

AN INTERVIEW WITH SHAKESPEARE

*(King Lear; The Two Gentlemen of Verona; Sonnet 62; Sonnet 76; Sonnet 91; Sonnet 106;
Hamlet)*

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Boy:

Sorry to bother you but your agent told me you'd agreed to give an interview.

Shakespeare:

Pray do not mock.

I am a very foolish, fond old man,

Fourscore and upward, and to deal plainly,

I fear I am not in my perfect mind.

Methinks I should know you...

Yet I am doubtful, for I am mainly ignorant

What place this is...

Boy:

You're at the Shakespeare Festival in Lublin where they're performing your plays. I'm Nicolas and I'm doing a school project on famous people. My English teacher advised me to choose you as you're the best playwright of all times. May I ask you some questions?

Shakespeare:

Ay, boy.

Boy:

Aren't you tired of fame?

Shakespeare:

A true devoted pilgrim is not weary

To measure kingdoms with his feeble steps.

Boy:

What do you think about modern writers and poets?

Shakespeare:

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,

Some in their wealth, some in their body's force,

Some in their garments (though new-fangled ill).

...so all their praises are but prophecies of this our time...

For we which now behold these present days

Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

Boy:

But don't you think that your writing is a bit old-fashioned?

Shakespeare:

Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
So far from variation or quick change?
Why, with the time, do I not glance aside
To new-found methods and to compounds strange?
...for as the sun is daily new and old,
So is my love, still telling what is told.

Boy:

Is it true that you believe no one can write better than you?

Shakespeare:

Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye,
And all my soul, and all my every part;
And for this sin there is no remedy,
It is so grounded inward in my heart.

Boy:

Now I'd like to ask about something that intrigues us all. To be or not to be?

Shakespeare:

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 heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to- 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished.

Boy:

I do believe you think what now you speak;
But what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but slave to memory,
Of violent birth but poor validity,
Which now like fruit unripe sticks on the tree
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.

Oh, my. I'm following your language! I'd better stop now. Thanks very much and goodbye.

Shakespeare:

Adieu! Adieu! To die, to sleep.
To sleep, perchance to dream.