

## THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

4 Quidam quae tantum amicis committenda sunt, obviis narrant et in quaslibet aures, quicquid illos urserit, exonerant. Quidam rursus etiam carissimorum conscientiam reformidant, et si possent, ne sibi quidem credituri interius premunt omne secretum. Neutrum faciendum est. Utrumque enim vitium est, et omnibus credere et nulli. Sed alterum honestius  
5 dixerim vitium, alterum tutius; sic utrosque reprehendas, et eos qui semper inquieti sunt, et eos qui semper quiescunt. Nam illa tumultu gaudens non est industria, sed exagitatae mentis concursatio. Et haec non est quies, quae motum omnem molestiam  
6 iudicat, sed dissolutio et languor. Itaque hoc, quod apud Pomponium legi, animo mandabitur: "quidam adeo in latebras refugerunt, ut putent in turbido esse, quicquid in luce est." Inter se ista miscenda sunt, et quiescenti agendum et agenti quiescendum est. Cum rerum natura delibera; illa dicet tibi et diem fecisse se et noctem. VALE.

### III.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

1 Persevera ut coepisti et quantum potes propera, quo diutius frui emendato animo et composito possis. Frueris quidem etiam dum emendas, etiam dum con-

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<sup>a</sup> See Index.

## EPISTLES III., IV.

There is a class of men who communicate, to anyone whom they meet, matters which should be revealed to friends alone, and unload upon the chance listener whatever irks them. Others, again, fear to confide in their closest intimates; and if it were possible, they would not trust even themselves, burying their secrets deep in their hearts. But we should do neither. It is equally faulty to trust every one and to trust no one. Yet the former fault is, I should say, the more ingenuous, the latter the more safe. In like manner you should rebuke these two kinds of men,—both those who always lack repose, and those who are always in repose. For love of bustle is not industry,—it is only the restlessness of a hunted mind. And true repose does not consist in condemning all motion as merely vexation; that kind of repose is slackness and inertia. Therefore, you should note the following saying, taken from my reading in Pomponius<sup>a</sup>: “Some men shrink into dark corners, to such a degree that they see darkly by day.” No, men should combine these tendencies, and he who reposes should act and he who acts should take repose. Discuss the problem with Nature; she will tell you that she has created both day and night. Farewell.

### IV. ON THE TERRORS OF DEATH

Keep on as you have begun, and make all possible haste, so that you may have longer enjoyment of an improved mind, one that is at peace with itself. Doubtless you will derive enjoyment during the time

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ponis ; alia tamen illa voluptas est, quae percipitur ex contemplatione mentis ab omni labe purae et  
2 splendidae. Tenes utique memoria, quantum senseris gaudium, cum praetexta posita sumpsisti virilem togam et in forum deductus es ; maius expecta, cum puerilem animum deposueris et te in viros philosophia transcripserit. Adhuc enim non pueritia sed, quod est gravius, puerilitas remanet. Et hoc quidem peior<sup>1</sup> est, quod auctoritatem habemus senum, vitia puerorum, nec puerorum tantum sed infantum. Illi levia, hi falsa formidant, nos utraque.

3 Profice modo ; intelleges quaedam ideo minus timenda, quia multum metus adferunt. Nullum malum est<sup>2</sup> magnum, quod extremum est. Mors ad te venit ; timenda erat, si tecum esse posset ; sed<sup>2</sup> necesse est aut non perveniat aut transeat

4 “ Difficile est,” inquis, “ animum perducere ad contemtionem animae.” Non vides, quam ex frivolis causis contemnatur ? Alius ante amicae fores laqueo pependit, alius se praecipitavit e tecto, ne dominum stomachantem diutius audiret, alius ne reduceretur e fuga, ferrum adegit in viscera. Non putas virtutem hoc effecturam, quod efficit nimia formido ? Nulli potest segura vita contingere, qui de producenda nimis cogitat, qui inter magna bona multos consules

<sup>1</sup> Hense, after Gertz, adds *res* after *peior*.

<sup>2</sup> *malum est* and *sed* inserted by Gertz.

## EPISTLE IV.

when you are improving your mind and setting it at peace with itself; but quite different is the pleasure which comes from contemplation when one's mind is so cleansed from every stain that it shines. You remember, of course, what joy you felt when you laid aside the garments of boyhood and donned the man's toga, and were escorted to the forum; nevertheless, you may look for a still greater joy when you have laid aside the mind of boyhood and when wisdom has enrolled you among men. For it is not boyhood that still stays with us, but something worse,—boyishness. And this condition is all the more serious because we possess the authority of old age, together with the follies of boyhood, yea, even the follies of infancy. Boys fear trifles, children fear shadows, we fear both.

All you need to do is to advance; you will thus understand that some things are less to be dreaded, precisely because they inspire us with great fear. No evil is great which is the last evil of all. Death arrives; it would be a thing to dread, if it could remain with you. But death must either not come at all, or else must come and pass away.

“It is difficult, however,” you say, “to bring the mind to a point where it can scorn life.” But do you not see what trifling reasons impel men to scorn life? One hangs himself before the door of his mistress; another hurls himself from the house-top that he may no longer be compelled to bear the taunts of a bad-tempered master; a third, to be saved from arrest after running away, drives a sword into his vitals. Do you not suppose that virtue will be as efficacious as excessive fear? No man can have a peaceful life who thinks too much about lengthening it, or believes that living through many consulships is a great bless-

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5 numerat. Hoc cotidie meditare, ut possis aequo animo vitam relinquere, quam multi sic conplectuntur et tenent, quomodo qui aqua torrente rapiuntur spinas et aspera.

Plerique inter mortis metum et vitae tormenta miseri fluctuantur et vivere nolunt, mori nesciunt.

6 Fac itaque tibi iucundam vitam omnem pro illa sollicitudinem deponendo. Nullum bonum adiuvat habentem, nisi ad cuius amissionem praeparatus est animus; nullius autem rei facilior amissio est, quam quae desiderari amissa non potest. Ergo adversus haec, quae incidere possunt etiam potentissimis, ad-

7 hortare te et indura. De Pompei capite pupillus et spado tulere sententiam, de Crasso crudelis et insolens Parthus; Gaius Caesar iussit Lepidum Dextro tribuno praebere cervicem, ipse Chaerae praestitit. Neminem eo fortuna provexit, ut non tantum illi minaretur, quantum permiserat. Noli huic tranquillitati confidere; momento mare evertitur. Eodem die ubi

8 luserunt navigia, sorbentur. Cogita posse et latronem et hostem admovere iugulo tuo gladium. Ut potestas maior absit, nemo non servus habet in te vitae necisque arbitrium. Ita dico: quisquis vitam suam contempserit, tuae dominus est. Recognosce exempla eorum, qui domesticis insidiis perierunt, aut aperta vi aut dolo; intelleges non pauciores servorum ira cecidisse quam regum. Quid ad te itaque, quam potens sit

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<sup>a</sup> A reference to the murder of Caligula, on the Palatine.

## EPISTLE IV.

ing. Rehearse this thought every day, that you may be able to depart from life contentedly; for many men clutch and cling to life, even as those who are carried down a rushing stream clutch and cling to briars and sharp rocks.

Most men ebb and flow in wretchedness between the fear of death and the hardships of life; they are unwilling to live, and yet they do not know how to die. For this reason, make life as a whole agreeable to yourself by banishing all worry about it. No good thing renders its possessor happy, unless his mind is reconciled to the possibility of loss; nothing, however, is lost with less discomfort than that which, when lost, cannot be missed. Therefore, encourage and toughen your spirit against the mishaps that afflict even the most powerful. For example, the fate of Pompey was settled by a boy and a eunuch, that of Crassus by a cruel and insolent Parthian. Gaius Caesar ordered Lepidus to bare his neck for the axe of the tribune Dexter; and he himself offered his own throat to Chaerea.<sup>a</sup> No man has ever been so far advanced by Fortune that she did not threaten him as greatly as she had previously indulged him. Do not trust her seeming calm; in a moment the sea is moved to its depths. The very day the ships have made a brave show in the games, they are engulfed. Reflect that a highwayman or an enemy may cut your throat; and, though he is not your master, every slave wields the power of life and death over you. Therefore I declare to you: he is lord of your life that scorns his own. Think of those who have perished through plots in their own homes, slain either openly or by guile; you will then understand that just as many have been killed by angry slaves as by angry kings. What matter, therefore, how power-

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quem times, cum id, propter quod times, nemo non  
9 possit? At si forte in manus hostium incideris, victor  
te duci iubebit; eo nempe, quo duceris. Quid te ipse  
decipis et hoc nunc primum, quod olim patiebaris,  
intellegis? Ita dico: ex quo natus es, duceris. Haec  
et eiusmodi versanda in animo sunt, si volumus  
ultimam illam horam placidi expectare, cuius metus  
omnes alias inquietas facit.

10 Sed ut finem epistulae inponam, accipe, quod mihi  
hodierno die placuit. Et hoc quoque ex alienis hor-  
tulis sumptum est. "Magnae divitiae sunt lege  
naturae composita paupertas." Lex autem illa  
naturae scis quos nobis terminos statuatur? Non  
esurire, non sitire, non algere. Ut famem sitimque  
depellas, non est necesse superbis adsidere liminibus  
nec supercilium grave et contumeliosam etiam  
humanitatem pati, non est necesse maria temptare  
nec sequi castra; parabile est, quod natura desiderat,  
11 et adpositum. Ad supervacua sudatur. Illa sunt,  
quae togam conterunt, quae nos senescere sub  
tentorio cogunt, quae in aliena litora inpingunt.  
Ad manum est, quod sat est. Cui cum paupertate  
bene convenit, dives est. VALE.

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<sup>a</sup> *i. e.*, to death.

<sup>b</sup> The Garden of Epicurus. Fragg. 477 and 200 Usener.

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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