Narrator
It was a chilly November evening. William Shakespeare's play The Tempest, full of music, magic and monsters, is being performed for the first time. King James I and the Queen are having dinner while they watch.

King James
I do like a good play... mmm... and this meat is delicious - bring me more of that pickle... Mmmm... I love a bit of pickle with my dinner... and a nice glass of wine...

Queen
Don't you think you've had enough wine, dear?

King James
Oh do be quiet dear: I can't hear the actors. Now, Mr Shakespeare, is that a King I see on the stage?

Will
Your Majesty, that is King Alonso of Naples. He is lost on a magical island.

King James
And who is this fellow in the jester's costume?

Will
Your Majesty, that is Trinculo. He drinks a lot, and plans to murder people.

King James
A drunken jester? Murder? No good will come of it... does the King know about this?

Will
Yes, your Majesty. Now, the King is going to find Trinculo - in a drunken mess. Your Majesty might care to listen...

King James I
Ooh yes, yes, I want to hear this, be quiet everybody.
Alonso
How camest thou in this pickle?

Robert Harley as Trinculo
I have been in such a pickle since I saw you last that, I fear me, will never out of my bones: I shall not fear fly-blowing.

King James I
Hahaha! He's in a pickle! I like it, Will, very good, very good!

Narrator
We'll leave them there for now. Pickles are a very messy food, made from fruit and vegetables, crushed and preserved in vinegar and spices - sometimes with alcohol too. When Trinculo says he is in a pickle, he's probably saying that he is very drunk - but he's also got himself into a mess - a very difficult situation. Nowadays, when someone has drunk a lot of alcohol, they can say: I'm pickled - and when they've got problems, they can say: I'm in a pickle. Take The Hunger Games actor Liam Hemsworth, who said:

Clip 1
Most of the time if I'm in a pickle I'll call one of my brothers. They've usually got somewhat uplifting advice.

Clip 2
Ooh, you're in a pickle with those bags aren't you? Let me help.

King James I
Now Mr Shakespeare, sit down and eat with us. Have some cold meat!

Servant
Anything with that?

Will
Hmmm… To pickle, or not to pickle: that is the question.