

Paul Ryan

(after Julius Caesar by Wm. Shakespeare)

By Shaun Manning

Scene I

Cleveland. Inside the Quicken Loans Arena during the Republican National Convention.

Enter KASICH, CARSON, and certain COMMONERS.

KASICH

Ok, that's quite enough! There's a buffet
In Banquet Room B, is that not why you
Languish round these halls? Tell me, who are you
When you are not a delegate?

FIRST COMMONER

A man.

KASICH

A man I can see plainly. But what else?

FIRST COMMONER

A man concerned with manly things.

CARSON

What things?

KASICH

I catch his meaning.

FIRST COMMONER

Things which int'rest men
And fire their hearts; things women know not of.

KASICH

Brave soul! You speak for us all.

CARSON

All us men.
And you, sirrah, what are you?

SECOND COMMONER

I am rich.

KASICH

Good man! How came you by your fortune so?

SECOND COMMONER

Why, sir, by my family.

KASICH

As is meet.

And you?

THIRD COMMONER

Governor, I am poor, and so I cast
My vote for Trump.

CARSON

What! Wherefor did you so?

THIRD COMMONER

He speaks his mind; what more could I request?

KASICH

No matter; Trump will not prevail. And yet
I do fear what turmoil follows his fall.
Though I urged my own cause, Speaker Ryan
Aby commands the delegation's applause.

Scene II

The convention hotel. Enter PAUL RYAN, TRUMP, CRUZ, BUSH, PRIEBUS, MCCONNELL, and a great crowd following, among them a Pundit.

RYAN

Leader McConnell!

PRIEBUS

Ho! The Speaker speaks.

RYAN

Leader McConnell!

MCCONNELL

Speaker, I am here.

RYAN

We have business to attend, quite outside
This vexing campaign. Defunding, repeal --

MCCONNELL

All that can wait, Speaker Ryan, until --

PUNDIT

Mr. Speaker, a moment?

RYAN

Who is this?

PUNDIT

Speaker Ryan, beware the GOP.

RYAN

What did you say? Are you from CNN?

PUNDIT

Speaker Ryan, beware the GOP.

PRIEBUS

A pundit says beware the GOP.

RYAN

Away! He has nothing to fear, who asks
Nothing of what is offered. No questions!

Exit RYAN, PRIEBUS, and MCCONNELL, as the crowd flashes photographs and shouts questions.

BUSH

I think I missed something; what's going on?

TRUMP

It's awful, terrible; they've treated me
So unfairly.

CRUZ

The party chose Ryan.

BUSH

Surely he did not accept a role
He so vehemently refused anon?

TRUMP

Yeah, he refused; and how the assembled
Delegates cheered.

BUSH

That was the rejoicing
I overheard from the hall! No wonder!

CRUZ

A second ballot followed, and again
Ryan overcame me and Mr. Trump.

BUSH

What said he then?

TRUMP

The fool Ryan said "no,"
And the delegates hooted their support.
But my own people, the best people, they
Grew surly, indignant, and angered, for
I am their voice and their hope.

CRUZ

So you say.
But the Party chose Ryan; Though I won
The love of our conservative voters.

BUSH

Alas! If only I could say the same!

CRUZ

Jeb! You of all men comprehend the ire
Of one who wins the race but is denied
His rightful prize.

BUSH

My brother kept us safe!

TRUMP

The past is past. The present finds Ryan
Winning again the third ballot, and though
He curses and swears he will not accept
The nomination, he swore as much when
Offered the place of Speaker, and we know
How that resolved. Tomorrow the conference
Meets again, and Ryan will then be crowned.

BUSH

Although he did not run.

CRUZ

Even you earned
More votes than he. Were you to make complaint
Surely the Party would back you instead.

BUSH

Do you truly think so?

CRUZ

Truly, I do.

BUSH

You have given me much to think upon.

TRUMP

Don't think too much; do it or clear the way
For Lyin' Ted or me to get stuck in.

BUSH

I will think upon it.

TRUMP

Tomorrow, then.

CRUZ

Tomorrow.

Exit TRUMP and BUSH

And come tomorrow, Ted Cruz
Will top the Republican field, whether
The Grand Old Party wills it or no.

Scene III

Outside the convention. TRUMP stands at a podium, addressing a yuge audience.

TRUMP

Sad! Disgraceful, how the GOP works
To deny my lustful voters their voice.
And I, the one who could control Putin,
Put China in its place, make Mexico
Build our wall, keep out Muslims from our shores,
To me, for whom the most voters say "yes,"
The party says "no," and anoints Ryan
In my place. Paul Ryan, who, time and time
Again boasts no strong ambition to lead
The greatest country to greatness again.
They scorn Trump, whom voters Republican
And Democratic alike love, Mexican,
Muslim, the Blacks, the Jews, no one is there

Who does not heartily embrace the strength
Of Trump. And why should they? For Trump is very,
Very rich, and what further proof requir'd
To judge a man's worthiness? Nay, vote Trump,
Or take your vote home and keepest it in
Your breast pocket. Does the Party reject
Your voice? Then raise your voice to reject
The Party. Truly, they can forswear Trump
And all of Trump's fantastic supporters.

Scene IV

Ryan's hotel room. Enter RYAN, MCCONNELL, and PRIEBUS.

RYAN

Though I did not seek this party's crown,
Yet must I needs take it upon my head.

MCCONNELL

Indeed, Speaker, you are our final hope.

PRIEBUS

And yet I do fear Trump and Cruz, who, like
Ravenous wolves, make fast to tear apart
Our Grand Old Party, and with it, my lord
The esteemed Speaker Paul Ryan.

RYAN

What! Bah!
Trump failed the first ballot, and Cruz again
The second; wherein our wise delegates
Lifted me atop the field.

PRIEBUS

And Kasich?

RYAN

And who? I fear Ohio's Governor
As I tremble at the vanquish'd scion
Of the family Bush. Pray, where is Jeb!?

MCCONNELL

Mr. Speaker, he has been seen anon
Moping about the convention hall floor.

PRIEBUS

Poor Jeb!!

RYAN

And yet his ill fortune serves me
Exceeding well. May he prosper in all
That does not pertain to presidency.

Scene V

A shady back hallway of the arena. Enter BUSH, KASICH, and CRUZ.

BUSH

Is Ben Carson won over to our cause?

KASICH

Alas, no one has seen that man for days.

BUSH

And Trump?

CRUZ

Trump is Trump, whatever our plans.
We cannot control him, but we'll use him
All the same.

BUSH

Senator Cruz, I hear him
Even now. I know not whether he stands
In the next room, or brazenly holds forth
In Cleveland's wide streets; his voice carries so.

CRUZ

Then, lo, our campaign begins without us!
Let us not tarry, but gird up our loins
To struggle against our broken party
And so, Phoenix-like, birth a new caucus,
Conceived in the backseat of Liberty,
Swaddled in the warm blanket of Freedom,
And secured by the boundless sacred love
Of the fatherly Second Amendment.

KASICH

To it, then! And before this day is gone,
Ryan will know what he lost as he won.

Scene VI

Enter RYAN, to a podium, with TRUMP, CRUZ, BUSH, KASICH, PRIEBUS, and MCCONNELL, standing before a cheering Crowd.

RYAN

Thank you, thank you. After long enmity
Our party unites to take up a fight
For our values; that no business might
Be taxed more than its lowest laborer,
That every woman have her whims approv'd,
That immigrants--

TRUMP

You're not to Muslims yet.

RYAN

I will get to them anon.

TRUMP

You order
All amiss, Speaker Ryan. Your judgment
Is cloudy, and my supporters, numb'ring
Millions, will not abide such a weakness.
They make riot outside these doors, calling
For new convention, and Trump.

RYAN

I am slain!

CRUZ

Not yet, Speaker, but my faction, too, cries
For a true conservative candidate.
They raise their voices for Cruz, and will not
Be satisfied with another.

RYAN

Alack!

KASICH

Look, ho, I was the intended last man
Standing amidst this unholy carnage
And will take my due, or none other will.

BUSH

It's my turn, and I claim my legacy.

RYAN

Et tu, Jeb!? Then, fall Ryan.

BUSH, KASICH, CRUZ, and TRUMP fall upon RYAN, as MCCONNELL and PRIEBUS scrambled and the Crowd shouts in confusion.

PRIEBUS

Speaker Ryan is o'erthrown, doomed are we
To another four year span of health care,
Reduced unemployment and, worst of all,
No security against --

Enter MARCO RUBIO, to the podium.

RUBIO

Friends, Republicans, Countrymen, lend me your ears --

ALL

No!

Exeunt all but RUBIO, in chaos.

RUBIO has a drink of water. Exit RUBIO.