

NIDA

Audition Essentials

FEMALE MONOLOGUES

1. VIOLA - TWELFTH NIGHT by William Shakespeare

VIOLA 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 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 t'untie.

2. JULIET - ROMEO AND JULIET by William Shakespeare

JULIET Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phoebus' lodging! such a waggoner
As Phaeton would whip you to the West
And bring in cloudy night immediately.
Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,
That runaways' eyes may wink, and Romeo
Leap to these arms, untalked of and unseen.
Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
By their own beauties; or, if love be blind,
It best agrees with night. Come, civil night,
Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,
And learn me how to lose a winning match,
Played for a pair of stainless maidenhoods.
Hood my unmanned blood, bating in my cheeks,
With thy black mantle till strange love grown bold,
Think true love acted simple modesty.
Come, night. Come, Romeo. Come, thou day in night;
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.
Come, gentle night. Come, loving black-brow'd night.
Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish sun.
O I have bought the mansion of a love,
But not possessed it; and though I am sold,
Not yet enjoyed. So tedious is this day
As is the night before some festival
To an impatient child that hath new robes,
And may not wear them. O here comes my nurse.

3. HERMIONE - THE WINTER'S TALE by William Shakespeare

HERMIONE Sir, spare your threats:
The bug which you would fright me with, I seek.
To me can life be no commodity;
The crown and comfort of my life, your favour,
I do give lost, for I do feel it gone,
But know not how it went. My second joy,
And first-fruits of my body, from his presence
I am barr'd, like one infectious. My third comfort,
(Starr'd most unluckily) is from my breast
(The innocent milk in its most innocent mouth)
Hal'd out to murder; myself on every post
Proclaim'd a strumpet, with immodest hatred
The child-bed privilege denied, which 'longs
To women of all fashion; lastly, hurried
Here, to this place, i'th'open air, before
I have got strength of limit. Now, my liege,
Tell me what blessings I have here alive
That I should fear to die? Therefore proceed.
But yet hear this: mistake me not: no life,
I prize it not a straw, but for mine honour,
Which I would free: if I shall be condemn'd
Upon surmises, all proofs sleeping else
But what your jealousies awake, I tell you
'Tis rigour and not law. Your honours all,
I do refer me to the Oracle:
Apollo be my judge!

4. ROSALIND - AS YOU LIKE IT by William Shakespeare

ROSALIND 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 a 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. 'Od'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 makes 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.

5. HELENA - A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM by William Shakespeare

HELENA Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia, most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd,
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,
The sister's vows, the hours that we have spent
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us - O, is all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling on one song, both in one key,
As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition,
Two lovely berries moulded on the one stem;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due to the one, and crowned with one crest.
And will you join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly;
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Thou I alone do feel the injury.

6. BEATRICE - MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING by William Shakespeare

BEATRICE Kill Claudio! (BEAT) You kill me to deny it. Farewell. I am gone, though I am here: there is no love in you: nay, I pray you, let me go. In faith, I will go. You dare easier be friends with me than fight with my enemy. Is Claudio not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O that I were a man! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands ; and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour, - O, God that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place. Talk with a man out at window! A proper saying! Sweet Hero! She is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone. Princes and counties! Surely, a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count Comfect; a sweet gallant surely! O that I were a man for his sake! Or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too : he is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie and swears it. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

7. PORTIA – JULIUS CAESAR by William Shakespeare

PORTIA Y' have ungently, Brutus,
Stole from my bed; and yesternight at supper
You suddenly arose, and walk'd about,
Musing, and sighing, with your arms across;
And when I ask'd you what the matter was,
You star'd upon me with ungentle looks.
I urg'd you further; then you scratch'd your head,
And too impatiently stamp'd with your foot;
Yet I insisted, yet you answer'd not,
But with an angry wafture of your hand
Gave sign for me to leave you. So I did,
Fearing to strengthen that impatience
Which seem'd too much enkindled, and withal
Hoping it was but an effect of humour,
Which sometime hath his hour with every man.
It will not let you eat, nor talk, nor sleep;
And could it work so much upon your shape
As it hath much prevail'd on your condition,
I should not know you Brutus. Dear my lord,
Make me acquainted with your cause of grief.
Is Brutus sick, and is it physical
To walk unbraced and suck up the humours
Of the dank morning? What, is Brutus sick?
And will he steal out of his wholesome bed
To dare the vile contagion of the night,
And tempt the rheumy and unpurged air
To add unto his sickness? No, my Brutus;
You have some sick offence within your mind,
Which, by the right and virtue of my place,
I ought to know of; and, upon my knees,
I charm you, by my once commended beauty,
By all your vows of love, and that great vow
Which did incorporate and make us one,
That you unfold to me, your self, your half,
Why you are heavy, and what men to-night
Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,
Is it expected I should know no secrets
That appertain to you? Am I your self
But, as it were, in sort or limitation,
To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,
And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the suburbs
Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,
Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife.

8. IRENA - THREE SISTERS by Anton Chekhov

IRENA

Tell me, why is it I'm so happy today? As if I were sailing, with the wide, blue sky above me, and great white birds soaring in the wind. Why is it? Why? I woke up this morning, I got up, I washed - and suddenly I felt everything in this world was clear to me - I felt I knew how life had to be lived. Dear Ivan Romanich, I can see it all. A human being has to labour, whoever he happens to be, he has to toil in the sweat of his face; that's the only way he can find the sense and purpose of his life, his happiness, his delight. How fine to be a working man who rises at first light and breaks stones on the road, or a shepherd, or a teacher, or an engine driver on the railway... Lord, never mind being human even - better to be an ox, better to be a simple horse, just so long as you work - anything rather than a young lady who rises at noon, then drinks her coffee in bed, then takes two hours to dress... that's terrible! In hot weather sometimes you long to drink the way I began longing to work. And if I don't start getting up early and working, then shut your heart against me, Ivan Romanich.

9. ANNA PETROVNA - WILD HONEY by Anton Chekhov

ANNA How can you say that? How can you lie to me, on such a night as this, beneath such a sky? Tell your lies in autumn, if you must, in the gloom and the mud, but not now, not here. You're being watched! Look up, you absurd man! A thousand eyes, all shining with indignation! You must be good and true, just as all this is good and true. Don't break this silence with your little words! There's no man in the world I could ever love as I love you. There's no woman in the world you could ever love as you love me. Let's take that love; and all the rest, that so torments you – we'll leave that to others to worry about. Are you really such a terrible Don Juan? You look so handsome in the moonlight! Such a solemn face! It's a woman who's come to call, not a wild animal! All right – if you really hate it all so much I'll go away again. Is that what you want? I'll go away, and everything will be just as it was before. Yes...? (she laughs) Idiot! Take it! Snatch it! Seize it! What more do you want? Smoke it to the end, like a cigarette – pinch it out – tread it under your heel. Be human! You funny creature! A woman loves you – a woman you love – fine summer weather. What could be simpler than that? You don't realise how hard life is for me. And yet life is what I long for. Everything is alive, nothing is ever still. We're surrounded by life. We must live, too, Misha! Leave all the problems for tomorrow. Tonight, on this night of nights, we'll simply live!

10. CHERIE – BLACKROCK by Nick Enright

CHERIE It was my fault. If we stuck together like we said, you and me and Leanne, you wouldn't be here. But I lost youse all. Now I've lost you. And no-one knows how. You should hear the rumours. Someone seen a black Torana with Victorian number plates. It was a stranger in a Megadeath T-shirt, it was a maddie from the hospital, even your stepdad. All these ideas about who did it, who did it, like it was a TV show. It is a TV show. Every night on the news. I want to yell out, this is not a body, this is Tracy you're talking about. Someone who was here last week, going to netball, working at the Pizza Hut, getting the ferry, hanging out. You were alive. Now you're dead. But I know you can hear me. I can hear you.

She plays a bit of the song.

Your song. Times we danced to that, you and me and Shana, Shana singing dirty words, remember? Mum hearing and throwing a mental.... I shouldn't laugh, should I? Not here. But all I can think of is the other words.

She turns off the tape.

You were wearing my earrings. You looked so great.

And some guy took you off and did those things to you.

Wish I knew how. You know, Trace. Nobody else does.

If I knew, but I'd go and kill him. I'd smash his head in. I'd cut his balls off. I'd make him die slowly for what he did to you.

11. PATSY - LITTLE MURDERS by Jules Feiffer

PATSY

Honey, I don't want to hurt you. I want to change you. I want to make you see that there is some value in life, that there is some beauty, some tenderness, some things worth reacting to. Some things worth feeling. But you've got to take some chances some time! What do you want out of life? Just survival? It's not enough! Its not, not, not enough! I am not going to have a surviving marriage. I'm going to have a flourishing marriage! I'm a woman! Or, by Jesus, it's about time I became one. I want a family! Oh, Christ, Alfred, this is my wedding day. I want – want to be married to a big, strong, protective, vital, virile, self-assured man. Who I can protect and take care of. Alfred, honey, you're the first man I've ever gone to bed with where I didn't feel he was a lot more likely to get pregnant than I was. You owe me something! I've invested everything I believe in you. You've got to let me mould you. Please let me mould you. You've got me whining, begging and crying. I've never behaved like this in my life. Will you look at this? That's a tear. I never cried in my life.

12. RITA – EDUCATING RITA by Willy Russell

RITA But I don't wanna be charming and delightful:

Funny. What's funny? I don't wanna be funny. I wanna talk seriously with the rest of you, I don't wanna spend the night takin' the piss, comin' on with the funnies because that's the only way I can get into the conversation. I didn't want to come to your house just to polay the court jester.

I don't want to be myself. Me? What's me? Some stupid woman who gives us all a laugh because she thinks she can learn, because she thinks that one day she'll be like the rest of them, talking seriously, confidently, with knowledge, livin' a civilised life. Well, she can't be like that really but bring her in because she's good for a laugh!

I'm all right with you, here in this room; but when I saw those people you were with a I couldn't come in. I would have seized up. Because I'm a freak. I can't talk to the people I live with any more. An' I can't talk to likes of them on Saturday, or them out here, because I can't learn the language. I'm a half-caste. I went back to the pub where Denny was, an' me mother, an' our Sandra, an' her mates. I'd decided I wasn't comin' here again.

I went into the pub an' they were singin', all of them singin' some song they'd learnt from the juke box. An' I stood in that pub an' thought, just what the frig am I trying to do? Why don't I just pack it in an' stay with them, an' join in the singin'?

You think I can, don't you? Just because you pass a pub doorway an' hear the singing', you think we're all O. K., that we're all survivin', with the spirit intact. Well I did join in with the singin, I didn't ask any question, I just went along with it.

But when I looked around me mother had stopped singin, an' she was cryin', but no one could get it out of her why she was crying'. Everyone just adi she was pissed an' we should get her home. So we did, an' on the way I asked her why. I said, 'Why are y' cryin', Mother?' she said, 'Because – because we could sing better songs than those'. Ten minutes later, Denny had her laughing and singing again, pretending she hadn't said it. But she had. And that's why ic an't back. And that why I'm staying.

13. CAROL - OLEANNA by David Mamet

CAROL Professor, I came here as a favour. At your personal request. Perhaps I should not have done so. But I did. On my behalf, and on behalf of my group. And you speak of the tenure committee, one of whose members is a woman, as you know. And though you might call it Good Fun, or An Historical Phrase, or An Oversight, or All of the Above, to refer to the committee as Good Men and True, it is a demeaning remark. It is a sexist remark, and to overlook it is to countenance continuation of that method of thought. You love the Power. I'm sorry. You feel yourself empowered ... you say so yourself. To strut. To posture. To "perform." To call me in here..." Eh? You say that higher education is a joke. And treat it as such, you treat it as such. And confess to a taste to play the Patriarch in your class. To grant this. To deny that. To embrace your students. And you think it's charming to "question" in yourself this taste to mock and destroy. But you should question it. Professor. And you pick those things which you feel advance you: publication, tenure, and the steps to get them you call "harmless rituals." And you perform those steps. Although you say it is hypocrisy. But to the aspirations of your students. Of hardworking students, who come here, who slave to come here – you have no idea what it cost me to come to this school – you mock us. You call education "hazing" and from your so-protected, so-elitist seat you hold our confusion as a joke, and hopes and efforts with it. Then you sit there and say "what have I done?" And ask me to understand that you have aspirations too. But I tell you. I tell you. That you are vile. And that you are exploitative. And if you possess one ounce of that inner honesty you describe in your book, you can look in yourself and see those things that I see. And you can find revulsion equal to my own. Good Day. (she prepares to leave the room)

14. RHONDA - WHO'S AFRAID OF THE WORKING CLASS? by Christos Tsiolkas, Patricia Cornelius, Melissa Reeves and Andrew Bovell

RHONDA Carol says, "Problem with you, Rhonda, problem with you is that you're just too fertile. You just got to look at a man and you're up the duff." And we laughed but she's right, she's fucking right. Woman from Welfare says, "it must be hard. Must be hard for you, Rhonda, with all those kids. Looking after them, it must be hard". And I say "No. it's not hard." Though it is. I know it and she knows it. But I'm not going to give her the satisfaction. So I say, "No. Those kids, those kids are my blessings. Everyone of them a blessing. You understand. A blessing" though it is ... hard. But it's like Carol says I only got to look at a man. Anyway, I'm down the pub playing the bandits when Carol, she's my neighbour, lives in the flat next door, Carol comes in and says, "Cops were over your place earlier". And I said, "Oh yeah, what do they want this time? If it's Nathan, you can tell 'em he's not there. Tell 'em he's pissed off." Without a word mind you and with the rent. Bastard. And I'm not taking him back, not this time. No fucking way. Better off alone. Well, that's what Carol says. But she doesn't get it, Family Services don't get it, but it's how I am. It's my life and I like having a man around. So I've had a few. They don't stick around. Anyway, Carol says it's not Nathan they're after, it's about your kids. And so I know there's trouble. Stacey's probably been picked up shoplifting or something. Doesn't bother me 'cause I taught 'em how. So I go down to the station and they know me there. And I say, "Where are they? I want to see my kids." You can't see them", and I look at him and I say, "I'm their mother and I can see them whenever I bloody well like". And then he says it. Just a couple of words, he says it: "There's been an accident".

(pause)

"What accident?" "A fire. There's been a fire. In a Brotherhood bin. A candle. The clothes. I'm sorry".

(pause)

The man in the suit, he says, "They didn't suffer, the smoke, it would

have... " (she holds up her hand as if to motion him to stop talking) And I say, "They suffered. You don't know how much".

15. HEAVENLY - SWEET BIRD OF YOUTH by Tennessee Williams

HEAVENLY Don't give me your "Voice of God" speech, Papa, there was a time when you could have saved me, by letting me marry a boy that was still young and clean, but instead you drove him away, drove him out of St. Cloud. And when he came back, you took me out of St. Cloud, and tried to force me to marry a fifty-year-old money bag that you wanted something out of - and then another, another, all of them ones you wanted something out of. I'd gone, so Chance went away. Tried to compete, make himself big as these big-shots you wanted to use me for a bond with. He went. He tried. The right doors wouldn't open, and so he went in the wrong ones, and - Papa, you married for love, why wouldn't you let me do it, while I was alive, inside, and the boy was still clean, still decent? You married for love, but you wouldn't let me do it, and even though you'd done it, you broke Mama's heart. Miss Lucy was your mistress long before Mama died. And Mama was just in front of you. (pause) Can I go in now, Papa? Can I go in now, Papa? I'm sorry my operation has brought this embarrassment on you, but can you imagine it, Papa? I felt worse than embarrassed when I found out that Dr George Scudder's knife had cut the youth out of my body, made me a childless woman. Dry, cold, empty, like an old woman. I feel as if I ought to rattle like a dead dried-up vine when the Gulf Wind blows, but, Papa - I won't embarrass you any more.

16. CRESSY - RADIANCE by Louis Nowra

CRESSY You were created from dirt. Your father was dirt. He never raped her...it was me. He raped me! Under this house. Me! He did it to me! Under that burning house. He was just one of Mum's boyfriends. If he walked down the street I don't think I'd even recognize him. Mum was in town. He was going to drive away but his car had no petrol, so he went and bought a can. He sucked on a tube to get it flowing into the tank. I was playing under the house. Then suddenly he was there. He had this screwdriver. I tried to fight him but he was too strong. As he was doing it he kept kissing me with his mouth stinking of petrol. The pain – all the awful pain through my body like he was stabbing me in two. He said he'd kill me if I told Mum. I stayed under the house for hours trying to clean myself with some old rags. Then a few months later I realized I was having that man's baby. I tried to keep it from her. You know what happened when I told her? She hit me. She said I was lying, that it was one of the local boys and I was blaming her boyfriend. She didn't believe me. I had you in that house. In my bed. I was twelve. Twelve, Nona. (pause) I hated Mum for not believing me. But at least she kept you, pretended you were hers. That's not your mother. I'm your mother, Nona. You were born because your so-called Black Prince raped me. Just a filthy pig smelling of petrol. We kept it a secret. I was ashamed. She was ashamed. But I'm not ashamed of you. I'm telling you the truth. You're my flesh and blood, my daughter. You're my blood. My blood is yours, Nona! I named you because you were mine. That's all Mum would allow me to do – name you, Nona...I want you to know the truth. You have to know the truth.

17. BRIT IN NEW YORK - STUFF HAPPENS By David Hare

BRIT

'America changed.' That's what we're told. 'On September 11th everything changed.' 'If you're not American, you can't understand.' The infantile psycho-babble of popular culture is grafted opportunistically onto America's politics. The language of childish entitlement becomes the lethal rhetoric of global wealth and privilege. Asked how you are as President, on the first day of a war which will kill around thirty thousand people: 'I feel good.' I was in Saks Fifth Avenue the morning they bombed Baghdad. 'Isn't it wonderful?' says the saleswoman. 'At last we're hitting back.' 'Yes,' I reply. 'At the wrong people. Somebody steals your handbag, so you kill their second cousin, on the grounds they live close. Explain to me,' I say, 'Saudi Arabia is financing Al Qaeda. Iran, Lebanon and Syria are known to shelter terrorists. North Korea is developing a nuclear weapons programme. All these you leave alone. No, you go to war with the one place in the region admitted to have no connection with terrorism.' 'You're not American,' says the saleswoman. 'You don't understand.' Oh, a question, then. If 'You're not American. You don't understand' is the new dispensation, then why not 'You're not Chechen'? Are the Chechens also now licensed? Are Basques? Theatres, restaurants, public squares? Do Israeli milk-bars filled with women and children become fair game on the grounds that 'You don't understand. We're Palestinian, we're Chechen, we're Irish, we're Basque'? If the principle of international conduct is now to be that you may go against anyone you like on the grounds that you've been hurt by somebody else, does that apply to everyone? Or just to America?

On September 11th, America changed. Yes. It got much stupider.

18. SECRETARY - SPECIAL OFFER by Harold Pinter

SECRETARY

(at a desk in an office)

Yes, I was in the rest room at Swan and Edgars, having a little rest. Just sitting there, interfering with nobody, when this old crone suddenly came right up to me and sat beside me. You're on the staff of the B.B.C. she said, aren't you? I've got just the thing for you, she said, and put a little card into my hand. Do you know what was written on it? MEN FOR SALE! What on earth do you mean? I said. Men, she said, all sorts shapes and sizes, for sale. What on earth can you possibly mean? I said. It's an international congress, she said, got up for the entertainment and relief of lady members of the civil service. You can hear some of the boys we've got speak through a microphone, especially for your pleasure, singing little folk tunes we're sure you've never heard before. Tea is on the house and every day we have the very best pastries. For the cabaret at teatime the boys do a rare dance imported all the way from Buenos Aires, dressed in nothing but a pair of cricket pads. Every single one of them is tried and tested, very best quality, and at very reasonable rates. If you like one of them by any of his individual characteristics you can buy him, but for you not at retail price. As you work for the B.B.C. we'll be glad to make a special reduction. If you're at all dissatisfied you can send him back within seven days and have your money refunded. That's very kind of you, I said, but as a matter of fact I've just been on leave, I start work tomorrow and am perfectly refreshed. And I left her where she was. Men for Sale! What an extraordinary idea! I've never heard of anything so outrageous, have you? Look - here's the card.

Pause.

Do you think it's a joke. . . or serious ?

19. ELIZABETH BARRY - THE LIBERTINE by Stephen Jeffries

ELIZABETH You have no understanding, do you? You have comprehended – just – that I am tired of being your mistress and your solution is to conscript me into becoming your wife. It is not being a mistress I am tired of, John. I am tired of you. I do not wish to be your wife. I do not wish to be anyone's wife. I wish to continue being the creature I am. I am no Nell Gwyn, I will not give up the stage as soon as a King or a Lord has seen me on it and, wishing me to be his and his alone, will then pay a fortune to keep me off it. I am not the sparrow you picked up in the roadside, my love. London walks into this theatre to see me – not George's play nor Mr. Betterton. They want me and they want me over and over again. And when people desire you in such a manner, then you can envisage a steady river of gold lapping at your doorstep, not five pound here or there for pity or bed favours, not a noble's ransom for holding you hostage from the thing you love, but a lifetime of money amassed through your own endeavours. That is riches. 'Leave this gaudy, gilded stage'. You're right, this stage is gilded. It is gilded with my future earnings. And I will not trade those for a dependency on you. I will not swap my certain glory for your undependable love.

20. MURRI WOMAN - 7 STAGES OF GRIEVING by Wesley Enoch, Deborah Mailman

MURRI WOMAN

(delivered in the style of Stand-up comedy)

Have you ever been black? You know when you wake up one morning and you're black? Happened to me this morning. I was in the bathroom, looking in the mirror and I thought, "Nice hair, beautiful black skin, white shiny teeth... I'm BLACK!"

You get a lot of attention, special treatment from being black. I'm in this expensive shop and there's this guy next to me, nice hair, nice tie, nice suit, waving a nice big gun in the air and the shop assistant says, "Keep an eye on the nigger... eye on the nigger."

OK, so I went to try on a dress and the shop assistant escorts me to the 'special' dressing room, the one equipped with video cameras, warning to shop lifters, a security guard, fucken sniffer dog... 'Get out of it'. Just so I don't put anything I shouldn't on my nice dress, nice hair, beautiful black skin and white shiny teeth...

Now I'm in this crowded elevator, bathed in perfume, in my nice dress, nice hair, beautiful black skin and white shiny tetth... 'Hey which way'.

The Woman sniffs the air.

Somebody boodgi and they all look at me!

Now I go to my deadly Datsun, looking pretty deadly myself, which way, lock my keys in the car. Eh but this Murri too good, she got a coat hanger in her bag! Fiddling around for a good five seconds and started hearing sirens, look around, policeman, fireman, army, fucken UN and that same sniffer dog. Just to make sure everything's OK.

Spoken in an American accent while holding the audience at 'gunpoint'.

"Who owns the car, Ma'am?"

Indicating herself.

"ME."

So I'm driving along in my deadly Datsun, stylin up to that rear vision mirror. Car breaks down. Get out. Started waving people for help.

Imitating a fast car.

Started waving people for help. Vrooom!

Started waving people for help. Vrooom!

Next minute I see this black shape coming down the road – fucken sniffer dog.

Finally get home, with the help of the policeman, fireman, army, fucken UN. Still looking deadly in my nice dress, nice hair, beautiful black skin and white shiny teeth. Aunty comes in, “Eh Sisgirl, nice dress, can I borrow it?”

‘Mmmm’.

Thinking that tomorrow will be a better day, I go to bed. Kicking that sniffer dog out. Still with the sound of sirens in my head. Snuggling up to my doona and pillow. Morning comes, I wake up, looking in the mirror. Nice hair, beautiful black skin, white shiny teeth. I’M STILL BLACK! NUNNA!

21. MARGOT – THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES by Joanna Murray – Smith

MARGOT I'm not to blame for every thing that's gone wrong in your lives. I'm a thinker! It's my job to think. Because that's something I do better than other people. You're all spoiled brats. Go on shoot me, but that's the truth! Talk about the Me Generation! All this nonsense about personal identity and self-growth and being fulfilled! What a load of self-indulgent crap. Has it ever occurred to any of you that there was a generation of men and women who didn't wake up in the morning and wonder how the day was going to pan out for them, but leapt out of bed intent on figuring out how the world was going to pan out for everyone? Maybe we got things wrong. Maybe we went too far. Maybe we had a goddamn mission and that was to make this planet a better place for our inheritors than it was for us. You whiners and whingers! What would you rather? That I'd sat quietly back and lead a sweet, unrestrained, anonymous life? So that your destiny as repressed, stupefied, second-class citizens could have gone on uninterrupted? I happened to get famous and now you're going to use my fame against me because you're not happy with yourselves? Why don't you take a little responsibility and, while you're at it, show a tiny bit of ordinary gratitude?

22. ROSE – THE SEED by Kate Mulvany

ROSE There was a spray that Dad breathed in and now I don't have the eggs. They've all been destroyed by radiotherapy and even if they found one, I can't carry it. The tumour wiped out half my organs, my body can't support a baby. Grandda, I'm thirty and I've just started menopause.

I will never have children. [Beat] I will never have children. [Beat] I will never have children. And you know what? I don't think I deserve them anyway. When a friend tells me she is pregnant I smile and hug and kiss and ask her dumb questions. 'How far along?' 'Any names picked yet?' 'What are you craving?' But I don't let on what I'm craving. That despite my big smile and congratulations I'm green and I'm bubbling and I'm thinking, you bitch, I hope it fucking dies inside you, you bitch. And when a pregnant woman walks past me on the street I want punch her belly and walk away when she falls to the ground and just leave her there to deal with it. And when a husband tells me he's having his third boy I want to put my hand down his pants and rip his fucking cock off and squeeze it dry of any seed. And when I see a baby in a pram...[beat.] I just want to pick it up and smell its skin and hold it to my heart and stoke its little head and never let another person touch it for the rest of its life. Is that normal, Grandda? I don't know. And I never will. Because the seed stops here.

23. DENISE – THE CALL by Patricia Cornelius

DENISE

This mother thing sucks. I hated it right from the start. Complete strangers came up and patted my belly as if it was going to bring them luck. And after the birth, which was fucking torture, mad people cooed and gurgled and talked in high-pitched voices. They smiled at me and expected me to smile back. Like, what the fuck! It's this 'You've got a little baby' stuff. I go crazy while she sleeps in her cot and you're at work and my friends have got a life and I'm on my own and I think, 'Jesus Christ, what have I done. How in hell am I going to get through this?' I push her in her pram to the shops because I've run out of baby wipes. I push her to the shops to buy disposable nappies and spend my last fifteen bucks. I push her to the shops because I can't think of anywhere else to push her. Sometimes I think if I leave her there someone nicer might come and get her and it'd be much much better. I meet with other mothers and I pray to fucking God that I don't look like them, or sound like them, or am like them. They tell me how smart their kid is, how early she talked, or walked. How their three-month-old baby is reading Shakespeare. And I look down at my fat little bald baby sucking on her dummy and I think, 'Oh, that's funny because mine's as thick as a brick'. This mother thing is weird. I'm bored. I'm lonely. And it doesn't stop.

24. EMILIA – OTHELLO by William Shakespeare

EMILIA Yes, a dozen; and as many to the
 vantage, as would store the world they play'd for.
 But I do think it is their husbands' faults
 If wives do fall. Say that they slack their duties,
 And pour our treasures into foreign laps,
 Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
 Throwing restraint upon us; or, say they strike us,
 Or scant our former having in despite;
 Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace, Yet have we some
 revenge. Let husbands know Their wives have sense like them; they see
 and smell, And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
 As husbands have. What is it that they do
 When they change us for others? Is it sport?
 I think it is; and doth affection breed it?
 I think it doth; is't frailty that thus errs?
 It is so too; and have not we affections,
 Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?
 Then, let them use us well; else let them know,
 The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

25. VITTORIA – The White Devil by John Webster

VITTORIA What have I gained by thee but infamy?
Thou hast stained the spotless honour of my house, And frightened
thence noble society:
Like those which, sick o'th'palsy, and retain
Ill-scenting foxes 'bout them, are still shunned
By those of choicer nostrils. What do you call this house? Is this your
palace? Did not the judge style it
A house of penitent whores? Who sent me to it?
Who hath the honour to advance Vittoria
To this incontinent college? Is't not you?
Is't not your high preferment?
Go, go brag How many ladies you have undone, like me. Fare you
well sir; let me hear no more of you. I had a limb corrupted to an
ulcer, But I have cut it off: and now I'll go
Weeping to heaven on crutches. For your gifts, I will return them all;
and I do wish That I could make you full executor
To all my sins - O that I could toss myself Into a grave as quickly: for
all thou art worth I'll not shed one tear more - I'll burst first.