

THE MONOLOGUES

Macbeth

MACBETH

Act V, Scene 5

She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in, this petty pace, from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Juliet

ROMEO AND JULIET

Act II, Scene 2

O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.
'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself though, not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O be some other name!
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name;
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

Portia

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Act IV, Scene 1

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice bless'd;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes;
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway.
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings;
It is an attribute to God himself,
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice.

Antony

JULIUS CAESAR

Act III, Scene 2

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.
 I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.
 The evil that men do lives after them,
 The good is oft interred with their bones;
 So let it be with Cæsar. The noble Brutus
 Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious;
 If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
 And grievously hath Cæsar answer'd it.
 Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—
 For Brutus is an honourable man;
 So are they all, all honourable men—
 Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.
 He was my friend, faithful and just to me.
 But Brutus says he was ambitious;
 And Brutus is an honourable man.
 He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
 Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill.
 Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious?
 When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept;
 Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.
 Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
 And Brutus is an honourable man.
 You all did see that on the Lupercal
 I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
 Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?
 Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
 And, sure, he is an honourable man.
 I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
 But here I am to speak what I do know.
 You all did love him once, not without cause.
 What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?
 O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,
 And men have lost their reason! Bear with me;
 My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,
 And I must pause till it come back to me.

Hamlet

HAMLET

Act III, Scene 1

To be, or not to be: that is the question.
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep; perchance to dream; ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil
Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.