

*LibriVox:*

*Shakespeare Monologues Collection 001*

*By William Shakespeare*

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*Quality of Mercy* from *Merchant of Venice*, Act IV, Scene I, Read by Kirsten Ferreri,

Runtime: 1:31

*The quality of mercy is not strain'd,*

*To mitigate the justice of thy plea,*

*It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven*

*Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice*

*Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd;*

*Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.*

*It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:*

*'Tis 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 enthroned 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, Jew,*

*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*

*No Shame But Mine* from *Taming of the Shrew*, Act III, Scene II, Read by Duan, Runtime: 1:40

*No shame but mine: I must, forsooth, be forced*

*To give my hand opposed against my heart*

*Unto a mad-brain rudesby full of spleen;*

*Who woo'd in haste and means to wed at leisure.*

*I told you, I, he was a frantic fool,*

*Hiding his bitter jests in blunt behavior:*

*And, to be noted for a merry man,*

*He'll woo a thousand, 'point the day of marriage,*

*Make feasts, invite friends, and proclaim the  
banns;*

*Yet never means to wed where he hath woo'd.*

*Now must the world point at poor Katharina,*

*And say, 'Lo, there is mad Petruchio's wife,*

*If it would please him come and marry her!'*

*They Met in the Day of Success from Macbeth, Act 1, Scene 5, Read by Lizzie Driver, Runtime: 2:22*

*(A Letter) They met me in the day of success; and I have learned by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me, 'Thane of Cawdor;' by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with, 'Hail, king that shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightest not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.*

*Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be*

*What thou art promis'd. Yet do I fear thy nature;*

*It is too full o' the milk of human kindness*

*To catch the nearest way; thou wouldst be great,*

*Art not without ambition, but without*

*The illness should attend it; what thou wouldst highly,*

*That thou wouldst holily; wouldst not play false,*

*And yet wouldst wrongly win; thou 'dst have, great Glamis,*

*That which cries, 'Thus thou must do, if thou have it;'*

*And that which rather thou dost fear to do*

*Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,*

*That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,*

*And chastise with the valour of my tongue*

*All that impedes thee from the golden round,*

*Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem*

*To have thee crown'd withal.*

*More Than Prince of Cats* from *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, Scene 4, Read by [Shurtagal](#), Runtime: 0:49

*More than prince of cats, I can tell you.*

*O! he is the courageous captain of compliments.*

*He fights as you sing prick-song,*

*keeps time, distance, and proportion;*

*rests me his minim rest*

*one, two, and the third in your bosom;*

*the very butcher of a silk button, a duellist, a duellist;*

*a gentleman of the very first house, of the first and second cause.*

*Ah! the immortal passado! the punto reverso! the hay!*

*Is This a Dagger?* from *Macbeth*, Act 2, Scene 1, Read by [Julian Jamison](#), Runtime: 2:16

*Is this a dagger which I see before me,*

*Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,*

*The handle toward my hand? Come, let me  
clutch thee:*

*Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,*

*I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.*

*With Tarquin's ravishing strides, toward his design*

*Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible*

*Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,*

*To feeling as to sight? or art thou but*

*Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear*

*A dagger of the mind, a false creation,*

*Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,*

*Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?*

*And take the present horror from the time,*

*I see thee yet, in form as palpable*

*Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat he lives:*

*As this which now I draw.*

*Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives. [A  
bell rings.]*

*Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;*

*I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.*

*And such an instrument I was to use.*

*Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell*

*Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses, That summons thee to heaven or to hell.*

*Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;*

*And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,*

*Which was not so before. There's no such thing:*

*It is the bloody business which informs*

*Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world*

*Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse*

*The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates*

*Pale Hecate's offerings; and wither'd murder,*

- *If We Shadows Have Offended* From *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 5, Scene 2, Read by [Kara Shallenberg](#), Runtime: 1:19

*If we shadows have offended,*

*Think but this, and all is mended,*

*That you have but slumber'd here*

*While these visions did appear.*

*And this weak and idle theme,*

*No more yielding but a dream,*

*Gentles, do not reprehend:*

*If you pardon, we will mend.*

*And, as I'm an honest Puck,*

*If we have unearned luck*

*Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,*

*We will make amends ere long;*

*Else the Puck a liar call:*

*So, good night unto you all.*

*Give me your hands, if we be friends,*

*And Robin shall restore amends.*

- Prologue From *Henry V*, Act 1, Scene 1, Read by [Squid Varilekova](#), Runtime: 2:32

*O! for a Muse of fire, that would ascend  
Whose high upreared and abutting fronts  
The brightest heaven of invention;  
The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:  
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act  
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts:  
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene.  
Into a thousand parts divide one man,  
Then should the war-like Harry, like himself,  
And make imaginary puissance;  
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,  
Think when we talk of horses that you see them  
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire  
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;  
Crouch for employment. But pardon, gentles all,  
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our  
kings,  
The flat unraised spirits that hath dar'd  
Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,  
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth  
Turning the accomplishment of many years  
So great an object: can this cockpit hold  
Into an hour-glass: for the which supply,  
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram  
Admit me Chorus to this history;  
Within this wooden O the very casques  
Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,  
That did affright the air at Agincourt?  
Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.  
O, pardon! since a crooked figure may  
Attest in little place a million;  
And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,  
On your imaginary forces work.  
Suppose within the girdle of these walls  
Are now confin'd two mighty monarchies,*

• *I Defy All Counsel From King John, Act 3, Scene 4, Read by [Larysa Jaworski](#), Runtime: 2:17*  
*No, I defy all counsel, all redress,*

*But that which ends all counsel, true redress,*

*Death, death: O, amiable lovely death!*

*Thou odoriferous stench! sound rottenness!*

*Arise forth from the couch of lasting night,*

*Thou hate and terror to prosperity,*

*And I will kiss thy detestable bones,*

*And put my eyeballs in thy vaulty brows,*

*And ring these fingers with thy household worms,*

*And stop this gap of breath with fulsome dust,*

*And be a carrion monster like thyself:*

*Come, grin on me; and I will think thou smil'st*

*And buss thee as thy wife! Misery's love,*

*O! come to me.*

- *Romeo, Romeo, Wherefore Art Thou Romeo* From *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, Scene 2, Read by Laurie Anne Walden, Runtime: 1:13

*O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?*

*Deny thy father, and refuse thy name;*

*Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,*

*And I'll no longer be a Capulet.*

*'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;*

*Thou art thyself though, not a Montague.*

*What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,*

*Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part*

*Belonging to a man. O! be some other name:*

*What's in a name? that which we call a rose*

*By any other name would smell as sweet;*

*So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,*

*Retain that dear perfection which he owes*

*Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name;*

*And for that name, which is no part of thee,*

*Take all myself.*

- *I left no ring with her*, From Twelfth Night, Act 2, Scene 2, Read by [Karen Savage](#), Runtime: 1:39

*I left no ring with her: what means this lady?      As I am woman,—now alas the day!—*

*Fortune forbid my outside have not charm'd her!      What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!*

*She made good view of me; indeed, so much,      O time! thou must untangle this, not I;*

*That sure methought her eyes had lost her tongue,      It is too hard a knot for me to untie.*

*For she did speak in starts distractedly.*

*She loves me, sure; the cunning of her passion*

*Invites me in this churlish messenger.*

*None of my lord's ring! why, he sent her none.*

*I am the man: if it be so, as 'tis,*

*Poor lady, she were better love a dream.*

*Disguise, I see, thou art a wickedness,*

*Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.*

*How easy is it for the proper-false*

*In women's waxen hearts to set their forms!*

*Alas! our frailty is the cause, not we!*

*For such as we are made of, such we be.*

*How will this fadge? My master loves her dearly;*

*And I, poor monster, fond as much on him;*

*And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.*

*What will become of this? As I am man,*

*My state is desperate for my master's love;*

- *Be Cheerful Sir*, From *The Tempest*, Act 4, Scene 1, Read by [Alan Davis-Drake](#), Runtime: 1:13

*Be cheerful, sir:*

*Our revels now are ended. These our actors,*

*As I foretold you, were all spirits and*

*Are melted into air, into thin air:*

*And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,*

*The cloud-capp'd towers, the golden palaces,*

*The solemn temples, the great globe itself,*

*Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve*

*And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,*

*Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff*

*As dreams are made on, and our little life*

*Is rounded with a sleep.*

- Emilia, From *Othello*, Act 4, Scene 3, Read by [Elizabeth Klett](#), Runtime: 1:57

*But I do think it is their husbands' faults*

*If wives do fall. Say that they slack their duties,*

*And pour our treasures into foreign laps,*

*Or else break out in peevish jealousies,*

*Throwing restraint upon us; or, say they strike us,*

*Or scant our former having in despite;*

*Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,*

*Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know*

*Their wives have sense like them; they see and smell,*

*And have their palates both for sweet and sour,*

*As husbands have. What is it that they do*

*When they change us for others? Is it sport?*

*I think it is; and doth affection breed it?*

*I think it doth; is 't frailty that thus errs?*

*It is so too; and have not we affections,*

*Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?*

*Then, let them use us well; else let them know,*

*The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.*

- *Hamlet's Speech to the Players*, From *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 2, Read by [Shurtagal](#), Runtime: 2:39 (Prose)

*Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and—as I may say—whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O! it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'er-doing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.*

*Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now, this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O! there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.*

*O! reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered; that's villanous, and snows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.*

- *Of Comfort No Man Speak*, From Richard II', Act 3, Scene 2, Read by Mark Nelson, Runtime: 2:36

<i>No matter where. Of comfort no man speak:</i>	<i>Allowing him a breath, a little scene,</i>
<i>Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;</i>	<i>To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks,</i>
<i>Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes</i>	<i>Infusing him with self and vain conceit</i>
<i>Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth;</i>	<i>As if this flesh which walls about our life</i>
<i>Let's choose executors and talk of wills:</i>	<i>Were brass impregnable; and humour'd thus</i>
<i>And yet not so—for what can we bequeath</i>	<i>Comes at the last, and with a little pin</i>
<i>Save our deposed bodies to the ground?</i>	<i>Bores through his castle wall, and farewell king!</i>
<i>Our lands, our lives, and all are Bolingbroke's,</i>	<i>Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood</i>
<i>And nothing can we call our own but death,</i>	<i>With solemn reverence: throw away respect,</i>
<i>And that small model of the barren earth</i>	<i>Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty,</i>
<i>Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.</i>	<i>For you have but mistook me all this while:</i>
<i>For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground</i>	<i>I live with bread like you, feel want,</i>
<i>And tell sad stories of the death of kings:</i>	<i>Taste grief, need friends: subjected thus,</i>
<i>How some have been depos'd, some slain in war,</i>	<i>How can you say to me I am a king?</i>
<i>Some haunted by the ghosts they have depos'd,</i>	
<i>Some poison'd by their wives, some sleeping kill'd;</i>	
<i>All murder'd: for within the hollow crown</i>	
<i>That rounds the mortal temples of a king</i>	
<i>Keeps Death his court, and there the antick sits,</i>	
<i>Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp;</i>	

- *'Tis One Thing To Be Tempted*, From Measure for Measure', Act 2, Scene 1, Read by [Martin Clifton](#), Runtime: 1:14

*'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,*

*Another thing to fall. I not deny,*

*The jury, passing on the prisoner's life,*

*May in the sworn twelve have a thief or two*

*Guiltier than him they try; what's open made to justice,*

*That justice seizes: what know the laws*

*That thieves do pass on thieves? 'Tis very pregnant,*

*The jewel that we find, we stoop and take it*

*Because we see it; but what we do not see*

*We tread upon, and never think of it.*

*You may not so extenuate his offence*

*For I have had such faults; but rather tell me,*

*When I, that censure him, do so offend,*

*Let mine own judgment pattern out my death,*

*And nothing come in partial. Sir, he must die.*