

An ancient piece of manuscript was recently discovered in Stratford upon Avon in the cellar of a plus-size lingerie shop, buried beneath a pile of J cup brassieres. It purports to be a first draft of William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, which according to the manuscript was previously known as 'Tu and Fro'.

Here is an extract:

JC: Ah Brutus, good of you to come.

B: The honour, sir, is mine.

JC: Care to join me for some apple tart?

B: I crumbly accept.

JC: Pass me the salt there will you? I say, pass the salt dear chap...is that a vile, depraved smirk on your ravaged face Brutus?

B: No sir...

JC: What was it then?

B: I was just admiring your most majestic jest, sir. Very good.

JC: A jest? A jest?! Not in the slightest, it needs more salt.

[B smirks]

JC: Again you laugh in my face.

B: Laugh, sir? I wouldn't dare. I just wish to commend you with the highest condiments a crumble servant such as I may offer.

JC: Hmm...pass me the salt will you Brutus.

B: Surely you mean the sugar sir.

JC: Do you think I don't know the difference between salt and sugar? I have had hordes of wild virginal maidens flogged for less.

B: I do most crumbly...er humbly regret those words sir.

JC: I'm sure you do Brutus. I'm sure you do. Now pass me the salt.

B: Certainly sir...how does it taste?

JC: Hmm...(clears throat then coughs).

B: Dry, sir?

JC: Are you...(clears throat) are you smirking at me Brutus? You know how much I hate the smirkers and the sodomisers.

B: I'm no smirker sir.

JC: But you are a...

B: ...what a fine beard you have there sir. A real grower if you don't mind me saying.

JC: I'm glad you've noticed Brutus, I am most obliged, but it does make one's face incredibly itchy. (Sound of massive scratching)

B: Why sir, perhaps I can be of help.

(Sound of clanking)

Narrator: Brutus knocks over his sword causing a bulge in his toga.

JC: Why Brutus, look at the size of your...!

B: ...Aubergine sir. I'm afraid one can never be too sure of one's situation to be without a particularly large aubergine tucked into one's toga.

JC: You could feed a whole village with that thing. I'm afraid though Brutus, that I have some bad news.

B: Really? Do tell.

JC: Oh. Ahem, well, I feel a severe bout of tyrantitis coming on.

B: Is there no cream they can give for that sir?

JC: I'm afraid not.

B: Oh. Damnation...if I may be permitted, what are the symptoms exactly?

JC: The brutal slaughter of thousands of innocent people, and a craving for clotted cream and custard.

B: God's alive! How can one man alone suffer such vile and depraved torment?

JC: I know Brutus, I know. I am a sick man.

B: And who...er...is to be slaughtered?

JC: Well, I did the A's last time, so I guess I might as well stay in alphabetical order.

B: ...I see.

JC: Not for much longer I fear.

B: Well, if that is to be my fate then I shall accept it in the great Roman tradition.

JC: Excellent, Brutus. Excellent. I knew you'd come around to it eventually.

B: Of course sir. But...er... might I be permitted first the honour of shaving your Excellency's itchy beard as a last service...?

JC: You may, dear Brutus, you may. I had my last barber butchered two weeks ago for drawing blood. Though I fear Marc Anthony has the razor.

B: No matter I have just the thing. Close your eyes and hold still...

(Sound of a sword being drawn).

JC: Et tu, Brute?!

B: What's that?

JC: You really do have such soft, feminine hands don't you?

B: Oh. Quite. Hold still, sir. We wouldn't want some accident to happen now would we?

Ben Lamy March 2010