

# A Shakespeare Collection

by [Susan J. Bryant](#) (May 2024)



The Plays of William Shakespeare –Sir John Gilbert, 1849

## Bardolatry

He boasted an iambic ear,  
That playwright with insight, Shakespeare;  
Yes, *Measure for Measure*  
He's given much pleasure  
With *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*.

The Bard's jealous fellow, *Othello*,

Brings lust, unjust murder and bellow—  
You're after a laugh?  
Then check out Falstaff  
Or Malvolio's tights of bright yellow.

In mystic *Midsummer Night's Dream*  
Titania's a mean fairy queen;  
There's Puck, of wild antic,  
And Bottom, a frantic  
Crass ass who's an absolute scream.

Try Shylock of harsh bond, indeed,  
Who glides to Antonio's need—  
For flashing his cash  
He fishes for flesh  
Sans blood—will he ever succeed?

Juliet Capulet gets upset;  
Beau Romeo's life's under threat.  
His name, Montague,  
With regret, just won't do—  
Star-crossed love pays the ultimate debt.

King Henry, a valiant peach,  
Assures Agincourt's within reach—  
His speech fuelled with fire  
Stokes tired men's desire  
To charge "Once more unto the breach!"

If sorcery and books are your quest  
*The Tempest's* a rare treasure chest—  
Sweet music, hypnosis,  
A monster's psychosis,  
All whirl at a wizard's behest.

If mystery and history's your thing  
Then Cleo and Tony will bring

A cuddle, a quibble,  
An asp and his nibble—  
A poisonous price for a fling...

Which brings me to Richard the Third,  
The hunchback of arch act and word—  
A horse, a damn horse,  
For his kingdom, of course,  
Leaves everyone shaken and stirred.

You yearn for the taming of shrews?  
I'm thrilled to deliver this news—  
A *Kiss-Me-Kate* fest  
(Cole Porter's the best)  
Will kill *Doll'- House*, Ibsenesque blues.

So, let's raise a glass to each play,  
No one will surpass Will's array—  
Did someone shout Chekhov?  
*The Seagull* can peck off!  
*Much Ado About Nothing*, I say!

### **Desdemona's Doppelgänger** *a villanelle*

He loved her with the passion of Othello.  
A spark of darkness flickered in his eye.  
He turned her firm and fevered flesh to jello.

He plucked her zinging heartstrings like a cello  
Till moonstruck musings made her swoon and sigh.  
He loved her with the passion of Othello.

She served him juicy lips of ripe morello  
Beneath a blushing cherry-blossom sky.

He turned her firm and fevered flesh to jello.

Her brooding dude eschewed the meek and mellow  
To bellow, strut and rut and signify  
He loved her with the passion of Othello.

She melted to his whim like soft marshmallow,  
All gooey in her gratifying high.  
He turned her firm and fevered flesh to jello.

One night a green-eyed beast bit her bedfellow  
Who (with a pillow) smothered her last cry.  
He loved her with the passion of Othello.  
He turned her firm and fevered flesh to jello.

### **Like Portia**

I want her poise. I want her grace. I want her flair to light  
my face.

I want her cool, her zest and fuel. I want her pluck to bend  
each rule,

Her wit to conquer fiend or fool. I want to be like Portia.

I want a plop of heaven's rain to drop its mercy on my plain—  
A gentle kiss of tenderness, a soft caress that will address  
All strain and stress. I must confess I crave the calm of  
Portia.

I want to shun the sceptered sway and rise above the earthly  
fray

To thwart ill will as justice should. I want to garner all  
that's good.

I want to join the sisterhood of could-be, would-be Portias.

I want a sweetheart's hand to hold, a suitor with his eye on

gold.

Its glister goads my heart and head—what wooer's lured by  
lumps of lead?

In her fair shoes I'll never tread. I'm falling short of  
Portia.

All mercy has eluded me. My lack of grace and dignity  
Befoul each day and blight each night. I'm burning for a  
barbarous fight —

To pummel pounds of flesh in spite. I'll never be like Portia.

### **Lady MacBeth's Regret**

Soft hands that led her smitten lord to bed  
Inflamed the flare and thrust of his desire.  
Cool hands that won his trust and soothed his dread,  
Now sting and burn in licks of Hades fire.

Slick hands now drip with crimson viciousness  
And reek of wicked deeds that sliced at life.  
Their smooth allure and sleek perniciousness  
Had honed the blade of regicide's sly knife.

Sore hands are scrubbing skin, a manic task  
To scour out damned spot, that shaming stain.  
A drench of heady scent will never mask  
The stench of sin that twists the brain insane.

She dwells within the dunkest smoke of hell,  
Where gore-flecked ghosts and guilt draw terror's yell.

### **Remembering Ophelia**

His scathing tongue had thrust her to the edge.  
It nudged her through the willow's sunless fringe.  
She teetered on that petal-littered ledge  
Where Hades howls and bluest moons unhinge  
The violet thoughts of agitated minds.  
The breath of death, it wreathed her in a kiss  
Of fennel fronds and fragrant columbines.  
It drew her gasps as surging waves claimed flesh.  
She thrashed and then she drowned within a deep  
Swirling pool of turbulence and grief.  
A prince awash with tears that lovers weep  
Stood clouded in a shroud of disbelief.

A shower of flowers rained upon her grave...  
Sweets to the stricken heart no soul could save.

## **Bardic Bots**

Will Shakespeare has been rendered obsolete.  
Bill's quillings are a patriarchal scandal.  
His iambs lack that fresh, progressive beat.  
*Barred from Avon* is his current handle.  
As lost as Lear, as dead as Desdemona,  
His wonder will no longer soar on high.  
Now robots can compose, the Swan's a goner.  
His dusty folios have bid goodbye.  
They've shuffled off like Hamlet and poor Yorick.  
Alas, the Big-Tech bods now canonize  
The soulless with a lick of the euphoric.  
This cyber-world of literary lies  
Builds bots that trot out sonnets minus heart.  
Welcome to the Will-free world of Art.

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