

Male Monologues

GREEK:

Oedipus Rex by Sophocles

OEDIPUS: I care not for thy counsel or thy praise;
For with what eyes could I have e'er beheld
My honoured father in the shades below,
Or my unhappy mother, both destroyed
By me? This punishment is worse than death,
And so it should be. Sweet had been the sight
Of my dear children--them I could have wished
To gaze upon; but I must never see
Or them, or this fair city, or the palace
Where I was born. Deprived of every bliss
By my own lips, which doomed to banishment
The murderer of Laius, and expelled
The impious wretch, by gods and men accursed:
Could I behold them after this? Oh no!
Would I could now with equal ease remove
My hearing too, be deaf as well as blind,
And from another entrance shut out woe!
To want our senses, in the hour of ill,
Is comfort to the wretched. O Cithaeron!
Why didst thou e'er receive me, or received,
Why not destroy, that men might never know
Who gave me birth? O Polybus! O Corinth!
And thou, long time believed my father's palace,
Oh! what a foul disgrace to human nature
Didst thou receive beneath a prince's form!
Impious myself, and from an impious race.
Where is my splendour now?

ANTIGONE by Sophocles

CREON: Yea, this, my son, should by thy heart's fixed law--in all things to obey thy father's will. 'Tis for this that men pray to see dutiful children grow up around them in their homes--that such may requite their father's foe with evil, and honour, as their father doth, his friend. But he who begets unprofitable children--what shall we say that he hath sown, but troubles for himself, and much triumph for his foes? Then do not thou, my son, at pleasure's beck, dethrone thy reason for a woman's sake; knowing that this is a

joy that soon grows cold in clasping arms--an evil woman to share thy bed and thy home. For what wound could strike deeper than a false friend? Nay, with loathing, and as if she were thine enemy, let this girl go to find a husband in the house of Hades. For since I have taken her, alone of all the city, in open disobedience, I will not make myself a liar to my people--I will slay her. So let her appeal as she will to the majesty of kindred blood. If I am to nurture mine own kindred in naughtiness, needs must I bear with it in aliens. He who does violence to the laws, or thinks to dictate to his rulers, such a one can win no praise from me.

AEGISTHOS: Hail, joyous light of justice-bearing day!

At length I can aver that God's supernal,
Judges of men, look down on earthly woes,
Beholding, in the Erinyes' woven robes,
This man, thus prostrate, welcome sight to me,
The wiles atoning compassed by his sire.
For Atreus, Argos' ruler, this man's father,
Did from the city and his home expel
Thyestes, rival in the sovereignty,--
My father, to be plain, and his own brother.
But coming back, a suppliant of the hearth,
Wretched Thyestes found a lot secure,
Not doomed his natal soil with blood to stain,
Here in his home: but this man's godless sire,
Atreus, with zeal officious more than kind,
Feigning a joyous banquet-day to hold,
Served to my sire, for food, his children's flesh.
Their feet indeed, the members of their hands,--
Seated aloof, in higher places, he hides.
Partaking of the undistinguished parts,
In ignorance, Thyestes eats the food,
Curse-laden, as thou seest, to the race.
Discerning then the impious deed, he shrieked,
And back recoiling the foul slaughter spewed.
Spurning, with righteous curse, th' insulted board
Dread doom he vows to the Pelopidæ;--
"So perish the whole race of Pleisthenes."
Hence is it that ye see this man laid low;
The righteous planner of his death am I.

ELIZABETHAN:

ROMEO AND JULIET by Shakespeare

Romeo: He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

[JULIET appears above at a window]

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!

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

Petruchio: Thus have I politicly begun my reign,
And 'tis my hope to end successfully.
My falcon now is sharp and passing empty.
And till she stoop she must not be full-gorg'd,
For then she never looks upon her lure.
Another way I have to man my haggard,
To make her come, and know her keeper's call,
That is, to watch her, as we watch these kites
That bate and beat, and will not be obedient.
She eat no meat to-day, nor none shall eat;
Last night she slept not, nor to-night she shall not;
As with the meat, some undeserved fault
I'll find about the making of the bed;
And here I'll fling the pillow, there the bolster,

This way the coverlet, another way the sheets;
Ay, and amid this hurly I intend
That all is done in reverend care of her-
And, in conclusion, she shall watch all night;
And if she chance to nod I'll rail and brawl
And with the clamour keep her still awake.
This is a way to kill a wife with kindness,
And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humour.
He that knows better how to tame a shrew,
Now let him speak; 'tis charity to show.

TWELFTH NIGHT

Malvolio: O, ho! do you come near me now? no worse man than Sir Toby to look to me! This concurs directly with the letter: she sends him on purpose, that I may appear stubborn to him; for she incites me to that in the letter. 'Cast thy humble slough,' says she; 'be opposite with a kinsman, surly with servants; let thy tongue tang with arguments of state; put thyself into the trick of singularity;' and consequently sets down the manner how; as, a sad face, a reverend carriage, a slow tongue, in the habit of some sir of note, and so forth. I have limed her; but it is Jove's doing, and Jove make me thankful! And when she went away now, 'Let this fellow be looked to:' fellow! not Malvolio, nor after my degree, but fellow. Why, every thing adheres together, that no dram of a scruple, no scruple of a scruple, no obstacle, no incredulous or unsafe circumstance. What can be said? Nothing that can be can come between me and the full prospect of my hopes. Well, Jove, not I, is the doer of this, and he is to be thanked.

FRENCH RENAISSANCE:

TARTUFFE by Moliere

ORGON:

Oh, had you seen Tartuffe as I first knew him,
Your heart, like mine, would have surrendered to him.
He used to come into our church each day
And humbly kneel nearby, and start to pray.
He'd sigh and weep, and sometimes with a sound

Of rapture he would bend and kiss the ground.
His serving man, no less devout than he,
Informed me of his master's poverty;
I gave him gifts, but in his humbleness
He'd beg me every time to give him less.
"Oh, that's too much," he'd cry, "too much by twice!
I don't deserve it. The half, Sir, would suffice."
In smallest trifles, he's extremely strict.
Last week, his conscience was severely pricked
Because, while praying, he had caught a flea
And killed it, so he felt, too wrathfully.

TARTUFFE:

Madam, no happiness is so complete
As when, from lips we love, come words so sweet;
Their nectar floods my every sense, and drains
In honeyed rivulets through all my veins.
To please you is my joy; my only goal;
Your love is the restorer of my soul;
And yet I must beg leave, now, to confess
Some lingering doubts as to my happiness.
Might this not be a trick? Might not the catch
Be that you wish me to break off the match
With Marianne, and so have feigned to love me?
I shan't quite trust your fond opinion of me
Until the feelings you've expressed so sweetly
Are demonstrated somewhat more concretely.

CLEANTE:

Good God man! Have you lost your common sense –
Or is this all some joke at my expense?
There's a vast difference, so it seems to me,
Between true piety and hypocrisy:
How do you fail to see it, may I ask?
Is not a face quite different from a mask?
These calculating souls who offer prayers
Not to their Maker, but as public wares,
And seek to buy respect and reputation
With lifted eyes and sighs of exaltation.
Such knaves are all too common: yet for the wise,
True piety isn't hard to recognize.
I think that you've been dreadfully deluded.
Now then, dear Brother, (my speech is now) concluded.

VALERE:

Madam, I've just received some wondrous news
Regarding which I'd like to hear your views.
(The news?) You're marrying Tartuffe (I find
Your father does have such a match in mind.)
I'll do my best to take it in my stride
The pain I feel at being cast aside.
Time and forgetfulness may put an end to
Or if I can't forget, I shall pretend to.
No self-respecting person is expected
To go on loving once he's been rejected.

Would you prefer it if I pined away
In hopeless passion till my dying day?
Am I to yield you to a rival's arms
And not console myself with other's charms?
You wish me to? (Yes) That's the final straw.
Madam, farewell. Your wish shall be my law.

REALISM:

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE by Tennessee Williams

Stanley: Stella... Come here. I am sorry for what I did tonight. I should have never hit you. It was completely wrong on my part and you don't deserve treatment like that ever again. I just got a little too drunk tonight and lost control of myself and reacted in the totally wrong way. I love you so much Stella. Even in my rough and sometime hurtful moments I still love you. I know I may not be the best husband at all times but I try my best for you. Heck even your own sister thinks I'm a terrible man and husband. But I truly do care more for you than anything else in this world. You are my wife. My true love. You are going to be the mother of my child. I need you Stella. More than you know. You and I will be spending the rest of our lives together. No one and nothing will ever come between us. I know people are gonna question me and my actions, but as long as I still have you then nothing else matters to me at all. You have my word that what took place is a one time, single event that was a lack of control on my part and that will never happen again. You mean way more to me than some stupid poker game where I get too drunk and lose control. From now on I will be a better husband. A better person overall. Don't let what Blanche has to say affect what you want. She is just jealous of what you have and she wishes to bring us apart. She can only dream to someday have what we have. She has been involved in failed marriages and relationships while we have maintained a strong and healthy relationship. She is gonna tell you to end things with me, that you deserve better, and all that foolish. You can't believe her. She doesn't know what is best you.

THE GLASS MENAGERIE by Tennessee Williams

Tom: What do you think I'm at? Aren't I supposed to have any patience to reach the end of, Mother? You think I'm crazy about the warehouse? You think I'm in love with the Continental Shoemakers? You think I want to spend fifty-five years down there in that celotex interior? With flourescent tubes? Look! I'd rather somebody picked up a crowbar

and battered out my brains than go back mornings. But I go. For sixty five dollars a month I give up all that I dream of doing and being ever! And you say self- self's all I ever think of. Why listen, if self is what I thought of Mother, I'd be where he is, GONE! I'm going to the movies! I'm going to opium dens, yes, opium dens, Mother. I've joined the Hogan Gang, I'm a hired assassin, I carry a tommy gun in a violin case. I run a string of cat houses in the Valley. They call me Killer, Killer Wingfield. I'm leading a double life: a simple, honest warehouse worker by day, by night, a dynamic czar of the underworld, Mother. On occasion they call me El Diablo.

DEATH OF A SALESMAN by Neil Simon

Willy: Business is definitely business, but just listen for a minute You don't understand this. When I was a boy-eighteen, nineteen---I was already on the road. And there was a question in my mind as to whether selling had a future for me. Because in those days I had a yearning to go to Alaska. See, there were three gold strikes in one month in Alaska, and I felt like going out. Just for the ride, you might say. Oh, yeah, my father lived many years in Alaska. He was an adventurous man. We've got quite a little streak of self-reliance in our family. I thought I'd go out with my older bother and try to locate him, and maybe settle in the North with the old man. And I was almost decided to go, when I met a salesman in the Parker House. His name was Dave Singleman. And he was eighty-four years old, and he'd drummed merchandise in thirty-one states. And old Dave, he'd go up to his room, y'understand, put on his green velvet slippers---I'll never forget---and pick up his phone and call the buyers, and without ever leaving his room, at the age of eighty-four, he made his living. And when I say that, I realized that selling was the greatest career a man could want. 'Cause what could be more satisfying than to be able to go, at the age of eight-four, into twenty of thirty different cities, and pick up a phone, and be remembered and loved and helped by so may different people? Do you know? When he died--- and by the way he died the death of a salesman, in his green velvet slippers in the smoker of the New York, New Haven and Hartford, going into Boston---when he died, Hundreds of salesman and buyers were at his funeral. Things were sad on a lotta trains for months after that.