

## **The surgeon**

by mazaher

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This is a commentfic, sprouting like a sudden weed from the touching Hamlet story *It Will Be Now* by irisbleufic, posted on July 25th, 2011 at <http://irisbleufic.livejournal.com/304058.html>. Please do go and read it, dry up your tears and then (only then) read this.

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*Hamlet chokes, tries to speak, and it sounds like nothing earthly ought.  
Fortinbras lifts his hand as if burned, rising quickly.  
"I'll fetch my surgeon. Don't move him."*

IRISBLEUFIC, *It Will Be Now*

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The surgeon comes hurriedly, shuffling his feet and mumbling to himself as he searches the pockets of his long shapeless robe.  
"Where is my damned scalpel... ouch! here it is. Must remember to have a cap sewn for it sooner or later. So what do we have here, poisoned wound you said...? Poisoned wound \*and\* poisoned drink?! Bit of overkill, don't you think? But not yet, not yet if I just can... Please, sir, stand back, allow me to do my work. Oh, same poison in you too? Quick, you over there, stick two fingers down his throat and make him vomit. Mind you, I can mend you both. I think. Let me see. Cut the wound across, make it bleed again. Not too much, enough to wash some of the poison out. No, sir, I don't care a damn for split infinitives in an emergency. Not at all. In the state you're in, you shouldn't either. You! Go fetch fresh mallow, I saw a bunch on the bank of the moat near the bridge. Peel it, beat the core to a pulp in a mortar (stone, not bronze) and bring it here on a clean towel. \*Clean\*, mind you. Also, a pint of fresh goat milk. You, over there: boil this yarrow in half a pint of water. It will stop the bleeding when needed. Now, if only I can find my jar of theriac-- straight from Venice, this comes, made to the Senate's specifications, the best aspis adder in it. Mountain adder, from the Euganeans. Keep breathing, my lord, or I'll have to recite more split infinitives at you, and you won't like it. Like this. Bit better? No? It will, soon. You're stubborn enough to go through this. Look at your friend over there, all set to die with you. It seems you're both going to live, though. Things sometimes are not so easy as dying young-- still work to do, you two. Here, drink this milk, it will blunt the poison in your stomach. Good, like this. You over there, too, drink the rest. Here comes my mallow poultice. Too hot? No, quite right. It will absorb more of the poison from the wound. Lay back, my lord, your friend is here, recovering. Keep breathing, the both of you, while I prepare the theriac infusion. Puncteus, Foemina, Aurora, Lucis Solaris, Aries, Potestas, Templum... I hope there's no priest near here listening... Ablatalba Blatalb latal ata t, for the power of the poison be the poison dissolved. This should do. This should do nicely."  
He changes the mallow poultice for a cloth soaked in the yarrow decoction, wiping at the wound until the bleeding stops. He dries the skin carefully, then sprinkles theriac powder liberally on it, covers with a square of the softest Syrian woven cotton, and bandages. The rest of the powder he mixes with more milk, and gives it to Horatio to drink.  
"No question, sir. He won't make it without you either. He'll have his dose when \*I\* say he needs it. Drink, now. Like this. You'll be fine. You'll both be fine, by Trismegiston, or there's no justice in this world."

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