

## SHAKESPEARE MONOLOGUES FOR MEN

### ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE / *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS* (Act 3, Scene 2)

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE:

Sweet mistress—what your name is else I know not,  
Nor by what wonder you do hit of mine,—  
Less in your knowledge and your grace you show not  
Than our earth's wonder, more than earth divine.  
Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak.  
Lay open to my earthy gross conceit,  
Smothered in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,  
The folded meaning of your words' deceit.  
Against my soul's pure truth why labour you  
To make it wander in an unknown field?  
Are you a god? would you create me new?  
Transform me, then, and to your power I'll yield.  
But if that I am I, then well I know  
Your weeping sister is no wife of mine,  
Nor to her bed no homage do I owe.  
Far more, far more, to you do I decline.  
O, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note  
To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears.  
Sing, Siren, for thyself, and I will dote.  
Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,  
And as a bed I'll take them and there lie,  
And in that glorious supposition think  
He gains by death that hath such means to die.  
Let Love, being light, be drownèd if she sink.

# THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND

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## **BENVOLIO / *ROMEO AND JULIET* (Act 3, Scene 1)**

BENVOLIO:

Tybalt here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay.  
Romeo, that spoke him fair, bade him bethink  
How nice the quarrel was and urged withal  
Your high displeasure. All this uttered  
With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bowed,  
Could not take truce with the unruly spleen  
Of Tybalt deaf to peace, but that he tilts  
With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast,  
Who, all as hot, turns deadly point to point,  
And, with a martial scorn, with one hand beats  
Cold death aside and with the other sends  
It back to Tybalt, whose dexterity,  
Retorts it. Romeo, he cries aloud,  
"Hold, friends! Friends, part!" and, swifter than his tongue,  
His agile arm beats down their fatal points,  
And 'twixt them rushes—underneath whose arm  
An envious thrust from Tybalt hit the life  
Of stout Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled.  
But by and by comes back to Romeo,  
Who had but newly entertained revenge,  
And to 't they go like lightning, for ere I  
Could draw to part them was stout Tybalt slain.  
And, as he fell, did Romeo turn and fly.  
This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

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## **CLAUDIO / *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* (Act 3, Scene 1)**

CLAUDIO:

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;  
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;  
This sensible warm motion to become  
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit  
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside  
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;  
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,  
And blown with restless violence round about  
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst  
Of those that lawless and incertain thought  
Imagine howling: 'tis too horrible!  
The weariest and most loathed worldly life  
That age, ache, penury and imprisonment  
Can lay on nature is a paradise  
To what we fear of death.

Sweet sister, let me live:  
What sin you do to save a brother's life,  
Nature dispenses with the deed so far  
That it becomes a virtue.

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## DEMETRIUS / *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* (Act 4, Scene 1)

DEMETRIUS:

My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,  
Of this their purpose hither to this wood.  
And I in fury hither followed them,  
Fair Helena in fancy following me.  
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power—  
But by some power it is—my love to Hermia,  
Melted as the snow, seems to me now  
As the remembrance of an idle gaud  
Which in my childhood I did dote upon.  
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,  
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,  
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,  
Was I betrothed ere I saw Hermia.  
But like in sickness did I loathe this food.  
But as in health, come to my natural taste,  
Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,  
And will for evermore be true to it.

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## **DOGBERRY / *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING* (Act 4, Scene 2)**

DOGBERRY:

Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my years? Oh, that he were here to write me down an ass! But masters, remember that I am an ass, though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass.—No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow and, which is more, an officer and, which is more, a householder and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina, and one that knows the law, go to, and a rich fellow enough, go to, and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns and everything handsome about him.—Bring him away.—Oh, that I had been writ down an ass!

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## EDMUND / *KING LEAR* (Act 1, Scene 2)

EDMUND:

Thou, nature, art my goddess. To thy law  
My services are bound. Wherefore should I  
Stand in the plague of custom and permit  
The curiosity of nations to deprive me  
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines  
Lag of a brother? Why “bastard”? Wherefore “base”?  
When my dimensions are as well compact,  
My mind as generous, and my shape as true  
As honest madam’s issue? Why brand they us  
With “base,” with “baseness,” “bastardy,” “base,” “base”—  
Who in the lusty stealth of nature take  
More composition and fierce quality  
Than doth within a dull, stale, tired bed  
Go to th’ creating a whole tribe of fops  
Got ’tween a sleep and wake? Well then,  
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.  
Our father’s love is to the bastard Edmund  
As to the legitimate.—Fine word, “legitimate”!—  
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed  
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base  
Shall top th’ legitimate. I grow, I prosper.  
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

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## LAERTES / *HAMLET* (Act 1, Scene 3)

LAERTES:

Think it no more.

For nature crescent does not grow alone  
In thews and bulk; but as this temple waxes,  
The inward service of the mind and soul  
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,  
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch  
The virtue of his will; but you must fear,  
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;  
For he himself is subject to his birth.  
He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends  
The safety and health of this whole state,  
And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd  
Unto the voice and yielding of that body  
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,  
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it  
As he in his particular act and place  
May give his saying deed; which is no further  
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.  
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain  
If with too credent ear you list his songs,  
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open  
To his unmast'red importunity.  
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,  
And keep you in the rear of your affection,  
Out of the shot and danger of desire.  
The chariest maid is prodigal enough  
If she unmask her beauty to the moon.

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PRO

Virtue itself scopes not calumnious strokes.  
The canker galls the infants of the spring  
Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd,  
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth  
Contagious blastments are most imminent.  
Be wary then; best safety lies in fear.  
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.



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## **PETRUCHIO / *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW* (Act 2, Scene 1)**

PETRUCHIO:

No, not a whit. I find you passing gentle.  
'Twas told me you were rough and coy and sullen,  
And now I find report a very liar.  
For thou are pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous,  
But slow in speech, yet sweet as springtime flowers.  
Thou canst not frown, thou canst not look askance,  
Nor bite the lip as angry wenches will,  
Nor hast thou pleasure to be cross in talk.  
But thou with mildness entertain'st thy wooers,  
With gentle conference, soft and affable.  
Why does the world report that Kate doth limp?  
O slanderous world! Kate like the hazel-twigg  
Is straight and slender and as brown in hue  
As hazel nuts, and sweeter than the kernels.  
Oh, let me see thee walk! Thou dost not halt.

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## PRINCE HENRY / *HENRY IV, PART I*

PRINCE HENRY:

Do not think so. You shall not find it so.  
And God forgive them that so much have swayed  
Your Majesty's good thoughts away from me.  
I will redeem all this on Percy's head,  
And, in the closing of some glorious day,  
Be bold to tell you that I am your son,  
When I will wear a garment all of blood  
And stain my favors in a bloody mask,  
Which, washed away, shall scour my shame with it.  
And that shall be the day, whene'er it lights,  
That this same child of honor and renown,  
This gallant Hotspur, this all-praised knight,  
And your unthought-of Harry chance to meet.  
For every honor sitting on his helm,  
Would they were multitudes, and on my head  
My shames redoubled! For the time will come  
That I shall make this northern youth exchange  
His glorious deeds for my indignities.  
Percy is but my factor, good my lord,  
To engross up glorious deeds on my behalf.  
And I will call him to so strict account  
That he shall render every glory up,  
Yea, even the slightest worship of his time,  
Or I will tear the reckoning from his heart.  
This in the name of God I promise here,  
The which if He be pleased I shall perform,  
I do beseech your Majesty may salve  
The long-grown wounds of my intemperance.

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If not, the end of life cancels all bands,  
And I will die a hundred thousand deaths  
Ere break the smallest parcel of this vow.

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## PROTEUS / THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA (Act 2, Scene 4)

PROTEUS:

Even as one heat another heat expels,  
Or as one nail by strength drives out another,  
So the remembrance of my former love  
Is by a newer object quite forgotten.  
Is it my mind, or Valentine's praise,  
Her true perfection, or my false transgression  
That makes me, reasonless, to reason thus?  
She is fair; and so is Julia that I love—  
That I did love, for now my love is thawed,  
Which like a waxen image 'gainst a fire  
Bears no impression of the thing it was.  
Methinks my zeal to Valentine is cold,  
And that I love him not as I was wont.  
O, but I love his lady too, too much,  
And that's the reason I love him so little.  
How shall I dote on her with more advice,  
That thus without advice begin to love her!  
'Tis but her picture I have yet beheld,  
And that hath dazzlèd my reason's light;  
But when I look on her perfections,  
There is no reason but I shall be blind.  
If I can check my erring love, I will;  
If not, to compass her I'll use my skill.