

AS YOU LIKE IT
by William Shakespeare
Act 3, Sc V

ROSALIND:

And why, I pray you? Who might be your mother,
That you insult, exult, and all at once
Over the wretched? What, though you have no beauty -
As, by my faith, I see no more in you
Than without candle may go dark to bed -
Must you be therefore proud and pitiless?
Why, what means this? Why do you look on me?
I see no more in you than in the ordinary
Of nature's sale-work. 'Od's my little life,
I think she means to tangle my eyes too!
No, faith, proud mistress, hope not after it:
'Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,
Your bugle eyeballs, nor your cheek of cream
That can entame my spirits to your worship.
You foolish shepherd, wherefore do you follow her,
Like foggy south, puffing with wind and rain?
You are a thousand times a properer man
Than she a woman. 'Tis such fools as you
That makes the world full of ill-favoured children.
'Tis not her glass but you that flatters her,
And out of you she sees herself more proper
Than any of her lineaments can show her.
But, mistress, know yourself; down on your knees
And thank heaven, fasting, for a good man's love!
For I must tell you friendly in your ear,
Sell when you can, you are not for all markets.
Cry the man mercy, love him, take his offer.
Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer.
So take her to thee, shepherd. Fare you well.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

by William Shakespeare

Act 5, Sc II

CLEOPATRA

Give me my robe, put on my crown, I have
Immortal longing in me. Now no more
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip.
Yare, yare, good Iras; quick: methinks I hear
Antony call. I see him rouse himself
To praise my noble act. I hear him mock
The luck of Caesar, which the gods give men
To excuse their after-wrath. Husband, I come:
Now to that name, my courage prove my title!
I am fire, and air; my other elements
I give to baser life. So, have you done?
Come then, and take the last warmth of my lips.
Farewell, kind Charmian, Iras, long farewell.

(Kisses them. Iras falls and dies)

Have I the aspic in my lips? Dost fall?
If thou and nature can so gently part,
The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
Which hurts, and is desir'd. Dost thou lie still?
If thus thou vanishest, thou tell'st the world
It is not worth leave-taking.

This proves me base:

If she first meet the curled Antony,
He'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss
Which is my heaven to have. Come, thou mortal wretch.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

by William Shakespeare

Act 3, Sc II

PORTIA:

Away then! I am lock'd in one of them, -
If you do love me, you will find me out.
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof, -
Let music sound while he doth make his choice,
Then if he lose he makes a swan-like end,
Fading in music. That the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
And wat'ry death-bed for him: - he may win,
And what is music then? Then music is
Even as the flourish, when true subjects bow
To a new-crowned monarch: such it is,
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day,
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear,
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes
With no less presence, but with much more love
Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
The virgin tribute, paid by howling Troy
To the sea-monster: I stand for sacrifice,
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
With bleared visages come forth to view
The issue of th' exploit: go Hercules!
Live thou, I live - with much much more dismay,
I view the fight, than thou that mak'st the fray.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

by William Shakespeare

Act 1, Sc II

JULIA:

(gathering up pieces of the letter)

O hateful hands, to tear such loving words;
Injurious wasps, to feed on such sweet honey,
And kill the bees that yield it, with your stings!
I'll kiss each several paper, for amends.
Look, here is writ 'kind Julia': unkind Julia!
As in revenge of thy ingratitude,
I throw thy name against the bruising stones,
Trampling contemptuously on thy disdain.
And here is writ 'love-wounded Proteus'.
Poor wounded name: my bosom, as a bed,
Shall lodge thee till thy wound be throughly heal'd;
And thus I search it with a sovereign kiss.
But twice, or thrice, was 'Proteus' written down:
Be calm, good wind, blow not a word away,
Till I have found each letter, in the letter,
Except mine own name: that some whirlwind bear
Unto a ragged, fearful, hanging rock,
And throw it thence into the raging sea.
Lo, here in one line is his name twice writ:
'Poor forlorn Proteus', 'passionate Proteus'.
'To the sweet Julia': that I'll tear away.
And yet I will not, sith so prettily
He couples it to his complaining names.
Thus will I fold them, one upon another:
Now kiss, embrace, contend, do what you will.

KING RICHARD III
by William Shakespeare
Act 4, Sc IV

QUEEN MARGARET:

I call'd thee then vain flourish of my fortune;
I call'd thee, then, poor shadow, painted queen,
The presentation of but what I was;
The flattering index of a direful pageant;
One heav'd a-high, to be hurl'd down below;
A mother only mock'd with two fair babes;
A dream of what thou wast; a garish flag
To be the aim of every dangerous shot;
A sign of dignity; a breath, a bubble;
A queen in jest, only to fill the scene.
Where is thy husband now? Where be thy brothers?
Where are thy two sons? Wherein dost thou joy?
Who sues, and kneels, and says 'God save the Queen'?
Where be the bending peers that flatter'd thee?
Where be the thronging troops that follow'd thee?
Decline all this, and see what now thou art:
For happy wife, a most distressed widow;
For joyful mother, one that wails the name;
For one being sued to, one that humbly sues;
For Queen, a very caitiff, crown'd with care;
For she that scorn'd at me, now scorn'd of me;
For she being fear'd of all, now fearing one;
For she commanding all, obey'd of none.
Thus hath the course of justice whirl'd about
And left thee but a very prey to time,
Having no more but thought of what thou wast
To torture thee the more, being what thou art.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

by William Shakespeare

Act 2, Sc IV

ISABELLA:

To whom should I complain? Did I tell this,
Who would believe me? O perilous mouths,
That bear in them one and the self-same tongue
Either of condemnation or approval,
Bidding the law make curtsey to their will,
Hooking both right and wrong to th'appetite,
To follow as it draws! I'll to my brother.
Though he hath fall'n by prompture of the blood,
Yet hath he in him such a mind of honour,
That had he twenty heads to tender down
On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up
Before his sister should her body stoop
To such abhorr'd pollution.
Then, Isabel live chaste, and brother, die:
More than our brother is our chastity.
I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request,
And fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest.

HENRY VI - PART 2
by William Shakespeare
Act 2, Sc IV

ELEANOR DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER:

Ah, Gloucester, teach me to forget myself;
For whilst I think I am thy married wife,
And thou a prince, Protector of this land,
Methinks I should not thus be led along,
Mailed up in shame, with papers on my back,
And followed with a rabble that rejoice
To see my tears and hear my deep-fet groans.
The ruthless flint doth cut my tender feet,
And when I start, the envious people laugh,
And bid me be advised how I tread.
Ah, Humphrey, can I bear this shameful yoke?
Trowest thou that e'er I'll look upon the world,
Or count them happy that enjoys the sun?
No, dark shall be my light, and night my day;
To think upon my pomp shall be my hell.
Sometime I'll say I am Duke Humphrey's wife,
And he a prince and ruler of the land;
Yet so he ruled, and such a prince he was,
As he stood by whilst I, his forlorn Duchess,
Was made a wonder and a pointing stock
To every idle rascal follower.
But be thou mild and blush not at my shame,
Nor stir at nothing till the axe of death
Hang over thee, as sure it shortly will.

ROAD

by Jim Cartwright

LOUISE:

It's all gambling this, in't it? Gambling with gabble to see what come out. That record it's so about pure things it make you want to cry. Why's the world so tough? It's like walking through meat in high heels. Nothing's shared out right, money or love. I'm a quiet person me. People think I'm deaf and dumb. I want to say things but it hard. I have big wishes, you know? I want my life to be all shineid up. It's so dull. Everything's so dulled. When that man sings on that record there, you put the flags up. Because he reminds you of them feelings you keep forgetting. The important ones. Once you wrap 'em up and put 'em away, there's nothing left but profit and loss and who shot who? But it's so hard, life. So hard. Nothing's interesting. Everything's been made ordinary in our eyes. I want magic and miracles. I want a Jesus to come and change things again and show the invisible. And not let us keep forgetting, forge-netting everything, kickin' everyone. I want the surface up and off and all the gold and jewels and light out on the pavements. Anyway I never spoke such speech in my life and I'm glad I have. If I keep shouting somehow a somehow I might escape.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD

by Anton Chekhov

Translated by Michael Frayn

RANYEVSKAYA:

Oh, my sins... Always I've thrown money about like a lunatic, and I married a man who made nothing of his life but debts. My husband died of champagne - he was a terrible drinker - and my misfortune then was to fall in love with someone else. I gave myself to him, and it was just at that time - and this was my first punishment, it was like a club coming down on my head - my little boy ... in the river here ... my little boy was drowned, and I went away, went abroad, went utterly away, went meaning never to return, never to see this river again ... I shut my eyes, ran blindly - and *he* after me ... pitilessly, brutally. I bought a villa outside Menton, because *he* fell sick there, and for three years I knew no rest, neither by day nor by night. For three years he was an invalid - he drained my strength - my spirit broke. And last year, when the villa was sold to pay my debts, I went to Paris, and there he robbed me openly, he threw me aside, he took up with another woman. I tried to poison myself ... So stupid, so shameful ... And suddenly I yearned for Russia, for my homeland, for my daughter ... (*Wipes her tears.*) Lord, Lord have mercy! Forgive me my sins! Don't punish me any more! (*Takes a telegram out of her pocket.*) I got this today from Paris ... He begs my forgiveness, implores me to return ... (*Tears the telegram up.*) There's a sound of music somewhere. (*Listens*)

AWAY
by Michael Gow

GWEN:

The things that are taken away on holidays always go in the proper order, so everything will fit. I can't help it if someone decides to be smart and funny and try to hide things in a little cardboard box. I wasn't going to have the whole routine upset, that we've been following all these years and that I thought was giving people a good life, though it seems I'm very wrong, for the sake of someone's joke.

You're developing a nasty streak. A very nasty, cruel streak. You know what you're becoming? Snide. A nasty, snide girl. No one likes a snide girl, always arguing, always throwing a tantrum, getting your own way, answering back, correcting people, criticising, complaining, no one likes that sort of girl. Unless you count your foulmouthed little English chum. You'll make a great pair. Throw your future away. Give it away. Throw what I have done, we have done, in our faces.

Sacrificed! Gone without. Gone through hardship so what happened to us will never happen to you. So you'll never know what we saw - never, never, never. Never see people losing jobs and never finding another one, never be without a home, never be without enough money for a decent meal, never be afraid that everything will fall apart at any second. Isn't that something, miss? Tell me? Isn't it?

Now my head's going to burst. I'm going to take something and then get lunch.

THE HERBAL BED

by Peter Whelan

SUSANNA:

This is my night-time garden where it's the moon that makes things grow. My silver garden with its crop of stars. I sit here many a time when he's away and the house is asleep. It's then that I'm myself and not John's wife. I do secret things. Read his books ... I learn Latin ... work the furnace ... oh yes, as I've watched him do ... but doing it as Susanna ... not Mistress Hall. Just as I'm myself ... and my husband's wife ... so he is himself, as well as his wife's husband. Five years have made him more himself, less mine. I married a man for a month or two. For the rest, I married medicine. He seemed to have such stature ... and still does. I respect him, absolutely ... but in those years, except at the beginning, I don't think ... *I know* ... he's never, of himself, reached out and embraced me ... never really kissed me, by which I mean in pure love. Sometimes we're in the company of a very loving couple ... well, take the Palmers ... or Hamnet Sadler and his wife who're my father's age ... but still he'll touch her hand, or lips, or her ear ... and she'll open up such a loving smile at him. Well, I've seen a husband and wife leave this house and hug and kiss before they've gone three yards ... as though trying to lift some blight they felt when they'd been with us. And when I see that I think my God! What a wilderness I'm in!

THE COUNTRY WIFE

Act 4, Scene II

MRS PINCHWIFE

'For Mr Horner'. - So, I am glad he has told me his name. Dear Mr Horner! But why should I send thee such a letter that will vex thee, and make thee angry with me? - Well, I will not send it. - Ay, but then my husband will kill me, for I see plainly he won't let me love Mr Horner - but what care I for my husband? - I won't, so I won't, send poor Mr Horner such a letter- but then my husband - But oh - what if I writ at bottom my husband made me write it? - Ay, but then my husband would see't. - Can one have no shift? Ah, a London woman would have had a hundred presently. Stay - what if I should write a letter, and wrap it up like this, and write on't too? Ay, but then my husband would see't. - I don't know what to do. - But yet y'vads, I'll try, so I will - for I will not send this letter to poor Mr Horner, come what will on't (*She writes, and repeats what she hath writ.*)

'Dear, Sweet Mr Horner' - so - 'my husband would have me send you a base, rude, unmannerly letter - but I won't' - so - 'and would have me forbid you loving me - but I won't' - so - 'and would have me say to you I hate you, poor Mr Horner - but I won't tell a lie for him' - there - 'for I'm sure if you and I were in the country at cards together', - so - 'I could not help treading on your toe under the table' - so - 'or rubbing knees with you, and staring in your face till you saw me' - very well - 'and then looking down, and blushing for an hour together' - so - 'but I must make haste before my husband come; and now he has taught me to write letters, you shall have longer ones from me, who am

Dear, dear, poor dear Mr Horner, your most
humble friend, and servant to command
'till death, Margery Pinchwife.'

Stay, I must give him a hint at bottom - so - now wrap it up just like t'other - so - now write 'For Mr Horner'. - But oh now what shall I do with it? For here comes my husband.

ORPHEUS DESCENDING

by Tennessee Williams

LADY:

You gotta go now - it's dangerous for you to stay here Take your pay out of the cashbox, you can go. Go, go, take the keys to my car, cross the river into some other county. You've done what you came here to do ... I have life in my body, this dead tree, my body, has burst in flower! You've given me life, you can go! When a woman's been childless as long as I've been childless, it's hard to believe that you're still able to bear! - We used to have a little fig tree between the house and the orchard. It never bore any fruit, they said it was barren. Time went by it, spring after useless spring, and it almost started to - die ... Then one day I discovered a small green fig on the tree they said wouldn't bear! I ran through the orchard. I ran through the wine garden shouting, 'Oh, Father, it's going to bear, the fig tree is going to bear!' - It seemed such a wonderful thing, after those ten barren springs, for the little fig tree to bear, it called for a celebration - I ran to a closet, I opened a box that we kept Christmas ornaments in! - I took them out, glass bells, glass birds, tinsel, icicles, stars ... And I hung the little tree with them, I decorated the fig tree with glass bells and glass birds, and silver icicles and stars, because it won the battle and it would bear! (*Rises ecstatic.*) Unpack the box! Unpack the box with the Christmas ornaments in it, put them on me, glass bells and glass birds and stars and tinsel and snow!

THE SEASON AT SARSAPARILLA

by Patrick White

NOLA:

This is the best time of all. Before the men come. (*However, she looks at her watch*) Even in summer, at the end of the day, when you feel you could have been spat out, when the hair is stuck to your forehead, it is best, best. A time to loiter. The flowers are lolling. The roses are biggest. (*Stoops to smell*) The big, lovely roses, falling with one touch. (*Laughs*) I could eat the roses! Dawdling in the back yard. If there was none of these busybodies around (*glancing at the Pogson home*) - thin, prissy, operated women - I'd take off me clothes, and sit amongst the falling roses. I've never felt the touch of roses on my body. (*Examining her bare arm*) Green in the shade. Green for shade. Splotchy. You can imagine the petals, trickling, trickling, better than water, because solid ...

(*She looks again at her watch, irritation rising.*)

But the men don't come! They gotta come! When you expect them. Now, or then, it's the same. They gotta come. The men. Standing in bars, with arms round one another's shoulders, faces running together, to tell a bluer story ... Men are dirty buggers! But they oughta come. They're expected.

(*ERNIE and MASSON appear from the lane.*)

(*Coldly*) Thought you'd drowned yourself in it.