

The Comedy of Errors

Audition Materials

Please prepare one or two of the following monologues or a comedic Shakespeare monologue of your choice. You should be familiar with the monologues but they do not need to be memorized.



BALTHAZAR | ACT III SCENE I

Have patience, sir; O! let it not be so;
Herein you war against your reputation,
And draw within the compass of suspect
The unviolated honour of your wife.
Once this, your long experience of her wisdom,
Her sober virtue, years, and modesty,
Plead on her part some cause to you unknown;
And doubt not, sir, but she will well excuse
Why at this time the doors are made against you.
Be rul'd by me: depart in patience,
And let us to the Tiger all to dinner;
And about evening come yourself alone,
To know the reason of this strange restraint.
If by strong hand you offer to break in
Now in the stirring passage of the day,
A vulgar comment will be made of it,
And that supposed by the common rout
Against your yet ungalled estimation,
That may with foul intrusion enter in
And dwell upon your grave when you are dead;
For slander lives upon succession,
For ever housed where it gets possession.

DUKE | ACT I SCENE I

Merchant of Syracuse, plead no more.

I am not partial to infringe our laws:

The enmity and discord which of late

Sprung from the rancorous outrage of your duke

To merchants, our well-dealing countrymen,

Who, wanting guilders to redeem their lives,

Have seal'd his rigorous statutes with their bloods,

Excludes all pity from our threat'ning looks.

For, since the mortal and intestine jars

'Twixt thy seditious countrymen and us,

It hath in solemn synods been decreed,

Both by the Syracusians and ourselves,

T' admit no traffic to our adverse towns:

Nay, more, if any, born at Ephesus

Be seen at Syracusian marts and fairs;

Again, if any Syracusian born

Come to the bay of Ephesus, he dies,

His goods confiscate to the duke's dispose;

Unless a thousand marks be levied,

To quit the penalty and to ransom him.

Thy substance, valu'd at the highest rate,

Cannot amount unto a hundred marks;

Therefore, by law thou art condemn'd to die.

ADRIANA | ACT II SCENE I

His company must do his minions grace,
Whilst I at home starve for a merry look.
Hath homely age the alluring beauty took
From my poor cheek? then, he hath wasted it:
Are my discourses dull? barren my wit?
If voluble and sharp discourse be marr'd,
Unkindness blunts it more than marble hard:
Do their gay vestments his affections bait?
That's not my fault; he's master of my state:
What ruins are in me that can be found
By him not ruin'd? then is he the ground
Of my defeatures. My decayed fair
A sunny look of his would soon repair;
But, too unruly deer, he breaks the pale
And feeds from home: poor I am but his stale.
[Luc.] Self-harming jealousy! fie! beat it hence.
Adr. Unfeeling fools can with such wrongs dispense.
I know his eye doth homage elsewhere,
Or else what lets it but he would be here?
Sister, you know he promis'd me a chain:
Would that alone, alone he would detain,
So he would keep fair quarter with his bed!
I see, the jewel best enamelled
Will lose his beauty; and though gold bides still
That others touch, yet often touching will
Wear gold; and no man that hath a name,
By falsehood and corruption doth it shame.
Since that my beauty cannot please his eye,
I'll weep what's left away, and weeping die.

LUCIANA | ACT III SCENE II

And may it be that you have quite forgot
A husband's office? Shall, Antipholus,
Even in the spring of love, thy love-springs rot?
Shall love, in building, grow so ruinous?
If you did wed my sister for her wealth,
Then, for her wealth's sake use her with more kindness:
Or, if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth;
Muffle your false love with some show of blindness;
Let not my sister read it in your eye;
Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator;
Look sweet, speak fair, become disloyalty;
Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger;
Bear a fair presence, though your heart be tainted;
Teach sin the carriage of a holy saint;
Be secret-false: what need she be acquainted?
What simple thief brags of his own attainment?
'Tis double wrong to truant with your bed,
And let her read it in thy looks at board:
Shame hath a bastard fame, well managed;
Ill deeds are doubled with an evil word.
Alas! poor women, make us but believe,
Being compact of credit, that you love us;
Though others have the arm, show us the sleeve;
We in your motion turn, and you may move us.
Then, gentle brother, get you in again;
Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her wife:
'Tis holy sport to be a little vain,
When the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife.

ABESS | ACT V SCENE I

And thereof came it that the man was mad:
The venom clamours of a jealous woman
Poison more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.
It seems, his sleeps were hinder'd by thy railing,
And thereof comes it that his head is light.
Thou say'st his meat was sauc'd with thy up-braidings:
Unquiet meals make ill digestions;
Thereof the raging fire of fever bred:
And what's a fever but a fit of madness?
Thou say'st his sports were hinder'd by thy brawls:
Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue
But moody moping, and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair,
And at her heels a huge infectious troop
Of pale distemperatures and foes to life?
In food, in sport, and life-preserving rest
To be disturb'd, would mad or man or beast:
The consequence is then, thy jealous fits
Have scar'd thy husband from the use of wits.

COURTESAN | ACT IV SCENE III

Now, out of doubt, Antipholus is mad,
Else would he never so demean himself.
A ring he hath of mine worth forty ducats,
And for the same he promis'd me a chain:
Both one and other he denies me now.
The reason that I gather he is mad,
Besides this present instance of his rage,
Is a mad tale he told to-day at dinner,
Of his own doors being shut against his entrance.
Belike his wife, acquainted with his fits,
On purpose shut the doors against his way.
My way is now to hie home to his house,
And tell his wife, that, being lunatic,
He rush'd into my house, and took perforce
My ring away. This course I fittest choose,
For forty ducats is too much to lose.