

ANTIGONE ([Act 1, scene 1](#))

By Sophocles

ISMENE

Bethink thee, sister, of our father's fate,
Abhorred, dishonored, self-convinced of sin,
Blinded, himself his executioner.
Think of his mother-wife (ill sorted names)
Done by a noose herself had twined to death
And last, our hapless brethren in one day,
Both in a mutual destiny involved,
Self-slaughtered, both the slayer and the slain.
Bethink thee, sister, we are left alone;
Shall we not perish wretchedest of all,
If in defiance of the law we cross
A monarch's will?—weak women, think of that,
Not framed by nature to contend with men.
Remember this too that the stronger rules;
We must obey his orders, these or worse.
Therefore I plead compulsion and entreat
The dead to pardon. I perforce obey
The powers that be. 'Tis foolishness, I ween,
To overstep in aught the golden mean.

Romeo and Juliet (Act 2, scene 2)

By William Shakespeare

JULIET

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 to-night
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
Then 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 'havior 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's passion: therefore pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

Loves Labor's Lost (Act 3, scene 1)

By William Shakespeare

BEROWNE:

And I, forsooth, in love!

I, that have been love's whip,

A very beadle to a humorous sigh,

A critic, nay, a night-watch constable,

A domineering pedant o'er the boy,

Than whom no mortal so magnificent!

O my little heart!

What? I love? I sue? I seek a wife?

A woman, that is like a German clock,

Still a-repairing, ever out of frame,

And never going aright, being a watch,

But being watched that it may still go right!

Nay, to be perjured, which is worst of all;

And among three to love the worst of all –

A whitely wanton with a velvet brow,

With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes;

And I to sigh for her, to watch for her,

To pray for her! Go to, it is a plague

That Cupid will impose for my neglect

Of his almighty dreadful little might.

Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue, and groan;

Some men must love my lady, and some Joan.

The Merchant of Venice ([Act 4, scene 1](#))

By William Shakespeare

PORTIA

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:
'T is mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned 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,
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.

King Lear (Act 2, scene 4)

By William Shakespeare

The Fool

We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's no labouring i' the winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes but blind men; and there's not a nose among twenty but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it: but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again: I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it. That sir which serves and seeks for gain,
And follows but for form,
Will pack when it begins to rain,
And leave thee in the storm,
But I will tarry; the fool will stay,
And let the wise man fly:
The knave turns fool that runs away;
The fool no knave, perdy

Romeo and Juliet ([Act 2, scene 2](#))

By William Shakespeare

ROMEO

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! /

Oedipus Rex ([LINK](#))

By Sophocles

JOCOSTA

My lords, ye look amazed to see your queen
With wreaths and gifts of incense in her hands.
I had a mind to visit the high shrines,
For Oedipus is overwrought, alarmed
With terrors manifold. He will not use
His past experience, like a man of sense,
To judge the present need, but lends an ear
To any croaker if he augurs ill.
Since then my counsels naught avail, I turn
To thee, our present help in time of trouble,
Apollo, Lord Lycean, and to thee
My prayers and supplications here I bring.
Lighten us, lord, and cleanse us from this curse!
For now we all are cowed like mariners
Who see their helmsman dumbstruck in the storm.

Antigone

By Sophocles

HAEMON

Father, the gods implant in mortal men
Reason, the choicest gift bestowed by heaven.
'Tis not for me to say thou errest, nor
Would I arraign thy wisdom, if I could;
And yet wise thoughts may come to other men
And, as thy son, it falls to me to mark
The acts, the words, the comments of the crowd.
Such the low murmurings that reach my ear.
O father, nothing is by me more prized
Than thy well-being, for what higher good
Can children covet than their sire's fair fame,
As fathers too take pride in glorious sons?
Therefore, my father, cling not to one mood,
And deemed not thou art right, all others wrong.
For whoso thinks that wisdom dwells with him,
That he alone can speak or think aright,
Such oracles are empty breath when tried.
The wisest man will let himself be swayed
By others' wisdom and relax in time.
Relent then and repent thee of thy wrath;
For, if one young in years may claim some sense,
I'll say 'tis best of all to be endowed
With absolute wisdom; but, if that's denied,
(And nature takes not readily that ply)
Next wise is he who lists to sage advice.

Henry V (Act 5, scene 4)

By William Shakespeare

JOAN

First, let me tell you whom you have condemn'd:
Not me begotten of a shepherd swain,
But issued from the progeny of kings;
Virtuous and holy; chosen from above,
By inspiration of celestial grace,
To work exceeding miracles on earth.
I never had to do with wicked spirits:
But you, that are polluted with your lusts,
Stain'd with the guiltless blood of innocents,
Corrupt and tainted with a thousand vices,
Because you want the grace that others have,
You judge it straight a thing impossible
To compass wonders but by help of devils.
No, misconceived! Joan of Arc hath been
A virgin from her tender infancy,
Chaste and immaculate in very thought;
Whose maiden blood, thus rigorously effused,
Will cry for vengeance at the gates of heaven.
Will nothing turn your unrelenting hearts?
Then, Joan, discover thine infirmity,
That warranteth by law to be thy privilege.
I am with child, ye bloody homicides:
Murder not then the fruit within my womb,
Although ye hale me to a violent death.