is not easy you see.

RIOTER 1 Especially when aliens rule his mind!

But look! I have a 50% tax on my income!

RIOTER 2 My farm has been turned into an internment camp!

RIOTER 3 My children's school has been condemned.

[Cheer from children]

We all have burdens to bear, I fear.

We all must suffer and that is called life.

I'm sorry if you've been inconvenienced.

All your complaints have been duly noted.

Now quit your yelling and let us have peace.

[*aside*] These people are right, my husband's a dolt.

[*unaside*] I go now and inform him of your pain.

[Exit]

RIOTER 1

This would never have happened under the reign of Scott.

MOB

[*in unison*] Rutabaga! Rutabaga! Rutabaga!

Scene 2

On the moon. Governor's Home, in a Dome

LIZBETH

Husband, why must you leave me now?

I'm afraid of what might be.

We need your leadership skills here.

Going to Earth will magnify

Your burdens six-fold. Stay here please.

VINCE

Aye, my wife, I have to go now.

My friend Steve is over his head.

He needs guidance and I will guide.

The alien menace will soon

Be gone and behind us like the

Hydrocarbon Automobile.

My trip there will take hours and

I will have much to do, but the

Thought of you will speed my trip home.

LIZBETH

Hurry home husband. I will miss

You with all my heart

VINCE

— and I, you.

[*exit Vince*]

LIZBETH Aye, why did I marry this man?
To be a lonely pioneer
On this atmosphereless spheroid? 20
Why do I remain so faithful?
Back in my youth I had many
Boyfriends from which I could choose. I
Simultaneously had six
And could have had numerous more. 25
Of all the males devoted to
Me, why did I pick this eccentric?
From my fickle youth, how did I
Become so static and steadfast?
Certainly not his looks or charm. 30
Maybe his innocence and wit.
Whatever it is, I miss him
And Godspeed his journey back home.
[*exit*]

Scene 3

STEVE *Steve's Room*
 [*to viewscreen*]
 But Yrbk, you are asking too much. Way, way too
 much.
 It will cause riots and looting and revolution.
 The human race will not stand for such great abuses.
 [*phone mumbling from Yrbk*]
 Yes, I remember our agreement. [*sighs*] It shall be so.
 [*Click*] These foolhardy aliens! They do not under-
 stand!
 People will not stand this kind of treatment from be-
 yond.

ERIN Earth is on the brink of chaos. I must act, but how?
 Husband Steve! A mob has formed on our lawn!
 They demand remittance and reaction!
 10 They want your neck! And the aliens gone!
 Unfortunately I agree with them.
 I want these aliens out of our lives!
 STEVE Dear wife, whose side are you on? Can't you see that
 I've tried?
 ERIN Well obviously you haven't tried enough.
 STEVE [*Stands up mad. Flings over table*]
 15 I'm trying to act in the best interests of Earth!
 They would control us no matter who was in power!
 ERIN Before you were all action against Scott,
 Whose acts you did think would ruin us all.
 Aye, truly I say you are no better.
 20 You have accomplished what is less than nought.
 You are a horrible demagogue.
 STEVE [*Silent. Mulls it over*]
 My dear, dear, wife. How right you are. A fool I have
 been.
 I must halt this evil before it becomes too late.
 I must go now and plan what I will tell the people.
 [*exuent*]

Scene 4

Outside. Next Day. Bigger Mob.
 BOY Avast ye rash people, calm must be
 Hastened! A minute of calm will make
 Clear our heads! We must now think things through.
 MOB Rutabaga! Rutabaga! Kill Steve!
 5 BOY [*aside*] The lunar governor is coming.
 Methinks I shall await his presence.

I am confused for I am young.
 This mob is obscuring my judgement.
 MOB Rutabaga! Rutabaga! Kill Steve!
 BOY No, we must not kill the demagogue! 10
 MOB Kill the demagogue! Kill the demagogue!
 BOY No! Scott is lost! He is gone! He would
 Not want us to forsake Steve as well!
 MOB Forsake Steve as well! Forsake Steve as well!
 BOY Listen, before I spoke hastily. 15
 I regret that error. You are lost.
 Only Steve contacts the aliens.
 Only through him can we find justice!
 MOB Steve gets justice! Steve gets justice!
 Mob rushes to castle with Boy on shoulders. He protests. Out bursts Steve
 STEVE Young rogue! How dare you lead this mob! You shall 20
 pay the price!
 Draws sword and decapitates Boy. The End. You cannot kill Boy and hope to come out unscathed
 As for you vultures, I have decided to confront
 The aliens and take back our honor and planet.
 Crowd somewhat shaken over boy, gradually realize what Steve has said and begin to cheer
 The battle for Earth has begun. May God have mercy
 On all of our souls.
 MOB Rutabaga! Rutabaga!
 [exuent]

Act V

Scene 1

Joppatowne Space Port. Vince Landed. Being given Report by Gus, who is now a messenger

GUS Good lunar leader. I have much to inform.
The battle for Bel Air has begun awhile.
Steve and his woman have been taken hostage.
The battle rages; The advantage is ours.
Without leadership, though, we have had problems. 5

VINCE What of Boy? He is young, but capable.
Aye, I commanded him to keep control.

GUS Steve killed him without honor. Apparently
Due to a misunderstanding of motive.

VINCE [*sad*] Arr. Boy was one of my very best men. 10
That he should be lost in the prime of life.
How many must die before this all ends?

GUS The quicker you lead, the less the casualties.

VINCE You are wise beyond your years, young maiden.
Take me now to where I am needed most. 15

Scene 2

Bomb Shelter of Demagogue Headquarters

YRBK The Earthlings do struggle. We will win the day.
 Their superior intellect is no match
 To our advanced weaponry. We will triumph.

 [*Young Seward, all in medieval garb, bursts in*]

Y. SEWARD I am young Seward, here to slay the foul Macbeth!

YRBK Earthling! Not only do you have
 The wrong play and castle, but you have also
 Come a millennium too late! You dimwit!

Y. SEWARD [*abashed*] Oh sorry. I shall make a hasty departure
 And leave, herewith.

YRBK Foolish knave! You shall depart even faster!
 This is a lesson to all who would be late!

*Decapitates him with a laser-like weapon,
 possibly a laser*

STEVE [*from Cell*] Fool alien! T'were it necessary to do that?
 The poor soul t'was only a bit disoriented.

YRBK We have no need for human life. It clutters
 This spheroid already. Every dead human
 Is an improvement. Now be quiet or die.

ERIN [*Quietly*] Ahh, I hope the battle goes well for us.

STEVE [*also quietly*] I can only hope our soldiers have good
 leadership.

ERIN Stupid man! You killed their only leader!

STEVE What? I did no such thing. That would be suicidal.

ERIN Fool! How could you not see! Boy was their man!

STEVE What?! That little rabelrouser! He was inciting!

ERIN You walked in late and jumped to conclusions.

STEVE What? You mean I'm the one who destroyed our
 salvation?

ERIN You have doomed our race to extinction.

VINCE Surrender, vile creature! Die!

Your minions have been overpowr'd!

YRBK Impossible! We have fantastic weapons!

VINCE Aye, but they are reflectable

By photon reflectors; MIRRORS!

Yrbk shoots. Vince deflects with shiny sword

20

VINCE Surrender now or I will be
Forced to halt your life with this sword!

YRBK Ha! You and what army?

VINCE The one

Currently occupying the
Courtyard. They will be here quite soon.

25

YRBK You will never take me alive, I'm afraid.

grabs pipe. Starts sword-fighting

VINCE Arrr! Well that's quite all right with me!

Fight, Clink, Clink, etc Yrbk trips Vince with pipe, Vince falls

YRBK A hit! A hit! A very palpable hit!

VINCE [*gets up quickly*]

Oh yeah?

Well I learned Fencing from La Mahs! [*famous sword guy*]

30

Click, Clink, Swish, ow, clink, etc. Lots of theatrics

VINCE Aye, I grow weary of this fight.

Look! Isn't that Halley's Comet?

YRBK Where? [*looks*]

Vince stabs her. Yrbk falls

Arrr! You have killed me. You were a worthy foe.

You lived without honor and so

Shall you die in the same manner.

Aye, good riddance is what I say.

35

[*sees bodies of Steve and Erin*]
 Terrible carnage! Did you this?
 YRBK They brought it on themselves. Let me die in peace.
 [*dies*]
 VINCE Oh, their timing was bad. I came,
 But I was just a bit late. 40
 He would have faced a long jail term,
 But with good behavior he would
 Get out and still have time for life.
 Since we are now demagogueless
 I must inform the populace. 45

Scene 4

JC Football Field to large crowd. 4 hours later
 VINCE People of Earth, the aliens
 Have been destroyed. We have won!
Cheers. yeah!
 As you probably know by now
 Acting Demagogue Steve has died.
 Earth needs a strong ruler right now 5
 To rebuild the desolation.
 RIOTER 1 How about you?
 RIOTER 2 Vince for Demagogue!
more cheers. Vince! Vince! etc
 VINCE Calm down! Calm down! Be quiet please!
 I have considered this option. 10
 Consolidating the moon and
 Earth under one demagogueship
 Might be a viable option.
 Unfortunately the Earth is

15 Much larger than the moon and I
 Am not qualified to run both.
 Leading the moon is a simple
 Task; The Earth is a complex place.
 During the crisis, however
 20 A certain young lady showed her
 Loyalty to all humankind.
 She acted with honor and skill
 Foresight, Knowledge and Wisdom.
 Her name is Gus, and I think that
 25 She would make an ideal leader.

mumbles in the crowd

Gus, Gus? Introduce yourself now.

[*Enter Gus*]

GUS Although this is a surprise, I feel I
 Am ready to take total control of this place.
 During the battle I'm the one who did
 30 Destroy the alien's means of escape.

murmurs of admiration and recognition

Though a daunting task, it can be handled.
 Terrans, will you give me a chance to lead?

murmurs.. Ok

RIOTER 1 All hail demagoguess Gus! [*repeat*]
 GUS [*to Vince*] I cannot thank you enough. What are you
 Going to do with your life now, lunar friend?

35 VINCE I will do what I can do best.
 Wait, I have a call on my phone.

[*wrist phone*]

LIZBETH Aye, husband, when will you be home?
 For I have made cookies for you.

VINCE Mmmmmm. . .
 Cookies, the elixir of Life.
 I must leave. Cookies await me!
 40 [*to mob*] Earthlings I leave you in good hands!

[*Exit Vince*]

FINIS

Afterword and Annotations

The Tragedy of Steve was originally written starting in the Fall of 1995. There was a break after about Act 2, and it was finished in the Spring of 1996. The “Special Edition” [with minimal changes to the main text] was released 1 April 2001. The third edition was released in June of 2011 in honor of Steve’s impending marriage.

I am pleased with how well the play still reads after all these years. I was afraid there were too many inside and immature jokes, but despite doubling my age I think it holds up better than I could have hoped.

This all came about because I was fed up with reading Shakespeare, and unlike most people, I take out my literary aggressions by writing satire.

The “Special Edition” started out as an exercise for me to learn L^AT_EX type-setting, but it turned into a complete overhaul of the supporting text as well.

I wanted to include some annotations, but unlike most student forms of Shakespeare’s works I did not want to clutter the text with footnote numbers. You will have to look up the following passages by hand.

Some notes on the Characters:

Scott: Based on Scott D, the valedictorian. During high school he really was evil demagogue material, but since then has changed quite a bit and probably would not so easily fill the role.

Steve: The one and only. Does lead a tragic life, although not quite as conniving in real life. Was a good leader, and our deeds as the Academic Team will be sung about in song for decades to come.

Erin: Erin K. Not much to say here. I don't think I over-dramatized her too much, although the pairing of her with Steve was a humorous plot device at the time.

Vince: Not much to say. Obviously the easiest character to write.

Lizbeth: Liz D. I took some artistic liberty here, because at the time it would have been hard to imagine her as a doting wife. We always were supposed to get married and start a Guinea Pig and goat farm, and I think that's how she ended up paired with me in the play.

Mree: Marie P, called Mree by me. I ended up dating her for a few years, but that didn't happen until after I killed her off in the play. At the time I thought it was a pretty accurate portrayal of her.

Boy: My favorite character from *Henry V*.

John: John C. He only gets a really minor part here, but he's in the kitchen with Gus which seems appropriate somehow.

Gus: I wrote the first 2 acts before I dated Gus, and the rest of the play was written after we had broken up. In real life she's nowhere near as timid and whiny as she is portrayed in the play. And yes, she'd make a good demagoguess.

Charcoal: Really Brighid T. A weak pun off of her name [Brighid to Briquette to Charcoal Briquette. Yes I know, awful]

Yrbk: Rachael T. She was in the yearbook homeroom, so correspondence to her often had "Yrbk" written across the top of it.

Sugar: I honestly don't remember where this name came from. Possibly a play on Gus's name backwards?

Young Seward: From Macbeth. One of the inside jokes relating to the sadly lost-forever “AP English Macbeth video”, the best video of all time starring the aforementioned Scott, Steve and I. It featured *Disasterpiece Theater*, poison beer, Young Seward, Laser-tag battles, and “The King” [da-da-dum]

Annotations:

Act 1 Scene 1

The Computer takes the place of ghosts/specters that usually give the tone of impending doom in Shakespeare’s plays.

(22) A million seconds is approximately 11 and a half days.

Act 1 Scene 2

Having things take place at the site of my High School (John Carroll) seemed amusing at the time.

(34) I remember I wished finding the tragic flaw was always this easy when analyzing plays.

(44) Bad pun alert.

(45) You’ll notice I really enjoy getting extra syllables out of words using the é character.

(46) Another bad pun, although this one comes from reading *The Swiss Family Robinson*. In the translation I read, every other phrase seemed to be “capital idea.”

(49) Doofus. What was I thinking.

Act 1 Scene 3

(21) GI Joe reference.

Act 1 Scene 4

(15) A strained Shakespeare reference.

Act 2 Scene 1

(1) I must say I had a lot of fun crafting Scott’s dialogue in demagogic verse.

(13) I assume I meant Hitler, but it could be Kaiser Wilhelm.

(24/25) I really like this rhyme, it's very Bill Watterson-esque. I hope I didn't steal it from him.

(27) The whole women==evil thing is a common motif through many of my stories.

(36) "Arrrrrrrrr" is a lot of fun to say. It should be pronounced as a pirate would say it. It occurs a lot in this play, probably in part due to my AP Calculus class with Mr. Appleby. It was fun trying to pronounce the inverse hyperbolic cosecant, argcsc .

(38) Nein being 'No' in German. I slip into Germish too easily at times.

Act 2 Scene 2

(14) I am pretty sure spheroid is a reference to *Casey at the Bat*.

(15) Steve's immediate trust of the aliens always seemed like a plot hole to me, but I wasn't sure quite how to have the aliens earn his trust without overly complicating the play.

(19) "Your name will be remembered always" comes from a similar line in *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

(41) Grimm, and I spelled it as in the fairy-tales. This may also be partly in reference to a high school friend with that last name.

(42) Scott-free, bad bad bad pun.

(50) Resistors, spelled as in the electrical component that is often made of carbon. Subtle Electrical Engineer joke? I don't remember.

Act 2 Scene 3

The whole beer thing dates to the previously mentioned Macbeth video. Instead of poisoning wine we were poisoning beer, and it just seemed so much more comical.

(23) Figmenting some delusions? Don't ask.

Act 2 Scene 4

- (12) I just have to say Betwixt is a cool word.
- (16) Bad pun? Subtle foreshadowing? I don't know.
- (25) Verbatim line from our Macbeth video, but meant to be said as if Homer Simpson were saying it.
- (29) "I'm not evil", a phrase often said by the real Marie.
- (40) I think this line was added after I started dating her, with line 41 supposing to be a joke for the audience.
- (47) A similar line is in They Might Be Giant's song "It's not My Birthday"
- (54) Dying room, as opposed to Living Room. A play on words of the similar sounding "Dining Room."
- (54) Biblical reference. Romans 12:19. "Beloved, do not look for revenge but leave room for the wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' " Advice Steve should take.

Act 3 Scene 1

- (9) Obviously a reference to *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, which I've actually never read.
- (16) Knave. I am sure I had a certain scene from the *Duck Tales* cartoon in mind when I used it.
- (19) RUTABAGA! This is sort of making fun of the "wear a leek in your hat" from Henry V. It was hard trying to find a vegetable sillier than a leek.
- (21) is vegetative really an adjective?

Act 3 Scene 2

This scene is home to some of my worst puns.

- (9) This is somehow similar to a scene from the movie *Field of Dreams*.
- (11) Digression, a cool word.
- (13) This self doubt is not really in character for Gus. I must have thought it was important for the plot.

(20-35) The real Gus would often, in my opinion, not eat enough. This section is basically what my response to the situation was, though I am sure I was never quite so wordy in real life.

(31) Mortal coil and it'd be a Hamlet reference.

(38) OK this pun is worse than most of them here.

(56) The real life Gus would never be so distraught as to confide in me, so this scene had some personal amusement value at the time.

(59) Blatant reference from the movie *Back to the Future*.

Act 3 Scene 3

(3) Great Scott, while being a bad pun, is also a *Back to the Future* reference.

(5) Another line stolen from our Macbeth video, and also referencing a similar line in either Macbeth or Hamlet, I forget which.

(27) A very wordy way of implying blackmail, I'll admit.

(38) A semi-famous analogy usually used to try to explain the concept of a black-hole in astronomy books.

(41) High noon? What is this, a cowboy movie?

Act 3 Scene 4

(10) Never underestimate the power of fresh rutabagas.

Act 4 Scene 1

(13) Back then I thought 50% would be ridiculously huge. Now I know better.

Act 4 Scene 2

Home in a Dome. I like settings that rhyme.

(11) I guess this is set in a futuristic world without cars. The

play does still has a Jacobian time frame feel. I never quite clearly worked out the play's world, but that's for the audience to dream up.

(17-35) This section of the play always drew the most negative comments. I needed a female character to have a long soliloquy. I also had to fix up a [at least to me] glaring plot-hole... why would Lizbeth be my wife. So I tried to solve both problems at once, but it ended up seeming to be a lot of self-praise, which was unintended. Believe it or not, I wasn't over-exaggerating my impression of her personal life that much.

Act 4 Scene 4

(20) Never, ever kill Boy in a Shakespearean drama. Never.

(Also, pre-3rd edition Boy was referred to as a rouge instead of a rogue. Some scholars think this was intentional. They are idiots).

Act 5 Scene 1

Joppatowne is where I grew up. A great place for a spaceport, and convenient to Dictator Headquarters.

(3) Bel Air, as in Bel Air, Maryland, the home of John Carroll. I always wondered what a battle for Bel Air would be like. Mainly a lot of smashed shopping centers I suppose.

(10) I really like this line.

(15) In reality I probably wouldn't make a good military leader, unless the battle was similar to Civ2. And even then I'd be out of luck if their capital was overseas.

Act 5 Scene 2

John Carroll actually does have a bomb shelter. Sadly I never got to see it personally.

(2) This saying is a paraphrase from a Simpson's Halloween special.

(4) Young Seward, from the Macbeth video. Sadly there seems

to be no cosmic consequences for killing him. Also, the original version had “fowl Macbeth” here, an interesting homonym.

(7) A millennium too late would imply a year of 2057, assuming Macbeth was killed in 1057.

(11) No, this actually isn’t a message to a few of my friends [both in this play] who are often consistently late.

(15) I use the word “spheroid” too often.

(23) Not exactly a reference, but jumping to conclusions always reminds me of *The Phantom Tollbooth*.

Act 5 Scene 3

(10) The various and numerous methods of self-immolation in Julius Caesar must have had an impact on me. [3rd edition note – 2001 Vince, immolate doesn’t mean what you thought it did]

(11) I use this reference a bit too often too.

(14) A lesson we all could learn from.

(15) Me to the rescue!

(17) The photon reflector thing was a joke I had going w Nick A. We made up over-complicated names for common devices. Stairs were “manual altitude adjusters” and we had a few others. Yes, this is sort of a cheesy “defeat aliens with primitive technology” cliché, but it works.

(24) The JC courtyard is pretty small so hopefully the army is bigger than implied.

(28) A favorite Shakespeare line we used in the Macbeth video.

(30) Another line from Macbeth. At the time we all thought the similarity of his name to the birth-breathing method humorous. Possibly also a reference to *The Princess Bride*, which was a big influence on the Macbeth video.

(32) OK, OK, I admit a cheesy way out, and a very unfair way to kill the alien. But hey, if she’s dumb enough to look. . .

(44) Ooh, a rhyming couplet to end the scene!

Act 5 Scene 4

The twist-surprise ending! I wrote this far, and the obvious ending was for me to assume power. But in reality, I really don't want to rule the world. The moon, sure. But Earth is a pain. The problem was I had killed off all the other major characters. Gus was still left though, and I knew she'd make a good leader. But is it believable for the kitchen help to become leader? She had already broken up with me at this point, so that wasn't the reason I gave her the planet. In retrospect I think I did the right thing.

(4) Acting demagogue, probably a reference to our "Acting-Principal" Mr. Scholl.

(29) Rationalizing the twist ending.

(36) I hope they never invent wrist-phones. Cellphones are bad enough.

(40) Cookies, a nice wife, and a minor-planet to rule. Who could ask for more?

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About the Author

Vince Weaver has more Computer Engineering Ph.D.s than your typical dramatist. He lives in Knoxville, Tennessee, with his lovely wife and his two noisy children. He hopes to re-acquire a guinea pig at some point, and would like to live on the moon some day. He does like cookies, but is fairly indifferent about rutabagas.

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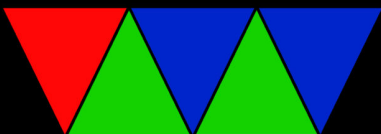
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