

# THE HANDLEBARDS

Cycling Shakespeare Tour 2025

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## Monologues for Casting

### **Viola, Twelfth Night - 'I left no ring with her'**

Monologue (Act II Scene II)

I left no ring with her: what means this lady?  
Fortune forbid my outside have not charm'd her!  
She made good view of me; indeed, so much,  
That sure methought her eyes had lost her tongue,  
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;  
As I am woman, now alas the day!  
What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!  
O time! thou must untangle this, not I;  
It is too hard a knot for me to untie!

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## Monologues for Casting

### **Helena, A Midsummer Night's Dream - 'O I am out of breath in this fond chase'**

Monologue (Act II Scene II)

O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!  
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.  
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;  
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.  
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:  
If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.  
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;  
For beasts that meet me run away for fear:  
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius  
Do, as a monster fly my presence thus.  
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine  
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?  
But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!  
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.  
Lysander if you live, good sir, awake!

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## Monologues for Casting

### **Phoebe, As You Like It - 'I would not be thy executioner'**

Monologue (Act III Scene V)

I would not be thy executioner;  
I fly thee for I would not injure thee.  
Thou tell'st me there is murder in mine eye.  
'Tis pretty, sure, and very probable  
That eyes, that are the frail'st and softest things,  
Who shut their coward gates on atomies,  
Should be called tyrants, butchers, murderers.  
Now I do frown on thee with all my heart,  
And if mine eyes can wound, now let them kill thee.  
Now counterfeit to swoon – why now fall down!  
Or if thou canst not – O, for shame, for shame –  
Lie not, to say mine eyes are murderers.  
Now show the wound mine eye hath made in thee.  
Scratch thee but with a pin, and there remains  
Some scar of it; lean thou upon a rush,  
The cicatrice and capable impressure  
Thy palm some moment keeps. But now mine eyes,  
Which I have darted at thee, hurt thee not,  
Nor I am sure there is no force in eyes  
That can do hurt.

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## Monologues for Casting

### **Rosalind, As You Like It - 'And why, I pray you'**

Monologue (Act III Scene V)

And why, I pray you? Who might be your mother,  
That you insult, exult, and all at once,  
Over the wretched? What though you have no beauty,—  
As by my faith, I see no more in you  
Than without candle may go dark to bed,—  
Must you be therefore proud and pitiless?  
Why, what means this? Why do you look on me?  
I see no more in you than in the ordinary  
Of nature's sale-work. O'd's my little life!  
I think she means to tangle my eyes too.  
No, faith, proud mistress, hope not after it:  
'Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,  
Your bugle eyeballs, nor your cheek of cream,  
That can entame my spirits to your worship.  
You foolish shepherd, wherefore do you follow her,  
Like foggy south puffing with wind and rain?  
You are a thousand times a properer man  
Than she a woman: 'tis such fools as you  
That make the world full of ill-favour'd children:  
'Tis not her glass, but you, that flatters her;  
And out of you she sees herself more proper  
Than any of her lineaments can show her.  
But, mistress, know yourself: down on your knees,  
And thank heaven, fasting, for a good man's love:  
For I must tell you friendly in your ear,  
Sell when you can; you are not for all markets.  
Cry the man mercy; love him; take his offer:  
Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer.  
So take her to thee, shepherd. Fare you well.

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## Monologues for Casting

### **Prospero, The Tempest – 'Ye elves of hills...'**

Monologue (Act V Scene I)

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves,  
And ye that on the sands with printless foot  
Do chase the ebbing Neptune and do fly him  
When he comes back; by your aid,  
Weak masters though ye be, I have bedimm'd  
The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,  
And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault  
Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder  
Have I given fire and rifted Jove's stout oak  
With his own bolt; the strong-bas'd promontory  
Have I made shake and by the spurs pluck'd up  
The pine and cedar: graves at my command  
Have wak'd their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth  
By my so potent art. But this rough magic  
I here abjure, and, when I have required  
Some heavenly music, which even now I do,  
To work mine end upon their senses that  
This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,  
Bury it fathoms in the earth,  
And deeper than did ever plummet sound  
I'll drown my book

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## Monologues for Casting

### **Sebastian, Twelfth Night - 'This is the air'**

Monologue (Act IV Scene III)

This is the air; that is the glorious sun;  
This pearl she gave me, I do feel't and see't;  
And though 'tis wonder that enwraps me thus,  
Yet 'tis not madness. Where's Antonio, then?  
I could not find him at the Elephant:  
Yet there he was; and there I found this credit,  
That he did range the town to seek me out.  
His counsel now might do me golden service;  
For though my soul disputes well with my sense,  
That this may be some error, but no madness,  
Yet doth this accident and flood of fortune  
So far exceed all instance, all discourse,  
That I am ready to distrust mine eyes  
And wrangle with my reason that persuades me  
To any other trust but that I am mad  
Or else the lady's mad; yet, if 'twere so,  
She could not sway her house, command her followers,  
Take and give back affairs and their dispatch  
With such a smooth, discreet and stable bearing  
As I perceive she does: there's something in't  
That is deceiveable. But here the lady comes.

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## Monologues for Casting

### Malvolio, Twelfth Night - 'What employment have we here'

Monologue (Act II Scene V)

#### MALVOLIO

[Sees letter.]

What employment have we here?

By my life, this is my lady's hand. These be her very c's, her u's and her t's, and thus makes she her great P's. It is in contempt of question her hand.

[Reads.]

To the unknown beloved, this, and my good wishes. Her very phrases! By your leave, wax. Soft – and the impressure her Lucrece, with which she uses to seal. 'Tis my lady. To whom should this be? [Opens letter. ]

[Reads.]

Jove knows I love,  
But who?

Lips, do not move,  
No man must know.

'No man must know.' What follows? The numbers altered. 'No man must know.' If this should be thee, Malvolio?

[Reads.]

I may command where I adore,  
But silence, like a Lucrece knife,  
With bloodless stroke my heart doth gore.  
M.O.A.I. doth sway my life.

#### MALVOLIO

M.O.A.I. doth sway my life. Nay, but first let me see, let me see, let me see.

I may command where I adore. Why, she may command me. I serve her, she is my lady. Why, this is evident to any formal capacity. There is no obstruction in this. And the end – what should that alphabetical position portend? If I could make that resemble something in me! Softly – [reading] M.O.A.I.

'M.' Malvolio. 'M' – why, that begins my name!

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## Monologues for Casting

### **Macbeth, Macbeth - 'To be thus is nothing'**

Monologue (Act III Scene I)

To be thus is nothing;  
But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo  
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature  
Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares;  
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,  
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour  
To act in safety. There is none but he  
Whose being I do fear: and, under him,  
My Genius is rebuked; as, it is said,  
Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters  
When first they put the name of king upon me,  
And bade them speak to him: then prophet-like  
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:  
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,  
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,  
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,  
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,  
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;  
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;  
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace  
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel  
Given to the common enemy of man,  
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!  
Rather than so, come fate into the list.  
And champion me to the utterance!

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