

## FAVOURITE SHAKESPEARE MONOLOGUES AND DUOLOGUES OF PROFESSIONAL ACTORS

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## Karen Whyte

My favourite monologue is a bit of an obscure one as they go! It is from Sylvia in Act 4, Scene 3 of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

O Eglamour, thou art a gentleman— Think not I flatter, for I swear I do not— Valiant, wise, remorseful, well accomplished. Thou art not ignorant what dear good will I bear unto the banished Valentine, Nor how my father would enforce me marry Vain Thurio, whom my very soul abhors. Thyself hast loved, and I have heard thee say No grief did ever come so near thy heart As when thy lady and thy true love died, Upon whose grave thou vowedst pure chastity. Sir Eglamour, I would to Valentine, To Mantua, where I hear he makes abode; And, for the ways are dangerous to pass, I do desire thy worthy company, Upon whose faith and honor I repose. Urge not my father's anger, Eglamour, But think upon my grief, a lady's grief, And on the justice of my flying hence To keep me from a most unholy match, Which heaven and fortune still rewards with plagues. I do desire thee, even from a heart As full of sorrows as the sea of sands, To bear me company and go with me; If not, to hide what I have said to thee, That I may venture to depart alone.

I think she is a great character who is very headstrong and determined; this speech highlights this especially well. Sylvia is changing tactics constantly in this speech to try and persuade Eglamore to accompany her on her pursuit of her true love. She plays to his ego and then his empathy and then his fear and sense of duty of protection over her. It is really rooted in the desperation of her want for freedom, unfettered from her

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gender and to have the right to be the guarantor of her own happiness. I love the images she paints with this speech. For me, it fully encapsulates how epic love can feel.



Above photo of me in As You Like It as part of the Cambridge Shakespeare Festival in 2016.

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