

## FEMALE MONOLOGUES

*From "The Way of the World" by William Congreve*

MILLAMANT:

Vanity! No—I'll fly and be followed to the last moment; though I am upon the very verge of matrimony, I expect you should solicit me as much as if I were wavering at the grate of a monastery, with one foot over the threshold. I'll be solicited to the very last; nay, and afterwards. Oh, I hate a lover that can dare to think he draws a moment's air independent on the bounty of his mistress. There is not so impudent a thing in nature as the saucy look of an assured man confident of success: the pedantic arrogance of a very husband has not so pragmatical an air. Ah, I'll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure. I'll lie a-bed in a morning as long as I please. And d'ye hear, I won't be called names after I'm married; positively I won't be called names—Ay, as "wife," "spouse," "my dear," "joy," "jewel," "love," "sweet-heart," and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar—I shall never bear that. Good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my Lady Fadler and Sir Francis; nor go to Hyde Park together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers, and then never be seen there together again, as if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together, but let us be very strange and well-bred.

*From "Miss Julie" by Strindberg*

JULIE:

We must go away, but we must talk first. That is, I must speak, for until now you have done all the talking. You have told me about your life--now I will tell you about mine, then we will know each other through and through before we start on our journey together. You see, my mother was not of noble birth. She was brought up with ideas of equality, woman's freedom and all that. She had very decided opinions against matrimony, and when my father courted her she declared that she would never be his wife--but she did so for all that. I came into the world against my mother's wishes, I discovered, and was brought up like a child of nature by my mother, and taught everything that a boy must know as well; I was to be an example of a woman being as good as a man--I was made to go about in boy's clothes and take care of the horses and harness and saddle and hunt, and all such things; in fact, all over the estate women servants were taught to do men's work, with the result being that the property came near being ruined--and so we became the laughing stock of the countryside. At last my father must have awakened from his bewitched condition, for he revolted and ran things according to his ideas. My mother became ill--what it was I don't know, but she often had cramps and acted queerly--sometimes hiding in the attic or the orchard, and would even be gone all night at times.

*From "Wuthering Heights" by Anne Bronte*

CATHERINE:

I wouldn't be you for a kingdom! Nelly, help me to convince her of her madness. Tell her what Heathcliff is: an unreclaimed creature, without refinement, without cultivation; an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone. I'd as soon put that little canary into the park on a winter's day, as recommend you to bestow your heart on him! It is deplorable ignorance of his character, child, and nothing else, which makes that dream enter your head. Pray, don't imagine that he conceals depths of benevolence and affection beneath a stern exterior! He's not a rough diamond - a pearl-containing oyster of a rustic: he's a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man. I never say to him, "Let this or that enemy alone, because it would be ungenerous or cruel to harm them;" I say, "Let them alone, because I should hate them to be wronged:" and he'd crush you like a sparrow's egg, Isabella, if he found you a troublesome charge. I know he couldn't love a Linton; and yet he'd be quite capable of marrying your fortune and expectations: avarice is growing with him a besetting sin. There's my picture: and I'm his friend -- so much so, that had he thought seriously to catch you, I should, perhaps, have held my tongue, and let you fall into his trap. Banish him from your thoughts. He's a bird of bad omen: no mate for you.

## MALE MONOLOGUES

*From "The Lamplighter" by Charles Dickens*

TOM:

He was an original. You should have known him! 'Cod! He was a genius, if ever there was one. Gas was the death of him! When gas lamps was first talked of, my uncle draws himself up and says, "I'll not believe it, there's no sich a thing," he says. "You might as well talk of laying on an everlasting succession of glow worms!" But when they made the experiment of lighting a piece of Pall Mall, and he had actually witnessed it with his own eyes, you should have seen my uncle then! Overcome, sir! He fell off his ladder, from weakness, fourteen times that very night! And his last fall was into a wheelbarrow that was going his way and humanely took him home. "I foresee in this," he says, "the breaking up of our profession; no more polishing of the tin reflectors," he says, "no more fancy-work in the way of clipping the cottons at two o'clock in the morning; no more going the rounds to trim by daylight and dribbling down the ile on the hats and bonnets of the ladies and gentlemen when one feels in good spirits. Any low fellow can light a gas-lamp, and it's all up!" So he petitioned the Government for--what do you call it that they give to people when it's found out that they've never been of any use and have been paid too much for doing nothing? Compensation! That's the thing! They didn't give him any though.

*From "The Village Coquettes" by Charles Dickens*

**BENSON:**

It is a lie! A base lie! She would be my disgrace, my shame: an outcast from her father's roof, and from the world. Support! Support me with the gold coined in her infamy and guilt! Heaven help me! Do you know that from infancy I have almost worshiped her, fancying that I saw in her young mind the virtues of a mother, to whom the anguish of this one hour would have been worse than death! Do you know that I have a heart and soul within me; or do you believe that because I am of lower station, I am a being of a different order from yourself, and that Nature has denied me thought and feeling! Man, do you know that I am this girl's father? You need be thankful, sir, for the grasp she has upon my arm. Money! If she were dying for want, and the smallest coin from you could restore her to life and health, sooner than she should take it from your hand, I would cast her from a sick bed to perish on the roadside. I care not for your long pedigree of ancestors--my forefathers made them all. I am a farmer, sir--one of the men on whom you, and such as you, depend for the money they squander in profligacy and idleness. Here, neighbors! Friends! Hear this, hear this! Your landlord, a high-born gentleman, is entering the houses of humble farmers and tempting their daughters to destruction!

*From "The Strange Gentleman" by Charles Dickens*

STRANGE GENTLEMAN: [Takes a letter from his pocket.]

Here's an illegal death-warrant; a pressing invitation to be slaughtered; a polite request just to step out and be killed, thrust into my hand by some disguised assassin in a dirty black calico jacket the very instant I got out of the gig at the door. I know the hand. There's a ferocious recklessness in the cross to this "T" and a baleful malignity in the dot of that "i" which warns me that it comes from my desperate rival. [Opens it and reads.] "Mr. Horatio Tinkles"--that's him-- "presents his compliments to his enemy"--that's me--"and requests the pleasure of his company tomorrow morning under the clump of trees on Corpse Common"--Corpse Common!--"to which any of the town's people will direct him and where he hopes to have the satisfaction of giving him his gruel."-- "Giving him his gruel! Ironical cut-throat!--"His punctuality will be esteemed a personal favour, as it will save Mr. Tinkles the trouble and inconvenience of calling with a horsewhip in his pocket. Mr. Tinkles has ordered breakfast at the Royal for one It is paid for. The individual who returns alive can eat it. Pistols-- half past five--precisely." Bloodthirsty miscreant! The individual who returns alive! I've seen him hit the painted man at the shooting-gallery regularly every time in his center shirt plait, except when he varied the entertainments by lodging the ball playfully in his left eye.