



## *The Young Shakespeareans*

### **THE BEAT GOES ON!**

Shakespeare knew that a play where everything stays the same from the beginning to the end is not very interesting. Therefore, just like in a play, each scene has at least three sections:

- a beginning – the set-up;
- a middle – when something important changes;
- an end – the resolution.

Each of these sections have several parts called **beats (a change in event, emotion, purpose, decision, or discovery)**. **Beats** also happen within a character's monologue, and within dialogue between characters. **Whenever a character changes what he/she is doing to get what he/she wants, it is a new beat.**

Figuring out where the beats are in a scene is important, especially for the Director of the play. Figuring out where the beats are in a character's lines is a very important part of what an Actor does.

Let's look at the BEATS in the following choral piece which are marked with a / :

**If we shadows have offended,  
Think but this, and all is mended, /  
That you have but slumbered here  
While these visions did appear.  
And this weak and idle theme,  
No more yielding but a dream. /  
Gentles, do not reprehend:  
If you pardon, we will mend.**

If we actors have offended you,  
just think of it this way and it will be all right /  
you were asleep  
when you saw these visions.  
And this silly and pathetic story  
was no more real than a dream. /  
Ladies and gentlemen, don't get upset with me:  
if you forgive us, we'll make everything all right.

The character is doing something slightly different in each beat of the monologue.

<b>1<sup>st</sup> beat</b>	<b>Apologizing</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> beat</b>	<b>Explaining, Convincing</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> beat</b>	<b>Asking Forgiveness</b>

Now you are ready to work out the beats in your character's lines!