

JOHN BELL SCHOLARSHIP 2021 MONOLOGUE LIST

Romeo and Juliet – Act 1, Scene 3

Juliet's nurse has been her lifelong companion and her closest confidante. In this scene Juliet's mother is anxious to deliver some exciting news, but everyone has to wait while Nurse recounts her favourite memory of a very young Juliet. She paints a vivid picture in her larger-than-life style, remembering her own daughter and husband.

NURSE

Even or odd, of all days in the year,
Come Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.
Susan and she, God rest all Christian souls,
Were of an age. Well, Susan is with God;
She was too good for me. But, as I said,
On Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen;
That shall she, marry! I remember it well.
'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years,
And she was weaned, I never shall forget it,
And since that time it is eleven years;
For then she could stand alone; nay, by the rood,
She could have run and waddled all about,
For even the day before, she broke her brow.
And then my husband - God be with his soul!
He was a merry man - took up the child:
'Yea,' quoth he, 'dost thou fall upon thy face?
Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit;
Wilt thou not, Jule?' and, by my holidam,
The pretty wretch left crying and said 'Ay.'
Madam I cannot choose but laugh,
To think it should leave crying and say 'Ay.'
And yet, I warrant, it had upon its brow
A bump as big as a young cockerel's stone;
A parlous knock, and it cried bitterly:
'Yea,' quoth my husband, 'fall'st upon thy face?
Thou wilt fall backward when thou comest to age;
Wilt thou not, Jule?' It stinted and said 'Ay.'
Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his grace,
Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed:
An I might live to see thee married once,
I have my wish.

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A Midsummer Night's Dream – Act 3, Scene 5

Helena is convinced that her friends are mocking her and she's devastated. Lysander and Demetrius, who had previously both sworn undying love to Hermia, have suddenly switched their affections to Helena. Helena believes that they are playing a cruel joke on her, and most hurtful of all, her closest friend Hermia appears to be the ring-leader.

HELENA

Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoined all three
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia! Most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us, O, is it all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grow together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet a union in partition;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly.
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

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The Merchant of Venice – Act 4, Scene 1

Portia has come to Venice to try to argue the case against Shylock's claim to a pound of Antonio's flesh. In the middle of the courtroom scene Shylock asks why he should be merciful. The enigmatic Portia responds by emphasising the benefits of mercy for both the giver and receiver.

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:
'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
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

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Romeo and Juliet – Act 4, Scene 3

In her desperation Juliet has agreed to the Friar's plan that she should take a potion to fake her own death, but she is terrified of the unintended consequences. Maybe it's a poison that will really kill her? Maybe she will wake too early and be trapped in a tomb with the remains of her ancestors? Juliet shares her fears with the audience.

JULIET

I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins,
That almost freezes up the heat of life.
I'll call them back again to comfort me,
Nurse! What should she do here?
My dismal scene I needs must act alone.
Come, vial.
What if this mixture do not work at all?
What if it be a poison, which the friar
Subtly hath ministered to have me dead,
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonoured,
Because he married me before to Romeo?
I fear it is, and yet, methinks, it should not,
For he hath still been tried a holy man.
How if, when I am laid into the tomb,
I wake before the time that Romeo
Come to redeem me? There's a fearful point!
Shall I not, then, be stifled in the vault,
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?
Or, if I live, is it not very like,
The horrible conceit of death and night,
Together with the terror of the place,
Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,
Lies festering in his shroud; where, as they say,
At some hours in the night spirits resort,
O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,
Environed with all these hideous fears?
O, look! methinks I see my cousin's ghost
Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body
Upon a rapier's point: stay, Tybalt, stay!
Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.

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Macbeth – Act 5, Scene 1

Lady Macbeth's conscience has caught up with her. Alone, shut out by her husband, she desperately tries to keep up appearances by day. But at night she wanders the castle, sleepwalking, unable to wash herself clean of the terrible things she has been a part of.

LADY MACBETH

Yet here's a spot.

Out, damned spot! out, I say!--One: two: why, then, 'tis time to do't.--Hell is murky!--Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?--Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him.

The thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now?--

What, will these hands ne'er be clean?--No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.

Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale. I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave.

To bed, to bed! there's knocking at the gate: come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone.--To bed, to bed, to bed!

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Othello – Act 1, Scene 3

Iago is furious that Othello has chosen Cassio to be his lieutenant instead of him, and swears revenge on both of them. He has a plan to take Cassio's place, in which he is going to ruin Cassio's reputation and anger Othello. After using the unsuspecting Roderigo for money to enact his plan, Iago shares with the audience that he is going to tell Othello that Cassio has been unfaithful with Othello's wife, Desdemona.

IAGO

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
If I would time expend with such a snipe.
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor:
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office: I know not if't be true;
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well;
The better shall my purpose work on him.
Cassio's a proper man: let me see now:
To get his place and to plume up my will
In double knavery - How, how? Let's see,
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
That he is too familiar with his wife.
He hath a person and a smooth dispose
To be suspected, framed to make women false.
The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,
And will as tenderly be led by the nose
As asses are.
I have't. It is engender'd. Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

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Hamlet – Act 3, Scene 3

Spurred to revenge by the ghost of his dead father, Hamlet suddenly finds himself presented with the perfect opportunity to kill his murderous uncle Claudius, while he is at prayer. However, at the last moment, Hamlet stops himself. If he kills Claudius while he is praying, then Claudius' soul will go to heaven. Hamlet decides to wait until Claudius is committing a sinful act.

HAMLET

Now might I do it pat, now he is a-praying;
And now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven;
And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd:
A villain kills my father; and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.
O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread;
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?
But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him: and am I then revenged,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
No!
Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;
At gaming, swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't;
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays:
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

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Henry IV Part 1 – Act 1, Scene 2

When we first meet the young Prince Hal (Henry), he is partying with his friends in the pub. Much to the disappointment of his father, the King, this is hardly ideal behaviour for the heir to the throne. Alone with the audience, Hal tells us that this is all part of his plan. He is only pretending to be irresponsible and careless. At just the right moment he will reveal his true nature, which will be all the more impressive because of this false impression people have of him.

PRINCE HENRY

I know you all, and will awhile uphold
The unyoked humour of your idleness:
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That, when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wonder'd at,
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.
If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come, they wish'd for come,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
So, when this loose behaviour I throw off
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I'll so offend, to make offence a skill;
Redeeming time when men think least I will.

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A Midsummer Night's Dream – Act 4, Scene 1

Bottom wakes up with a jolt, having had a fantastical dream. He remembers his head being transformed into that of a donkey and that the Queen of The Fairies fell madly in love with him. But now he is all alone, no donkey ears, no fairies, and he can't find his friends who he was rehearsing a play with. So was it all a dream, or was it real? Undeterred, Bottom resolves to find his friends and turn his "dream" into a most spectacular performance.

BOTTOM

[Awaking] When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer: my next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.'
Heigh-ho!

Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep!

I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had, but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream. It shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death.