

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Prince Hal

*King Henry IV Part 1*

Act 1 Scene 2

*Hal, the young heir to the throne of England, has spent more time at the pub than the palace. He has been frequenting London's Eastcheap district, mixing with thieves and drunks, chief among them the larger-than-life, Sir John Falstaff. In this soliloquy, Hal explains the benefits of his 'off-the-rails' behaviour and his plan to 'make good.'*

I know you all, and will awhile uphold  
The unyoked humour of your idleness.  
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,  
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds  
To smother up his beauty from the world,  
That, when he please again to be himself,  
Being wanted, he may be more wondered at  
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists  
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.  
If all the year were playing holidays,  
To sport would be as tedious as to work,  
But when they seldom come, they wished for come,  
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.  
So when this loose behaviour I throw off  
And pay the debt I never promisèd,  
By how much better than my word I am,  
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;  
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,  
My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,  
Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes  
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.  
I'll so offend to make offence a skill,  
Redeeming time when men think least I will.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Hamlet

*Hamlet*

Act 1 Scene 2

*Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, is deeply troubled by the sudden death of his father and the hasty marriage of his mother to his uncle. In this speech he tries to make sense of this new reality.*

O that this too too solid flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,  
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. O God, God,  
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
Fie on't, ah fie, 'tis an unweeded garden  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature  
Possess it merely. That it should come to this:  
But two months dead – nay not so much, not two –  
So excellent a king, that was to this  
Hyperion to a satyr, so loving to my mother  
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth,  
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him  
As if increase of appetite had grown  
By what it fed on. And yet within a month  
(Let me not think on't – frailty, thy name is woman),  
A little month, or ere those shoes were old  
With which she followed my poor father's body,  
Like Niobe, all tears, why she, even she –  
O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason  
Would have mourned longer – married with my uncle,  
My father's brother, but no more like my father  
Than I to Hercules. Within a month,  
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
Had left the flushing in her gallèd eyes,  
She married. O most wicked speed, to post  
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!  
It is not, nor it cannot come to good;  
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Trinculo

*The Tempest*

Act 2 Scene 2

*Trinculo, a court jester, has been shipwrecked on the shore of a strange island; he believes himself to be the only survivor of the storm. As another storm brews, Trinculo looks for a place to shelter. He finds Caliban hiding under a cloak and tries to figure out what he is.*

Here's neither bush nor shrub to bear off any weather at all, and another storm brewing – I hear it sing i'th'wind. Yond same black cloud, yond huge one, looks like a foul bombard that would shed his liquor. If it should thunder as it did before, I know not where to hide my head; yond same cloud cannot choose but fall by pailfuls. What have we here? A man or a fish? Dead or alive? A fish: he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fish-like smell; a kind of not-of-the-newest poor-John. A strange fish. Were I in England now, as once I was, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday-fool there but would give a piece of silver. There would this monster make a man. Any strange beast there makes a man: when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian. Legged like a man, and his fins like arms. Warm, o'my troth! I do now let loose my opinion, hold it no longer: this is no fish, but an islander that hath lately suffered by a thunderbolt. *[Thunder]* Alas, the storm is come again. My best way is to creep under his gaberdine; there is no other shelter hereabout. Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows. I will here shroud till the dregs of the storm be past.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Iago

*Othello*

Act 1 Scene 3

*Iago, an ensign in the Venetian army, is widely believed to be honest. He isn't. Here he outlines his plans to rob Roderigo, take Cassius' job and hurt his master, Othello.*

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:  
For I mine own gained knowledge should profane  
If I would time expend with such a snipe  
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor,  
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets  
He's done my office. I know not if't be true,  
But I for mere suspicion in that kind  
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well,  
The better shall my purpose work on him.  
Cassio's a proper man: let me see now,  
To get his place, and to plume up my will  
In double knavery. How? How? Let's see:  
After some time to abuse Othello's ear  
That he is too familiar with his wife.  
He hath a person and a smooth dispose  
To be suspected, framed to make women false.  
The Moor is of a free and open nature  
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,  
And will as tenderly be led by th'nose  
As asses are.  
I have't, it is engendered! Hell and night  
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

**Benedick**

***Much Ado About Nothing***

**Act 2 Scene 3**

*Don Pedro has hatched a plan to trick the quarrelsome Benedick and Beatrice into falling in love with each other. In this scene, Don Pedro, Leonato and Claudio allow Benedick to overhear them talking about how desperately Beatrice loves him. Benedick takes the bait.*

This can be no trick. The conference was sadly borne; they have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady. It seems her affections have their full bent. Love me? Why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say I will bear myself proudly if I perceive the love come from her. They say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry. I must not seem proud; happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair – 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness. And virtuous – 'tis so, I cannot reprove it. And wise, but for loving me. By my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage. But doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.

*[Enter Beatrice]*

Here comes Beatrice. By this day, she's a fair lady! I do spy some marks of love in her.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

**Sebastian**

***Twelfth Night***

**Act 4 Scene 3**

*Olivia has fallen in love with Cesario, who is really Viola in disguise. Viola's twin brother, Sebastian, is a dead ringer for his disguised sister. When Sebastian stumbles upon Olivia, and she starts making advances towards him, Sebastian questions both his and her sanity.*

This is the air, that is the glorious sun,  
This pearl she gave me, I do feel't and see't,  
And though 'tis wonder that enwraps me thus,  
Yet 'tis not madness. Where's Antonio then?  
I could not find him at the Elephant,  
Yet there he was, and there I found this credit,  
That he did range the town to seek me out.  
His counsel now might do me golden service:  
For though my soul disputes well with my sense  
That this may be some error, but no madness,  
Yet doth this accident and flood of fortune  
So far exceed all instance, all discourse,  
That I am ready to distrust mine eyes  
And wrangle with my reason that persuades me  
To any other trust but that I am mad,  
Or else the lady's mad; yet if 'twere so,  
She could not sway her house, command her followers,  
Take and give back affairs and their dispatch  
With such a smooth, discreet and stable bearing  
As I perceive she does. There's something in't  
That is deceivable. But here the lady comes.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

**Mark Antony**

**Julius Caesar**

**Act 3 Scene 1**

*Mark Antony's friend, Julius Caesar, has just been assassinated. The conspirators Brutus and Cassius allow Antony to speak at Caesar's funeral as long as he doesn't blame them. Antony very carefully and skilfully sways public opinion back towards Caesar. By this point in his speech, the mob is screaming for revenge.*

Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up  
To such a sudden flood of mutiny.  
They that have done this deed are honourable.  
What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,  
That made them do it: they are wise and honourable  
And will no doubt with reasons answer you.  
I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts.  
I am no orator, as Brutus is,  
But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man  
That love my friend, and that they know full well  
That gave me public leave to speak of him.  
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,  
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech  
To stir men's blood. I only speak right on:  
I tell you that which you yourselves do know,  
Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths,  
And bid them speak for me. But were I Brutus,  
And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony  
Would ruffle up your spirits and put a tongue  
In every wound of Caesar that should move  
The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

Romeo

*Romeo and Juliet*

Act 2 Scene 2

*Romeo and Juliet, children of two feuding families, meet at a party and fall instantly in love. Later that night, Romeo hides in Juliet's orchard and watches her.*

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.  
But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?  
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.  
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,  
Who is already sick and pale with grief  
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.  
Be not her maid, since she is envious;  
Her vestal livery is but sick and green,  
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.  
It is my lady, O it is my love:  
O that she knew she were!  
She speaks, yet she says nothing: what of that?  
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.  
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:  
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,  
Having some business, do entreat her eyes  
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.  
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?  
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,  
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven  
Would through the airy region stream so bright  
That birds would sing and think it were not night.  
See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!  
O that I were a glove upon that hand,  
That I might touch that cheek!

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

## Edmund     *King Lear*     Act 1 Sc. 1

*Edmund has felt dejected as the 'bastard son' his entire life. Here in this speech, we glimpse his motives for a villainous uprising against those who have rejected him based on his less than royal blood.*

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 asleep and wake? Well then,  
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.  
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund  
As to th' 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!

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

**Enobarbus. Antony & Cleopatra Act 2 Sc 2**

*Enobarbus recalls Cleopatra's arrival on the Nile, painting a vivid and beautiful picture of Egypt's Queen, elevating her to her mythical status. Cleopatra is a legend of ancient history and an icon of femininity – earthy, amorous and passionately driven.*

I will tell you.

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,  
Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;  
Purple the sails, and so perfumed that  
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,  
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made  
The water which they beat to follow faster,  
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,  
It beggar'd all description: she did lie  
In her pavilion.cloth-of-gold of tissue.  
O'er-picturing that Venus where we see  
The fancy outwork nature: on each side her  
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,  
With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem  
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,  
And what they undid did.  
Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,  
So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,  
And made their bends adornings: at the helm  
A seeming mermaid steers: the silken tackle  
Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands,  
That yarely frame the office. From the barge  
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense  
Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast  
Her people out upon her; and Antony,  
Enthroned i' the market-place, did sit alone,  
Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy,  
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,  
And made a gap in nature.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

**Chorus**

**Henry V**

**Act 1 Sc 1**

*This opening Chorus speaks directly to the audience, asking for the imagination of the viewers to help set the scene for Shakespeare's history play in which the 'War-like Harry' enters into battle against the French.*

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend  
The brightest heaven of invention,  
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act  
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!  
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,  
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,  
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword and fire  
Crouch for employment. But pardon, and gentles all,  
The flat unraised spirits that have dared  
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth  
So great an object: can this cockpit hold  
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram  
Within this wooden O the very casques  
That did affright the air at Agincourt?  
O, pardon! since a crooked figure may  
Attest in little place a million;  
And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,  
On your imaginary forces work.  
Suppose within the girdle of these walls  
Are now confined two mighty monarchies,  
Whose high upreared and abutting fronts  
The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:  
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;  
Into a thousand parts divide on man,  
And make imaginary puissance;  
Think when we talk of horses, that you see them  
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;  
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,  
Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times,  
Turning the accomplishment of many years  
Into an hour-glass: for the which supply,  
Admit me Chorus to this history;  
Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,  
Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.

# BELL SHAKESPEARE.

## Macbeth      *Macbeth*      Act 3 Sc 1

*Haunted by the initial contact with the Witches, and their prophecies, Macbeth realises he must remove all possible obstacles that stand in the way of his crown. Here he struggles with the immediate threat posed by his best friend Banquo, and the knowledge that Banquo's children have been prophesised as future Scottish kings.*

To be thus is nothing;  
But to be safely thus.--Our fears in Banquo  
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature  
Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares;  
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,  
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour  
To act in safety. There is none but he  
Whose being I do fear: and, under him,  
My Genius is rebuked; as, it is said,  
Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters  
When first they put the name of king upon me,  
And bade them speak to him: then prophet-like  
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:  
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,  
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,  
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,  
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,  
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;  
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;  
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace  
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel  
Given to the common enemy of man,  
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!  
Rather than so, come fate into the list.  
And champion me to the utterance!