



# Women for Shakespeare

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# Shakespeare's vision of women

Shakespeare was a great admirer and connoisseur of the female world. It is no coincidence that women always play a central role in his works. Reading Shakespeare it is possible to meet practically every kind of woman: the strong woman, the weak woman, the naive one, the greedy one, the one in love, the honest one, the shrewd one and so on. And each one represents, in the story in which it is inserted, a determining factor (both for good and for bad) for the evolution of events.

He knows well the obstacles posed to women by his society but manages to make their point of view perfectly understood in his works. In the plays the women are enterprising and this attitude is "punished" at the end with their death or with shame.

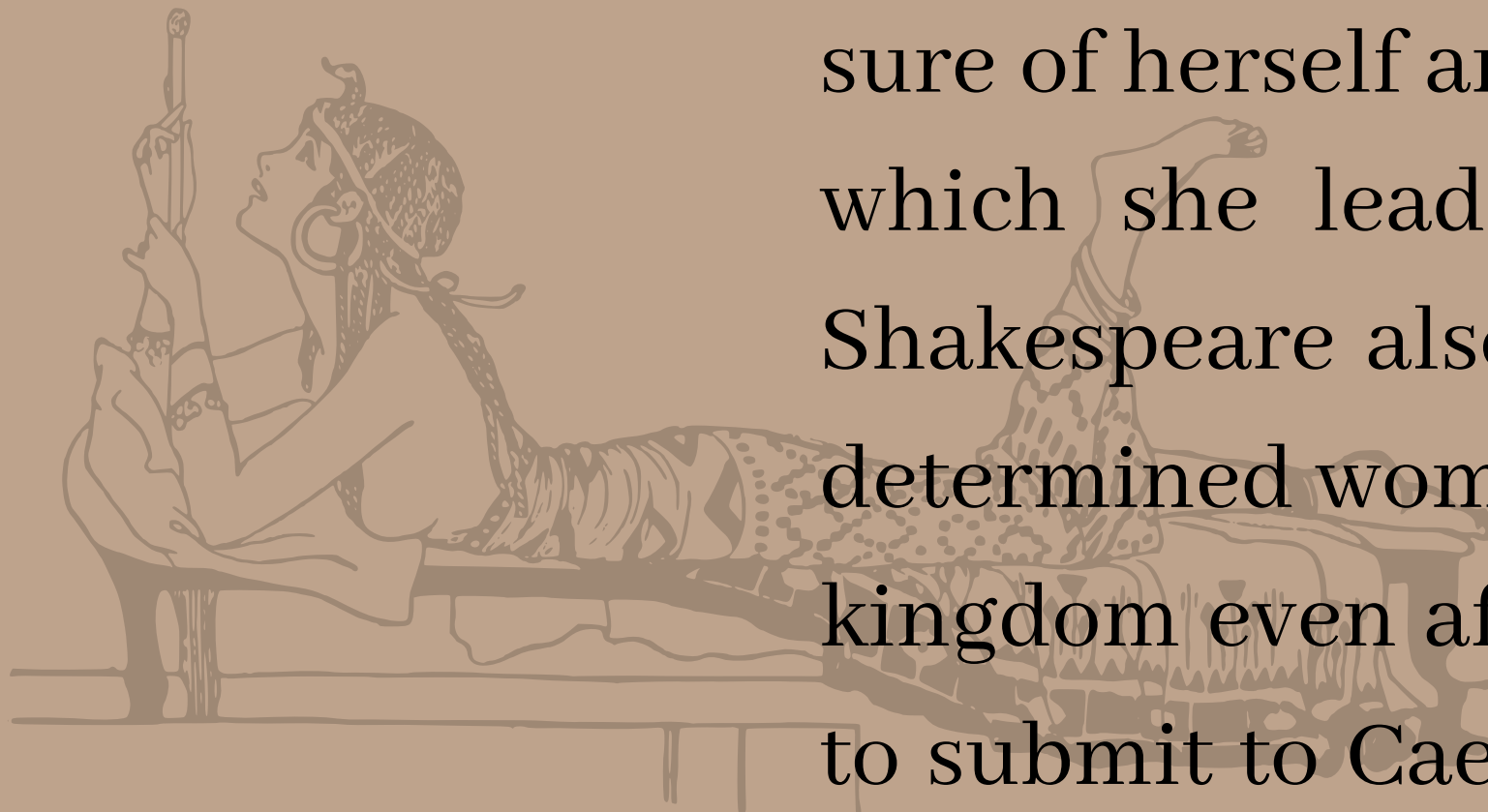
# DARK LADY

Shakespeare is a renaissance poet but he does not describe the beloved woman like the Italian renaissance. the name of this woman is not known but he identifies her with "dark lady" and is the main theme of the second part of his sonnets. in the works he describes this woman as physically unpleasant, with black hair and dark skin, but says that there is something that makes her very attractive in his eyes.



# CLEOPATRA

Concerning the women described in the plays, the strong woman is represented by Cleopatra in the tragedy "Antony and Cleopatra". Cleopatra is sure of herself and aware of her charm thanks to which she leads Antonio to the vice of lust. Shakespeare also speaks to us of Cleopatra as a determined woman who fights to defend her kingdom even after Antony's death. In order not to submit to Caesar the only solution he finds is death. Cleopatra is therefore an extreme character who takes femininity to very high levels.



# OPHELIA

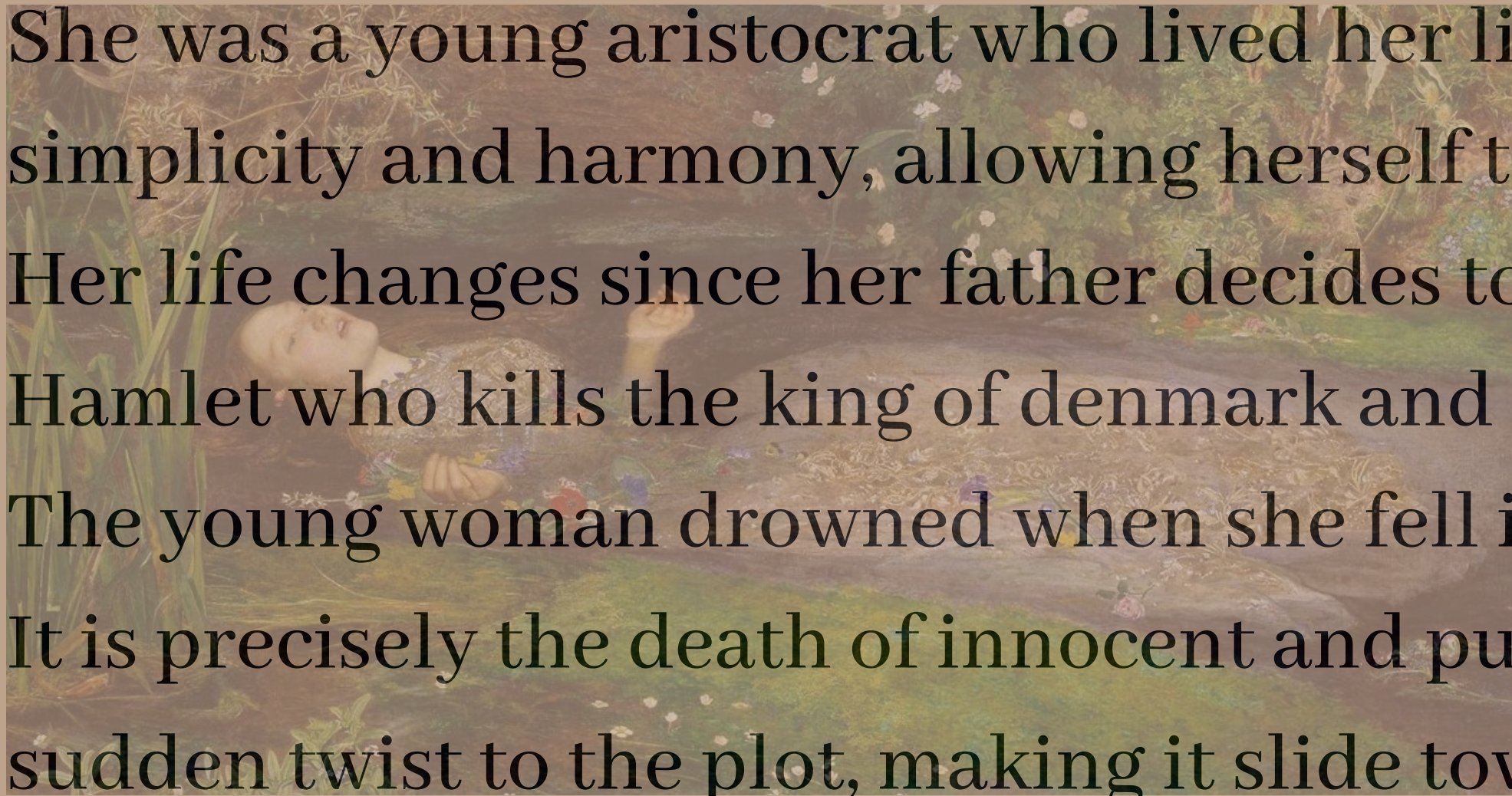
Ophelia, in the tragedy Hamlet, represents the weak woman. of all the characters in the opera he is the pure, sensitive and innocent one.

She was a young aristocrat who lived her life at the court in simplicity and harmony, allowing herself to be wooed by Hamlet.

Her life changes since her father decides to use her to control Hamlet who kills the king of denmark and drives ophelia mad.

The young woman drowned when she fell into the river.

It is precisely the death of innocent and pure Ophelia that gives a sudden twist to the plot, making it slide towards a disastrous end.



# DESDEMONA



Desdemona, in the tragedy Othello, represents the naive woman.

She is the embodiment of sweetness and innocence, but at the same time she shows character to sell, marrying in secret with the Moor and thus rebelling against the patriarchal rules of the society in which she lives.

The woman is the object of jealousy of her husband Othello and that is why Iano makes him believe in the existence of a relationship between desdemona and his rival Cassius in order to ruin him.

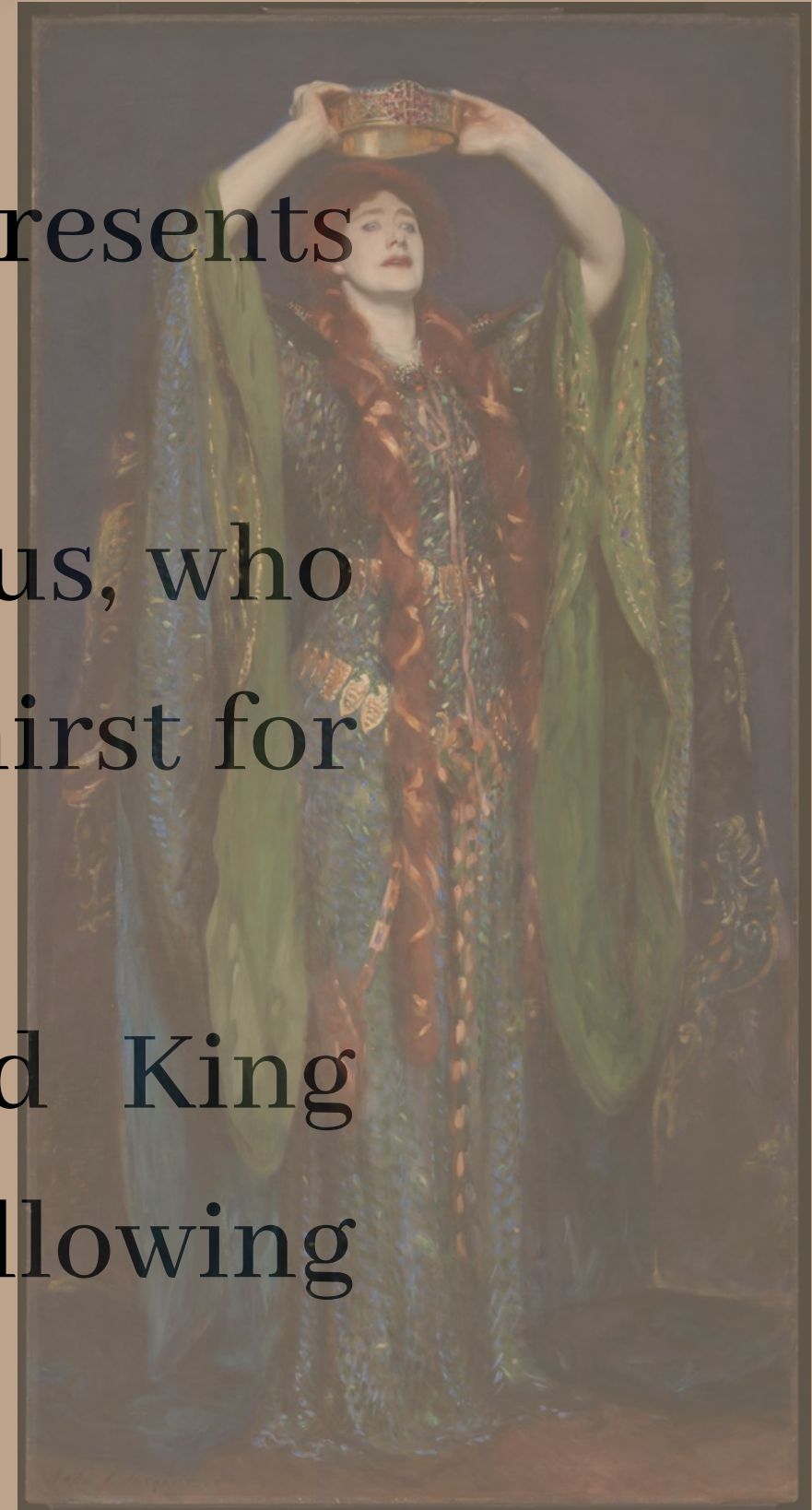
Othello, blinded by jealousy, kills his wife, accusing her of treason.

# LADY MACBETH

Lady Macbeth, in the tragedy "Macbeth", represents the greedy woman.

It is this woman, ambitious and unscrupulous, who guides her husband's story and feeds the thirst for power.

Without her he would never have killed King Duncan to take his place on the throne, following the plan dictated by his wife.





# JULIET

Juliet, in the tragedy "Romeo and Juliet", represents the woman in love.

She is the symbol of pure and troubled love.

Shakespeare describes Juliet as an enterprising character as she is ready to do anything to be able to live her love story with Romeo.

Her decision to implement Friar Lorenzo's plan, which precipitates events and brings the drama to a close. A tragic conclusion that sees the death of the two protagonists.





# PORTIA

Portia, in the comedy "The merchant of Venice", represents the shrewd woman.

Portia was a woman so desired that she was the result of the creation of a pact

between two contenders: Antonio and Shylock. Antonio fails to respect the

pact and therefore we arrive at a trial.

Portia is not only a beautiful and rich heiress to marry, but she is also a bright

and enterprising young woman, who uses her shrewdness for good.

She disguises herself as a young law doctor, participates in the trial and with

the sole weapon of the word, she manages to change Antonio's fate, effectively

saving his life.

# CORDELIA

Cordelia, in the tragedy "King Lear, represents the honest woman. The old King Lear, before abdicating, decides to divide the kingdom of Britain between his three daughters and he proposes a kind of game: asking them to express in words the love they feel for him. The more flattering the words, the greater the portion of the kingdom that will be awarded.

Cordelia refuses and tries to explain to her father that she won't let go of great praise just to take the part of the bigger kingdom, still confirming the great love she feels for him.

However, her father does not understand her intent and deserts her, despite the fact that she was the only good and honest person in the court of Britain.



# OUR OPINIONS

We really liked the way of treating women that Shakespeare takes. We were interested in her different vision compared to her contemporaries and therefore in the evolutionary behavior that places the woman at the center of the dramas and that describes her not only as a woman to love but also as a woman with quality and resourcefulness.



**Nicoletta Rizzo,  
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