

January 1950

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Recommended Citation

Floyd F. Miles, *Dicta Est Mort - A Tragedy in One Scene*, 27 *Dicta* 117 (1950).

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Dicta Est Mort - A Tragedy in One Scene

DICTA EST MORT

A Tragedy in One Scene *

FLOYD F. (FORSHAKESPEARE) MILES

Scene: A legal churchyard. Night. Moaning winds, ghosts flitting about.

Enter: Two members of the Editorial Board disguised as gravediggers. They dig furiously and throw up a skull.

Enter: Hamlet J. Barry, Jr., and Horatio S. Ramsey, Jr.

HAM. I will speak to this fellow. —Whose grave's this, sirrah?

1st GRAVEDIGGER. (*Throwing up another skull*) This same skull, sir, was Dicta's skull.

HAM. Alas, poor Dicta! I knew him Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest; of most excellent fancy; he hath tickled to my boot heels a thousand times; and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those quips that brought a smile I know not how oft. —Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your flashes of merriment? that were wont to set the table in a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning. How dull and stupid now thou seem'st whose pages once lilted to the wit of Henry Toll, the wiles of Hilliard. Thy mouth is stopt with the dust of legal tomes and the ghostly echoes of thy tongue squeek and gibber i' the moonlight!—Prythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HOR. What's that, my lord?

HAM. Dost think an Attorney General brief look'd o' this fashion i' the earth?

HOR. E'en so.

HAM. And smelt so? Phew!

HOR. E'en Moore so, my Lord.

HAM. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust o' this tome till we find it stopping a bunghole?

HOR. E'en so, my lord. But soft you, the Board approaches.

HAM. Farewell, Dicta, Farewell! (*Horatio drags him away*)

HAM. (*Shouting to the Board*) Get thee to a nunnery!

Exeunt.

* Careful inquiry was made, and the impression given by this poesy confirmed, that Judge Miles is harkening back, not to any time in the recent past, but to those halcyon days of 1928 and 1929. The editors want it understood that while they would like each issue to contain some "dull" work of permanent reference value, the pages of DICTA are ever open to the scribe with the sprightly pen, be his name Miles, Toll or just plain Jones.

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