

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

**Juliet**

**Romeo and Juliet**

**Act 2 Scene 2**

*Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet, children of two feuding families, meet at a party and fall instantly in love. Later that night, Romeo sneaks into the Capulet orchard and overhears Juliet declaring her love for him. Here, Juliet questions Romeo's true feelings and her own behaviour, whilst declaring her passion for him.*

Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,  
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek  
For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.  
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny  
What I have spoke, but farewell compliment.  
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'Ay'  
And I will take thy word; yet if thou swear'st,  
Thou mayst prove false: at lovers' perjuries  
They say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,  
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully;  
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,  
I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay,  
So thou wilt woo, but else not for the world.  
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,  
And therefore thou mayst think my 'haviour light.  
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true  
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.  
I should have been more strange, I must confess,  
But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,  
My true-love passion; therefore pardon me,  
And not impute this yielding to light love,  
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

**Phebe**

***As You Like It***

**Act 3 Scene 5**

*Phebe, a shepherdess, has just fallen in love with a beautiful young man called Ganymede. However, Ganymede is actually a girl (Rosalind) in disguise. Here Phebe tries to convince Silvius, who loves her, that she's not interested in Ganymede.*

Think not I love him though I ask for him.  
'Tis but a peevish boy – yet he talks well.  
But what care I for words? Yet words do well  
When he that speaks them pleases those that hear.  
It is a pretty youth – not very pretty –  
But sure he's proud, and yet his pride becomes him.  
He'll make a proper man. The best thing in him  
Is his complexion; and faster than his tongue  
Did make offence, his eye did heal it up.  
He is not very tall, yet for his years he's tall.  
His leg is but so-so, and yet 'tis well.  
There was a pretty redness in his lip,  
A little riper and more lusty red  
Than that mixed in his cheek; 'twas just the difference  
Between the constant red and mingled damask.  
There be some women, Silvius, had they marked him  
In parcels as I did, would have gone near  
To fall in love with him; but for my part  
I love him not – nor hate him not. And yet  
I have more cause to hate him than to love him,  
For what had he to do to chide at me?  
He said mine eyes were black and my hair black,  
And now I am remembered, scorned at me.  
I marvel why I answered not again.  
But that's all one – omittance is no quittance.  
I'll write to him a very taunting letter  
And thou shalt bear it. Wilt thou, Silvius?

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Viola

*Twelfth Night*

Act 2 Scene 2

*Viola disguises herself as a boy, calling herself Cesario, in order to enter the service of the Duke. The Duke, who is trying to woo Olivia, sends Viola with a message to her. However, Olivia falls in love with Cesario (who is really Viola) and insists that her steward give Cesario a ring, to ensure 'he' returns to see her. Viola is confused.*

I left no ring with her: what means this lady?  
Fortune forbid my outside have not charmed her!  
She made good view of me, indeed so much  
That methought her eyes had lost her tongue,  
For she did speak in starts distractedly.  
She loves me, sure; the cunning of her passion  
Invites me in this churlish messenger.  
None of my lord's ring? Why, he sent her none.  
I am the man. If it be so, as 'tis,  
Poor lady, she were better love a dream.  
Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness,  
Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.  
How easy is it for the proper-false  
In women's waxen hearts to set their forms!  
Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we,  
For such as we are made of, such we be.  
How will this fadge? My master loves her dearly,  
And I, poor monster, fond as much on him,  
And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.  
What will become of this? As I am man,  
My state is desperate for my master's love;  
As I am woman – now alas the day! –  
What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe?  
O time, thou must untangle this, not I;  
It is too hard a knot for me t'untie.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Helena

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Act 1 Scene 2

*Helena is in love with Demetrius, but he has dumped her and is now in love with Hermia, her best friend. Meanwhile, Hermia is in love with Lysander and plans to run away with him to the woods tomorrow night. Hermia and Lysander have just told Helena about their secret plan.*

How happy some o'er other some can be!  
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she,  
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;  
He will not know what all but he do know.  
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,  
So I, admiring of his qualities.  
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,  
Love can transpose to form and dignity.  
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,  
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind;  
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste:  
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste.  
And therefore is Love said to be a child,  
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.  
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,  
So the boy Love is perjured everywhere.  
For ere Demetrius looked on Hermia's eyne,  
He hailed down oaths that he was only mine;  
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,  
So he dissolved and showers of oaths did melt.  
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:  
Then to the wood will he, tomorrow night,  
Pursue her; and for this intelligence  
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense.  
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,  
To have his sight thither and back again.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Emilia

*Othello*

Act 4 Scene 3

*Emilia, Iago's wife, is the waiting-gentlewoman to Othello's wife, Desdemona. Othello has just abused Desdemona, accusing her of being unfaithful. As the shaken Desdemona gets ready for bed, Emilia shares her thoughts on faithfulness.*

But I do think it is their husbands' faults  
If wives do fall. Say that they slack their duties  
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,  
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,  
Throwing restraint upon us; or say they strike us,  
Or scant our former having in despite,  
Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,  
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know  
Their wives have sense like them: they see and smell  
And have their palates both for sweet and sour  
As husbands have. What is it that they do  
When they change us for others? Is it sport?  
I think it is. And doth affection breed it?  
I think it doth. Is't frailty that thus errs?  
It is so too. And have not we affections,  
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?  
Then let them use us well, else let them know,  
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Ariel

*The Tempest*

Act 1 Scene 2 (edited)

*Prospero's enemies, including his brother Antonio, who usurped Prospero's position as Duke of Milan, are sailing past the island. Ariel, a spirit of the island, has, at the behest of Prospero, created a massive storm and shipwrecked the travellers. Ariel describes the scene to Prospero.*

I boarded the king's ship. Now on the beak,  
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin  
I flamed amazement. Sometime I'd divide  
And burn in many places; on the topmast,  
The yards and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,  
Then meet and join. Jove's lightning, the precursors  
O'th'dreadful thunder-claps, more momentary  
And sight-outrunning were not; the fire and cracks  
Of sulphurous roaring the most mighty Neptune  
Seem to besiege and make his bold waves tremble,  
Yea, his dread trident shake.

Not a soul

But felt a fever of the mad, and played  
Some tricks of desperation. All but mariners  
Plunged in the foaming brine and quit the vessel,  
Then all a-fire with me. The king's son, Ferdinand,  
With hair up-staring – then like reeds, not hair –  
Was the first man that leaped, cried 'Hell is empty,  
And all the devils are here.'

But they are, master, safe. Not a hair perished;  
On their sustaining garments not a blemish,  
But fresher than before. And, as thou bad'st me,  
In troops I have dispersed them 'bout the isle.

The king's son have I landed by himself,  
Whom I left cooling of the air with sighs  
In an odd angle of the isle, and sitting,  
His arms in this sad knot.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Ophelia

*Hamlet*

Act 2 Scene 1 (edited)

*Ophelia's father, Polonius, has warned her to cut off all contact with Hamlet. Here she describes to Polonius her most recent encounter with the prince.*

O my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted.  
My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,  
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,  
No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,  
Ungartered and down-gyved to his ankle,  
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,  
And with a look so piteous in purport  
As if he had been loosèd out of hell  
To speak of horrors, he comes before me.  
He took me by the wrist and held me hard,  
Then goes he to the length of all his arm  
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow  
He falls to such perusal of my face  
As he would draw it. Long stayed he so.  
At last, a little shaking of mine arm  
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound  
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
And end his being. That done, he lets me go  
And with his head over his shoulder turned  
He seemed to find his way without his eyes,  
For out o' doors he went without their help,  
And to the last bended their light on me.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Portia

*The Merchant of Venice*

Act 4 Scene 1

*Portia has disguised herself as a legal expert called Balthazar and arrived at court, purportedly as a neutral party, to intervene in the dispute between Antonio and Shylock. She is actually supporting Antonio's case and here, in the courtroom, she argues that Shylock should show mercy.*

The quality of mercy is not strained:  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes,  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The thronèd 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 enthronèd 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. Therefore, Jew,  
Though justice be thy plea, consider this:  
That in the course of justice none of us  
Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much  
To mitigate the justice of thy plea,  
Which, if thou follow, this strict court of Venice  
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Hermione

*The Winter's Tale*

Act 3, Scene 2

*Under false accusations of infidelity against her husband, Leontes, Hermione – the Queen of Sicily - stands trial in defence of her virtue and loyalty. Remaining elegant and poised, she denies any wrongdoing.*

Sir, spare your threats:

The bug which you would fright me with I seek.

To me can life be no commodity:

The crown and comfort of my life, your favour,

I do give lost; for I do feel it gone,

But know not how it went. My second joy

And first-fruits of my body, from his presence

I am barr'd, like one infectious. My third comfort

Starr'd most unluckily, is from my breast,

The innocent milk in its most innocent mouth,

Haled out to murder: myself on every post

Proclaimed a strumpet: with immodest hatred

The child-bed privilege denied, which 'longs

To women of all fashion; lastly, hurried

Here to this place, i' the open air, before

I have got strength of limit. Now, my liege,

Tell me what blessings I have here alive,

That I should fear to die? Therefore proceed.

But yet hear this: mistake me not; no life,

I prize it not a straw, but for mine honour,

Which I would free, if I shall be condemn'd

Upon surmises, all proofs sleeping else

But what your jealousies awake, I tell you

'Tis rigor and not law. Your honours all,

I do refer me to the oracle:

Apollo be my judge!

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Lady Percy

Henry 4, Part 2

Act 2, Scene 3.

*Lady Percy chides her father-in-law, Northumberland for abandoning her deceased husband, Hotspur, in his time of need. In the battle of Shrewsbury, Hotspur displayed the very essence of honour, where Northumberland fell drastically short. In this monologue Lady Percy compares the characteristics of Hotspur and his disloyal father.*

O, yet, for God's sake, go not to these wars!  
The time was, father, that you broke your word,  
When you were more endear'd to it than now;  
When your own Percy, when my heart's dear Harry,  
Threw many a northward look to see his father  
Bring up his powers; but he did long in vain.  
Who then persuaded you to stay at home?  
There were two honours lost, yours and your son's.  
For yours, the God of heaven brighten it!  
For his, it stuck upon him as the sun  
In the grey vault of heaven; and by his light  
Did all the chivalry of England move  
To do brave acts. He was indeed the glass  
Wherein the noble youth did dress themselves.  
He had no legs that practis'd not his gait;  
And speaking thick, which nature made his blemish,  
Became the accents of the valiant;  
For those who could speak low and tardily  
Would turn their own perfection to abuse  
To seem like him: so that in speech, in gait,  
In diet, in affections of delight,  
In military rules, humours of blood,  
He was the mark and glass, copy and book,  
That fashion'd others. And him—O wondrous him!  
O miracle of men!—him did you leave—  
Second to none, unseconded by you—  
To look upon the hideous god of war  
In disadvantage, to abide a field  
Where nothing but the sound of Hotspur's name  
Did seem defensible. So you left him.  
Never, O never, do his ghost the wrong  
To hold your honour more precise and nice  
With others than with him! Let them alone.  
The Marshal and the Archbishop are strong.  
Had my sweet Harry had but half their numbers,  
To-day might I, hanging on Hotspur's neck,  
Have talk'd of Monmouth's grave.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Tamora

*Titus Andronicus*

Act 2 Scene 3

*Titus Andronicus, a war hero and Roman general, sacrifices the eldest son of Tamora, Queen of the Goths, setting in motion one of Shakespeare's most bloody revenge tragedies. The wicked and manipulative Tamora then makes it her mission in life to make Titus and his family suffer. Prior to this monologue, Bassanius and Lavinia (Titus' daughter) have found Tamora in the forest with her lover, Aaron the Moor. She tells her sons that she had been unwittingly lured into the forest by them, and demands they exact revenge on the young couple.*

Have I not reason, think you, to look pale?  
These two have 'ticed me hither to this place:  
A barren detested vale, you see it is;  
The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,  
O'ercome with moss and baleful mistletoe:  
Here never shines the sun; here nothing breeds,  
Unless the nightly owl or fatal raven:  
And when they show'd me this abhorred pit,  
They told me, here, at dead time of the night,  
A thousand fiends, a thousand hissing snakes,  
Ten thousand swelling toads, as many urchins,  
Would make such fearful and confused cries  
As any mortal body hearing it  
Should straight fall mad, or else die suddenly.  
No sooner had they told this hellish tale,  
But straight they told me they would bind me here  
Unto the body of a dismal yew,  
And leave me to this miserable death:  
And then they call'd me foul adulteress,  
Lascivious Goth, and all the bitterest terms  
That ever ear did hear to such effect:  
And, had you not by wondrous fortune come,  
This vengeance on me had they executed.  
Revenge it, as you love your mother's life,  
Or be ye not henceforth call'd my children.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Constance

King John

Act 3 Scene 4 (edited)

*Constance is the mother of Arthur, who has a claim to the throne of England. The King of France backs Arthur's claim against the reigning King of England, King John. John, however, refuses to give up the crown and cuts a deal with France. France, agreeing to the power-sharing deal, abandons its support of Arthur's claim and in a battle that follows, Arthur is captured and imprisoned by John. In this speech, Constance is talking to King Phillip of France and Cardinal Pandulph, a representative of the Pope. She is denying that her grief is a sign of madness.*

I am not mad: this hair I tear is mine;  
My name is Constance; I was Geoffrey's wife;  
Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost:  
I am not mad: I would to heaven I were!  
For then, 'tis like I should forget myself:  
O, if I could, what grief should I forget!  
Grief fills the room up of my absent child,  
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,  
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,  
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,  
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form;  
Then, have I reason to be fond of grief?  
Fare you well: had you such a loss as I,  
I could give better comfort than you do.  
I will not keep this form upon my head,  
When there is such disorder in my wit.  
O Lord! my boy, my Arthur, my fair son!  
My life, my joy, my food, my all the world!  
My widow-comfort, and my sorrows' cure!