

Audition pieces

LEONTES

The Winter's Tale

Too hot, too hot!
To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods.
My heart dances;
But not for joy; not joy-
To be paddling palms and pinching fingers,
As now they are, and making practised smiles,
As in a looking-glass, and then to sigh!
O, that is entertainment
My bosom likes not, nor my brows!
How she holds up the beak, the bill to him!
And arms her with the boldness of a wife
To her allowing husband!
Gone already!
Inch-thick, knee-deep, o'er head and ears a fork'd one!

IMOGEN

Cymbeline

I false! Thy conscience witness: Iachimo,
Thou didst accuse him of incontinency;
Thou then look'dst like a villain; now methinks
Thy favour's good enough. Some jay of Italy
Whose mother was her painting, hath betray'd him:
Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion;
And, for I am richer than to hang by the walls,
I must be ripp'd:--to pieces with me!--O,
Men's vows are women's traitors! All good seeming,
By thy revolt, O husband, shall be thought
Put on for villany; not born where't grows,
But worn a bait for ladies.

DESDEMONA

Othello

Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio!
My advocacy is not now in tune;
My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him,
Were he in favour as in humour alter'd.
So help me every spirit sanctified,
As I have spoken for you all my best
And stood within the blank of his displeasure
For my free speech! you must awhile be patient:
What I can do I will; and more I will
Than for myself I dare: let that suffice you.

GRATIANO

The Merchant of Venice

To Nerissa

By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk:
Would he were gelt that had it, for my part,
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.

PORTIA

A quarrel, ho, already! what's the matter?

GRATIANO

About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me, whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, 'Love me, and leave me not.'

NERISSA

What talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death
And that it should lie with you in your grave:
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

GRATIANO

He will, an if he live to be a man.

NERISSA

Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

GRATIANO

Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,
No higher than thyself; the judge's clerk,
A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee:
I could not for my heart deny it him.

PORTIA

You were to blame, I must be plain with you,
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift:
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger
And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring and made him swear
Never to part with it; and here he stands;
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief:
An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.

BASSANIO

Why, I were best to cut my left hand off
And swear I lost the ring defending it.

HERMIA**A Midsummer Night's Dream**

O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
You thief of love! what, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?

HELENA

Fine, i'faith!
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

HERMIA

Puppet? why so? ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; she hath urged her height;
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem;
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HELENA

I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me: I was never curst;
I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
I am a right maid for my cowardice:
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her.

HERMIA

Lower! hark, again.

HELENA

Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
But he hath chid me hence and threaten'd me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back
And follow you no further: let me go:
You see how simple and how fond I am.

HERMIA

Why, get you gone: who is't that hinders you?

HELENA

A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

DUKE

Two Gentlemen of Verona

This love of theirs myself have often seen,
Haply when they have judged me fast asleep,
And oftentimes have purposed to forbid
Sir Valentine her company and my court:
But fearing lest my jealous aim might err
And so unworthily disgrace the man,
I gave him gentle looks, thereby to find
That which thyself hast now disclosed to me.
And, knowing that tender youth is soon suggested,
I nightly lodge her in an upper tower,
The key whereof myself have ever kept.

BIANCA

The Taming of the Shrew

Good sister, wrong me not, nor wrong yourself,
To make a bondmaid and a slave of me;
That I disdain: but for these other gawds,
Unbind my hands, I'll pull them off myself,
Yea, all my raiment, to my petticoat;
Or what you will command me will I do,
So well I know my duty to my elders.

KATHARINA

Of all thy suitors, here I charge thee, tell
Whom thou lovest best: see thou dissemble not.

BIANCA

Believe me, sister, of all the men alive
I never yet beheld that special face
Which I could fancy more than any other.

KATHARINA

Minion, thou liest. Is't not Hortensio?

BIANCA

If you affect him, sister, here I swear
I'll plead for you myself, but you shall have
him.

KATHARINA

O then, belike, you fancy riches more:
You will have Gremio to keep you fair.

BIANCA

Is it for him you do envy me so?
Nay then you jest, and now I well perceive
You have but jested with me all this while:
I prithee, sister Kate, untie my hands.

KATHARINA

If that be jest, then all the rest was so.

FORD

The Merry Wives of Windsor

What a damned Epicurean rascal is this! My heart is ready to crack with impatience. Who says this is improvident jealousy? my wife hath sent to him; the hour is fixed; the match is made. Would any man have thought this? See the hell of having a false woman! My bed shall be abused, my coffers ransacked, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not only receive this villanous wrong, but stand under the adoption of abominable terms, and by him that does me this wrong. I will rather trust a Fleming with my butter, Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my aqua-vitae bottle, or a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself; then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises; and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect. Fie, fie, fie! cuckold! cuckold! cuckold!

CLEOPATRA

Antony and Cleopatra

Pray you, stand further from me.

ANTONY

What's the matter?

CLEOPATRA

O, never was there queen So mightily betray'd! yet at the first I saw the treasons planted.

ANTONY

Cleopatra ...

CLEOPATRA

Why should I think you can be mine and true,
Though you in swearing shake the throned gods,
Who have been false to Fulvia?

ANTONY

Most sweet queen,--

CLEOPATRA

Nay, pray you, seek no colour for your going,
Eternity was in our lips and eyes, with you here
Bliss in our brows' bent; They are so still.
Or thou, the greatest soldier of the world,
Art turn'd the greatest liar.

ANTONY

Hear me, queen:

The strong necessity of time commands
Our services awhile; but my full heart
Remains in use with you. Our Italy
Shines o'er with civil swords: enemies
Make daring approaches to the port of Rome:
Upon the present state, whose numbers threaten;
By any desperate change: my more particular,
And that which most with you should save my going,
Is Fulvia's death.

CLEOPATRA

Can Fulvia die?

ANTONY

She's dead, my queen:

CLEOPATRA

O most false love!

Where be the sacred vials thou shouldst fill

With sorrowful water? Now I see, I see,

In Fulvia's death, how mine received shall be.

SIR ANDREW

Twelfth Night

No, faith, I'll not stay a jot longer.

SIR TOBY BELCH

Thy reason, dear venom, give thy reason.

FABIAN

You must needs yield your reason, Sir Andrew.

SIR ANDREW

Marry, I saw your niece do more favours to the
count's serving-man than ever she bestowed upon me;
I saw't i' the orchard.

SIR TOBY BELCH

Did she see thee the while, old boy? tell me that.

SIR ANDREW

As plain as I see you now.

FABIAN

This was a great argument of love in her toward you.

SIR ANDREW

'Slight, will you make an ass o' me?

FABIAN

I will prove it legitimate, sir, upon the oaths of
judgment and reason.

SIR TOBY BELCH

And they have been grand-jury-men since before Noah
was a sailor.

FABIAN

She did show favour to the youth in your sight only
to exasperate you, to awake your dormouse valour, to
put fire in your heart and brimstone in your liver.
You should then have accosted her; and with some
excellent jests, fire-new from the mint, you should
have banged the youth into dumbness. This was
looked for at your hand, and this was balked: the
double guilt of this opportunity you let time wash
off, and you are now sailed into the north of my
lady's opinion; where you will hang like an icicle
on a Dutchman's beard, unless you do redeem it by
some laudable attempt either of valour or policy.