

The Good Audition Guides

# CLASSICAL MONOLOGUES FOR MEN

*edited and introduced by*

MARINA CALDARONE

NICK HERN BOOKS

London

[www.nickhernbooks.co.uk](http://www.nickhernbooks.co.uk)

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editor and publisher wish to thank the following for permission to use copyright material:

*Medea*, Euripides, trans. David Wiles; *Hecuba*, Euripides, trans. Frank McGuinness, Faber and Faber; *Thebans*, Liz Lochhead, after Sophocles and Euripides, Nick Hern Books; *Bacchae*, Euripides, Kenneth McLeish, Nick Hern Books; *Rudens*, Plautus, trans. Christopher Stace (1981), Cambridge University Press; *Peribanez*, Lope de Vega, adapt. Tanya Ronder, Nick Hern Books; *Life is a Dream*, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, trans. John Clifford, Nick Hern Books; *Don Juan*, Molière, trans. Kenneth McLeish, Nick Hern Books; *Phedra*, Racine, trans. Julie Rose, Nick Hern Books; *Lorenzaccio* (in *Musset: Five Plays*), Alfred de Musset, trans. Donald Watson, Methuen Publishing Ltd; *The Government Inspector*, Nikolai Gogol, trans. Stephen Mulrine, Nick Hern Books; *An Enemy of the People*, Henrik Ibsen, adapt. Arthur Miller, Nick Hern Books; *Ivanov*, Anton Chekhov, adapt. David Hare, Methuen Publishing Ltd; *Miss Julie*, August Strindberg, trans. Kenneth McLeish, Nick Hern Books; *The Seagull*, Anton Chekhov, trans. Stephen Mulrine, Nick Hern Books; *To Damascus Part III* (in *Strindberg: The Plays Volume II*), August Strindberg, trans. Michael Meyer, Secker and Warburg; *Children of the Sun*, Maxim Gorky, trans. Stephen Mulrine, Nick Hern Books. Every effort has been made to trace all copyright holders, but if any has been inadvertently overlooked, the publishers will be pleased to receive information and make the necessary arrangements at the first opportunity.

# The Tamer Tamed

John Fletcher (1611)

WHO 📖 *Petruchio, the character first met in The Taming of the Shrew. He is best known as a wife tamer. 30s plus.*

WHERE 📖 *Outside Petruchio's house in Italy.*

TO WHOM 📖 *The audience.*

WHEN 📖 *Contemporary with the authorship.*

WHAT HAS JUST HAPPENED 📖 *Kate, Petruchio's wife, has died; he has recently re-married her cousin Maria, who is more than a match for him. She has been defying her new husband's every demand – including shunning the marital 'duties' in the bedroom. She wants to break him, just as Petruchio believes he broke her cousin Kate. Petruchio has been feigning illness in an attempt to win his wife's pity – it has backfired, she has caught on to his ruse and is playing along with it, only boosting the story somewhat in her own inimitable way. She has told everyone he has the plague, it is contagious, no one is to go into the house; she has locked him in and she has advised him and all that know him that he has only days to live. The watchmen who were set outside the house to stop him coming out or anyone going in, have just run off as Petruchio's desperate vitriol has terrified them as he breaks down the door, livid and armed with a gun!*

WHAT HE WANTS/OBJECTIVES TO PLAY 📖

- *To warn every man in the audience of the duplicity of all wives – however seemingly 'nice'.*
- *To impress upon the audience that if any male member is not already married, then he must never take the risk and get married.*
- *To educate men who may not know how wives systematically destroy their husbands.*

## Petruchio

“ The door shall open too, I'll have a fair shoot.

*Petruchio bursts the door open and enters with a gun.*

Are ye all gone? Tricks in my old days, crackers  
Put now upon me? And by Lady Greensleeves?  
When a man has the fairest and the sweetest  
Of all their sex, and, as he think the noblest,  
What has he then? I'll speak modestly:  
He has a quartern-ague that shall shake  
All his estate to nothing: out on 'em, hedgehogs!  
He that shall touch 'em has a thousand thorns  
Run through his fingers. If I were unmarried,  
I would do anything below repentance,  
Any base dunghill slavery, be a hangman,  
Ere I would be a husband. O, the thousand,  
Thousand, ten thousand ways they have to kill us!  
Some fall with too much stringing of the fiddles,  
And those are fools: some that they are not suffer'd,  
And those are maudlin lovers: some, like scorpions,  
They poison with their tails, and those are martyrs;  
Some die with doing good, those benefactors,  
And leave 'em land to leap away; some few,  
For those are rarest, they are said to kill  
With kindness and fair usage, but what they are  
My catalogue discovers not, only 'tis thought  
They are buried in old walls with their heels upward.  
I could rail twenty days together now.  
I'll seek 'em out, and if I have not reason,  
And very sensible, why this was done,  
I'll go a-birding yet, and some shall smart for't. ”

## GLOSSARY

*Lady Greensleeves* the beloved object of the song 'Greensleeves'  
*quartern ague* chronic fever  
*stringing of the fiddles* sex  
*suffer'd* allowed  
*leap away* fritter away  
*smart* feel pain