

# The $\pi$ Play

*A One-Act Play In Which  
The Number of Letters  
In Successive Words Of Dialogue  
Spells Out The First 770 Digits  
Of The Number pi.*

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2006

*Guil and Roz are seated in two chairs front and center. Upstage and to the side is a large cardboard box on the floor. Guil is brandishing a sheaf of papers.*

3 1 4 1 5 9 2 6 5 3 5 8

**Guil** It's a play! A farce involving Mr. Cheney, trees...and quail shooting!  
Hilarious, totally hilarious!

9 7 9

**Roz** Uhh...no.

3 2

3 8 4 6 2 6 4 3 3 8 3 2 7

**Guil** Yes! Envision this: Cheney is eating plum pie and cleaning out an ancient  
gunpowder chest...

9 5

**Roz** Absolutely no! [*Grabs the papers from Guil*] Suppress politics, Guil.  
I recommend "classic".

0 2 8 8 4

1 9 7

*Roz shows a copy of each text to the audience as she names it:*

1 6 9 3 9 9

**Roz** A "Hamlet"... "Pygmalion"... "Wit"... "Cleopatra"... "Euripides".  
Not Cheney's quail!

3 7 5

**Guil** I understand. Maybe politics *is* thoroughly pointless.

1 0 5 8 2 0 9

7 4 9 4 4 5 9 2 3 0

**Roz** Exactly. Look - Virginian Math/Tech dudes scheduled us for *mathematic*  
reasons. Enacting a stupid play concerning rifles - or [*pauses, flaps arms*]  
humanoid flying - is irrelevant.

7 8 1 6 4 0 6 2

8 6 2 0

**Guil** Alrighty: radically different approach!

8 9 9 8

*Guil walks over to the box and spins it around. It says "It's a Case o' Props" on  
the side. [31415 – get it?] He starts pulling things out one at a time.*

6

**Guil** Lessee.

*He pulls out a rubber chicken, looks at Roz quizzically.*

2

**Roz** No.

*He pulls out a zip-loc bag of broccoli.*

8

**Guil** Broccoli?

*Roz shakes her head "no". He pulls out a bunch of boomerangs.*

0

**Guil** Boomerangs?

*Roz again shakes her head. He pulls out a plate, holds it back to audience.*

3 4 8

**Guil** Aha! This! Remember?

*He turns the plate around so the audience can see the front. It has the digits of  $\pi$   
inscribed in a circle around the circumference.*

2 5

**Roz+Guil** Pi Plate!

*Guil pulls a wand out of the box.*

3 4 2 1 1 7

**Guil** The wand of SerPIsortia! Perfect!

*Roz looks confused; Guil picks up a random book and mimes using the wand.*

0 6 7 9 8 2 1 4 8

**Guil** Literature slowly scanned magically converts to a text spelling successive  
decimals, namely:

0 8 6

*Guil points at the successive digits on the pi plate.*

5

**Guil** Three...

*Guil continues wordlessly with "mm", "mm", "mm" to indicate successive digits...*

1 3 2 8 2

**Roz** I see. So – exercise it!

*Guil shakes his head "no", hands Roz the wand and book*

3

**Guil** You!

*Roz pauses a moment then passes the wand over the book. She opens it to the first page and examines it (unseen by the audience).*

0 **Roz** Remarkable!  
6 6 4 7 0 9 3 **Guil** Indeed. [*Points to the open pages*] Notice word lengths faithfully following pi's  
8 sequence.  
4 4 6 0 9 5 5 **Roz** [*Suddenly excited*] Guil, let's change Shakespere! Something weird, crazy, ...  
0 5 **Guil** ...Positively scary...  
8 **Roz** Forsooth! [*Picks up two plays of The Bard, shows each to Guil*]  
2 2 **Guil** No... no... [*Guil picks up "Macbeth", shows it to Roz*]  
3 1 7 2 5 3 5 9 4 0 8 **Roz** Yes! O, "Macbeth" is crazy *and* scary, 'specially that nightgown'd restless  
12 8 sleepwalking incident.  
4 **Guil** Cool!  
8 **Roz** Forsooth!  
*Guil quickly takes the wand and touches it to the copy of "Macbeth"*  
11 1 7 **Guil** Abracadabra - a "Macmath"!  
*Guil hands the book to Roz.*  
4 **Guil** Here.  
*Roz opens the book and begins to study, as if memorizing, while she walks to the box of  
props. Inside the box she finds a nightgown, slips it on. As she is finishing up, Guil  
introduces the scene from "Macbeth".*  
5 0 2 8 4 1 0 2 7 **Guil** [*to audience*] After conspiracy to secretly kill a compatriot, Ms. Macbeth  
0 1 9 undertakes a sleepwalk...  
*This is the Lady Macbeth "madness scene" from Act V scene I. Roz should do the usual  
bits of business normally done during this scene in productions of "Macbeth".*  
3 8 5 2 1 1 0 5 5 5 **Roz** Out, damnable spots! No, troublesome spellbound witch - hell's murky!  
9 6 4 4 6 2 2 9 4 8 9 5 Disappear, damned spot! Fear besets us, my ambitious Lord. Whatever adventure comes,  
4 9 3 0 3 8 1 9 6 4 4 fear nevermore! Fie, providence! Fie, prophecy! A swordsman, afraid? What fear?  
2 8 8 1 0 9 7 5 6 6 5 So impotent, overlord? I altogether eradicate Banquo's blood. Begone, damned spots!  
9 Evaporate!  
3 3 4 4 6 The man from Fife belied  
1 2 8 4 A so-demented wife.  
7 5 6 4 8 2 3 3 7 8 6 7 Banquo's blood smells, your ladyship. So all the Arabian perfumes cannot sweeten  
8 3 1 6 5 2 7 1 2 0 1 9 0 likewise thy...O! horrid spots! On Duncan's spellbinding apparition I privately deliberate.  
9 1 4 5 6 4 8 5 6 6 9 2 3 Posthaste I come along, gentle Lord. Previous deeds cannot become abolished. To bed...  
4 6 0 3 4 8 6 1 0 4 5 **Guil** Cool. Drama's intriguing, but let's consider...poetry. A tetrameter - like, maybe...  
4 3 **Roz** [*Holds up a copy of "The Raven"*] Like Poe?  
2 6 6 4 8 **Guil** OK. [*Handing wand to Roz.*] Change ravens into...whatever.  
*Roz touches the wand to the book and hands it to Guil. Guil reads aloud to the audience.*  
2 1 3 3 9 3 6 0 7 2 6 On a sad day, overweary, dim night's spellbound draught so dreary,  
0 2 4 9 1 4 1 2 7 3 Struggling to stay sustained I most distraughtly pensive sat.  
7 2 4 5 8 7 0 0 Clothed in cold sweat, thoughts defying, intimation terrifying  
6 6 0 6 3 1 5 5 8 Pining, pining, henceforth pining, for a nymph named Elsinore,  
8 1 7 4 Vanished - O! - forever more.

8 8 1 5 2 0 9 2 0                   Strength regained I stood, so frightened, curiosity so heightened  
9 6 2 8 2 9 2 5                    Whereupon beyond my antedoor so purposely it cried;  
4 0 9 1 7 1 5 3 6                  With incendiary heartburn I deduced a sound not modern,  
4 3 6 7 8 9 2 5 9                  Like the solemn ancient bagpipes, exercised to haunt therefore,  
0 3 6                                    Terrifying all before.

0 0 1 1 3 3 0                        Melancholy penetrated, strangeness old and syncopated  
5 3 0 5 4 8 8 2 0 4                Moved the storehouse rooms with dreadful melodies of graveyards past.  
6 6 5 2 1 3 8 4 1 4 6 9            Naught harmed truth or understanding: shrieked then I this phrase, demanding  
5 1 9 4 1 5 1 1                    "Lives a legendary lady, O inert conspirator?"  
6 0 9                                  Heaven proclaimed: "Nevermore".

4                                    **Roz**   Cool.  
3 3 0 5 7                        **Guil**  Did you appreciate every anagram?  
2 7                                **Roz**   Uh...anagram?  
0                                  **Guil**  Absolutely.  
*Guil starts to walk towards the blackboard*  
3 6 5 7 5                        **Guil**  The "Lenore" which appears *there* [*he points to the "Raven" in his hand*]  
9 5 9 1 9 5 3 0 9                obviously needs replacing. A Lenoreful poem's now containing "Elsinores".  
2                                  **Roz**   So? I...  
*Guil goes to the blackboard, writes "Elsinore"*  
1 8 6 1 1 7                        **Guil**  "Elsinore" thusly transformed becomes...  
*As he speaks the preceding line, he writes on the board below Elsinore "Is Lenore".*  
3                                  **Roz**   Wow!  
8 1 9 3 2 6 1 1                    **Guil**  Forsooth. I suspect it's of "Hamlet" [*holds up a copy*] Serpisortia [*shows the wand*]  
7 9                                adopted "Elsinores".  
3 1 0 5 1 1 8 5 4                **Roz**   Yes. [*pause for a new thought*] I definitely enjoy Serpisortia-modified texts. Let's  
8 0 7 4 4 6 2                    scramble everything! [*Picks up books one at a time*] Classic play, poem, modern, or... [*on*  
*"modern", she holds up "Waiting for Godot". Guil grabs it.*]  
3 7 9                                **Guil**  Yes! Beckett! [*They both imitate Didi and Gogo*] Elevation...  
9                                  **Roz**   Isolation...  
6 2                                **Guil**  Hating...or  
7                                  **Roz+Guil** Waiting!  
*They wait.*  
*Then walk toward the box of props. As they go, Roz speaks*  
4 9 5 6 7                        **Roz**   Let's transform crazy Lucky's lecture.  
*They root through the box of props and find a hat for Roz (Lucky) and a rope for Guil*  
*(Pozzo) to attach to Roz. They walk to center stage.*  
3 5                                **Guil**  You: Lucky. [*Gives Roz the rope, who attaches it to her right hand, letting the*  
*other end drop to the floor and trail behind her. She stands with one foot on each side of*  
1 8 8 5                            the rope on the floor.] I: annoying, superior Pozzo.  
*They look ready to begin, but as Guil tightens the rope it pulls on Roz's arm and also goes*  
*between her legs. They play Roz's entanglement for laughs, eventually getting her free.*  
7 5                                **Guil**  [*to audience*] Silence! [*slowly puts the hat on Roz/Lucky*] Think!  
[*This is an abbreviated version of Lucky's speech from Act I of "Waiting for Godot". It*  
*should be spoken loudly and as if by a madman.*]

27248912      **Roz**      In regards to this proposed existence quaquaquaqu  
27938183      in Puncher regarding the personal - *A* personal - God  
0119      extemporal extemporary extensive  
491298      with greybeard-countenanced authority athambia  
3367      his old divine aphasia  
33624      his new divine “as what?”  
40      with marginalia  
6566      divine mania divine anemia  
430860      lets men altogether suffused suffer altogether  
21394      overintellectualizing the principal idea  
9463952247371      discussed here within the collected works of Mr. Dewy Puncher and Wattman (I)  
9070217      following Normandie’s General Ackacademy of Anthropopometry  
9860      following Puncher’s proven principles  
9437027705      following from the massive monographs of Fartoff & Belcher (unfinished works)  
39217      and following on I observe  
176293      I observe dismal Mr. Wasserman and  
1767      I observe feeble Puncher,  
523846      lives of men occupied with sports:  
748      further, with sporting  
18467669405      a-sporting with flying cycling riding tennis billiards golf versifying dying  
1320      I say in conclusion  
0056812      penicillin succedanea dying flying conating concurrently  
714526356      passing a time there in plains and great rivers  
08      throughout pastures  
277      in running streams  
8577      touching great running streams  
13427      I say also: in streams  
577      great running streams  
89609      touching weathered stones conscience Connemara  
173637      I observe the tennis the gravity  
1787      I observe touching streams  
21468440      in a word, stones...touching...calm...alas...unfinished...

901224      **Guil**      Brilliant! Humanistic satiricality is cool.  
953430      **Roz**      President Bush’s GOP says it’s deplorable.  
146549585      **Guil**      I know. [*sotto voce*] Stupid Dubya. [*louder*] Well, regarding these writings, which  
37105      one creates a *pilariffic* scene?  
                 *Roz holds up “Macbeth”.*  
07      **Roz**      Shakespere? Macbeth? [*Guil takes it from her.*]  
9227968      **Guil**      [*Slowly, as if thinking out loud*] Topically, it is...tyrants attacking mostly innocent  
9258923542      humankind. No, that’s somewhat analogous to the world we’re in. [*Hands it back to her.*]  
0      **Roz**      [*Nods*] Tragically. [*She puts it aside.*]  
                 *Roz picks up “The Raven”*  
1995611      **Roz**      A blatantly numerical “Raven”? Pilish tetrameters?  
                 *Guil shakes his head “no”. Roz sets it aside, continues to look through stuff.*  
2129021960      **Guil**      [*slowly*] I’d specifically advocate literature of a *reflexive* format... concerning...  
8      possibly...  
64034      **Roz**      Listen – let’s disarrange *our* play! [*holds up the sheaf of papers*]  
41815981      **Guil**      Sure! I envision a final statement encoding a... [*Guil holds up 3 fingers*].  
3629774      **Roz**      Yes! Lessee...[*thumbs through the script*] We surpassed seventy decades *here*.

7 7 1 [points at the place in the script about 700 digits in] Quickly, uncover a... [Roz holds up 3 fingers]  
*Guil picks up a stack of 3x5 cards which apparently have the digits of  $\pi$  on them, one to a card. He cuts to the right place in the deck and starts searching, looking through the cards one at a time.*

3 0 9 9 6 **Guil** D'oh! Completely worthless! Worthless sevens [*shows the audience two 7's in a row*], irrelevant eight [*shows the audience an 8*], a fourteen [*said as a question, with a quizzical look, and shows the audience a card with 14 on it*], useless, irrelevant, useless...  
0 5 1 8 [for each of these he counts off a card without showing it] Ah! Interesting! [*fans the deck*]  
7 0 7 and shows it to Roz, but not the audience. Roz steps close to Guil.] It's here! [*points to the 7<sup>th</sup> card down*]  
2 1 1  
3 4  
As Guil says the next six words, he shows the next six cards to the audience, which are all nines.

9 9 9 9 9 **Guil** Worthless, worthless, worthless, worthless, worthless, worthless...  
*Guil shows the next card to Roz as he says...*

8 **Guil** Worthful!  
*Then turns it around to the audience. Of course, it is a "3".*

3 **Guil + Roz** [*loudly and demonstratively, or, alternatively, singing*] END!

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## Notes

(1) The precise rules for converting words to digits are:

If a word has 1-9 letters, it stands for that digit (1-9).

If a word has 10 letters, it stands for the digit 0.

If a word has more than 10 letters, it represents two consecutive digits

(e.g., a 12-letter word stands for the digit 1 followed by the digit 2)

A word with an apostrophe is considered a single unit (e.g., *don't* is a "4"). All other punctuation marks are treated as word separators (e.g. *so-demented* on page two represents 2,8).

The sequence of pi's digits corresponding to the dialogue is shown in the left margin.

(2) "Shakespeare", used twice in the play, is one of the many variant spellings of "Shakespeare" used during his lifetime.

(3) Yes, there really *are* six nines in a row at digits 763 to 768 of pi (see just above).