

“To be or not to be” from *Hamlet*

All excerpts are taken from Shakespeare’s full text, not from the FSU/Asolo Conservatory’s touring adaptation.

From Act III, Scene 1

HAMLET

To be or not to be—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. To die, to sleep—
 To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there’s the rub,
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
 Must give us pause. There’s the respect
 That makes calamity of so long life.
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 Th’ oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,
 The pangs of despised love, the law’s delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of th’ unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make
 With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death,
 The undiscovered country from whose bourn
 No traveler returns, puzzles the will
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have
 Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought,
 And enterprises of great pitch and moment
 With this regard their currents turn awry
 And lose the name of action.