

## MACBETH

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.

## HAMLET: Soliloquy 3

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,  
Th'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 th'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 pitch and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry  
And lose the name of action.

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#### **HAMLET** Soliloquy 4

Now I am alone. O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!  
Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
That from her working all his visage wann'd,  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!  
For Hecuba!  
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,  
That he should weep for her? What would he do,  
Had he the motive and the cue for passion  
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears  
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,  
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,  
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed

The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,  
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,  
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,  
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,  
Upon whose property and most dear life  
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?  
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?  
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?  
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,  
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?  
Ha!

'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be  
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall  
To make oppression bitter, or ere this  
I should have fatted all the region kites  
With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!  
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!  
O, vengeance!

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,  
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,  
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,  
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,  
A scullion!

Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain! I have heard  
That guilty creatures sitting at a play  
Have by the very cunning of the scene  
Been struck so to the soul that presently  
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;  
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak

With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players  
Play something like the murder of my father  
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;  
I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,  
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen  
May be the devil: and the devil hath power  
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps  
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,  
As he is very potent with such spirits,  
Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds  
More relative than this: the play's the thing  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

## KING LEAR

CORDELIA

(aside) Then poor Cordelia!  
And yet not so, since I am sure my love's  
More ponderous than my tongue.

LEAR

To thee and thine hereditary ever  
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom,  
No less in space, validity, and pleasure  
Than that conferred on Goneril.—But now, our joy,  
Although our last and least, to whose young love  
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy  
Strive to be interested. What can you say to draw  
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

CORDELIA

Nothing, my lord.

LEAR

Nothing?

CORDELIA

Nothing.

LEAR

How? Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again.

CORDELIA

Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave  
My heart into my mouth. I love your majesty  
According to my bond, no more nor less.

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EDMUND

(pocketing the letter) So please your lordship, none.

GLOUCESTER

Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter?

EDMUND

I know no news, my lord.

GLOUCESTER

What paper were you reading?

EDMUND

Nothing, my lord.

GLOUCESTER

No? What needed, then, that terrible dispatch of it into your  
pocket? The quality of nothing hath not such need to hide itself.  
Let's see.—Come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.

EDMUND

I beseech you, sir, pardon me. It is a letter from my brother that

I have not all o'er-read. And for so much as I have perused, I find it not fit for your o'erlooking.

GLOUCESTER

Give me the letter, sir.

EDMUND

I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

## RICHARD II

### JOHN OF GAUNT, ON HIS DEATHBED

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,  
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,  
This other Eden, demi-paradise,  
This fortress built by Nature for her self  
Against infection and the hand of war,  
This happy breed of men, this little world,  
This precious stone set in a silver sea  
Which serves it in the office of a wall  
Or as a moat defensive to a house,  
Against the envy of less happier lands,  
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,  
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,  
Feared by their breed and famous for their birth,  
Renowned for their deeds as far from home  
For Christian service and true chivalry  
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry  
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's son;  
This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,  
Dear for her reputation through the world,  
Is now leased out - I die pronouncing it -  
Like to a tenement or pelting farm.  
England, bound in with the triumphant sea,  
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege  
Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,  
With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds.

That England that was wont to conquer others  
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.  
Ah, would the scandal vanish with my life,  
How happy then were my ensuing death!

# THE TEMPEST

## PROSPERO

You do look, my son, in a moved sort,  
As if you were dismay'd: be cheerful, sir.  
Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Ye all which it inherit, shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.