

SHAKESPEARIENCE!

Stories, Swords, & Soliloquies

HAMLET

Ensemble Soliloquy: Hamlet's To be or not to be, Act III, scene 1

To be or not to be, that is the question;
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous
fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing, end them.
To die, to sleep no more; and by a sleep to say we end
the heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to — 'tis a
consummation devoutly to be wish'd.
To die, to sleep; To sleep, perchance to dream.
Ay, there's the rub...
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil, must give us pause.
There's the respect that makes calamity of so long life.
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
With this regard their currents turn awry, and lose the name of action.

To be or not to be, that is the question;
(the question is: is it better to be alive or dead)

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows
of outrageous fortune,
(is it nobler to put up with all of the nasty things that life can throw at you)

or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing,
end them.
*(or to fight against all those troubles by simply putting an end to them once and for
all)*

To die, to sleep no more; and by a sleep to say we end
the heart-ache
*(dying, sleeping - that's all dying is - a sleep that ends the heartache that life can
bring)*

and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to —
(and all those shocks that life will certainly bring)

'tis a consummation devoutly to be wish'd.
(that's an achievement to wish for)

To die, to sleep; To sleep, perchance to dream.
Ay, there's the rub...
(to die, or to sleep, maybe even dream – but there's the catch)

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
(in death's sleep, who knows what dreams might come)

When we have shuffled off this mortal coil, must give us
pause.
(after we've put all of the commotion of life behind us, that may be cause to worry)

There's the respect that makes calamity of so long life.
(that's actually what makes us stretch out our suffering through life)

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
(fear of death makes cowards out of everyone)

With this regard their currents turn awry, and lose the name
of action.
(actions that should be carried out right away get misdirected and stop being actions at all)