

Acting for Bards the on-camera edition

Magistra Iselda de Narbonne
alix.evans@gmail.com

Iselda's ~~Three~~ Four Laws of Performance:

- I. Know what every word means
- II. Say it like it's true
- III. Say it like it's important
- IV. Say it like you're performing for one person

Example Texts

Two households, both alike in dignity
(In fair Verona, where we lay our scene),
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life,
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-marked love
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, naught could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage—
The which, if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

- Romeo and Juliet, Act 1, Scene 1

Hwæt. We Gardena in geardagum,
þeodcyninga, þrym gefrunon,
hu ða æpelingas ellen fremedon.
Oft Scyld Scefing sceaþena þreatum,
monegum mægþum, meodosetla ofteah,
egsode eorlas.

- Beowulf

Practice Texts

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
(Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

- William Shakespeare, sonnet 29

Quickly, the dragon came at him, encouraged
As Beowulf fell back; its breath flared,
And he suffered, wrapped around in swirling
Flames -- a king, before, but now
A beaten warrior. None of his comrades
Came to him, helped him, his brave and noble
Followers; they ran for their lives, fled
Deep in a wood. And only one of them
Remained, stood there, miserable, remembering,
As a good man must, what kinship should mean.

- Beowulf, trans. Burton Raffel

Upon a day, came Sorrow in to me,
Saying, 'I've come to stay with thee a while';
And I perceived that she had ushered Bile
And Pain into my house for company.
Wherefore I said, 'Go forth – away with thee!'
But like a Greek she answered, full of guile,
And went on arguing in an easy style.
Then, looking, I saw Love come silently,
Habited in black raiment, smooth and new,
Having a black hat set upon his hair;
And certainly the tears he shed were true.
So that I asked, 'What ails thee, trifler?'
Answering, he said: 'A grief to be gone through;
For our own lady's dying, brother dear.'

- Dante Alighieri, trans. Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Homework

Review the entries in the [“Laurels Only” War Point](#) from the first Bardic Wars.

Are there any performances that you find particularly gripping or moving? What do you think the performers did to communicate their material to you so effectively?

In particular, take a look at Ollaimh Ruaidhri an Cu ([starting at 00:55:48](#)), and Tyzes Sofia, called Zsof ([starting at 1:14:55](#)). Notice how they seem to be talking *directly* to you, and to really believe what they’re saying.