

William Shakespeare's

Hamlet

Adapted by

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ACT I, SCENE I

Enter HORATIO and HAMLET, severally.

Hamlet L, Horatio R, sc

HORATIO

Hail to your lordship!

HAMLET

I am glad to see you well:
Horatio,--or I do forget myself.

HORATIO

The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

REGRE

HAMLET

~~Sir~~, my good friend; I'll change that name with you:
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?

HAMLET

~~I am very glad to see you. Good even.~~
~~But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?~~

HORATIO

A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAMLET

I would not hear your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself: I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?

HORATIO

My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

HAMLET

I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

HORATIO

Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

HAMLET

Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father!--methinks I see my father.

HORATIO

Where, my lord?

HAMLET

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

HORATIO

I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

HAMLET

He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.
We'll have a speech straight: come, give us a taste
of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

HAMLET records the speech on a tape-recorder.

HORATIO

To be, or not to be--

HAMLET

Aye, there's the point.

HORATIO

To Die, to sleep...

HAMLET

Is that all?

HORATIO

Aye, all.

HAMLET

No, to sleep, to dream--

HORATIO

Aye, mary, there it goes,
For in that dream of death, when we awake,
And borne before an everlasting Judge,
From whence no passenger ever retur'nd,
The undiscovered country, at whose sight
The happy smile, and the accursed damn'd.

HAMLET

But for this, the joyful hope of this,
 Whol'd bear the scorns and flattery of the world,
 Scorned by the right rich, the rich cursed of the poor?

HORATIO

The widow being oppressed, the orphan wrong'd,
 The taste of hunger, or a tyrant's reign,
 And thousand more calamities besides,
 To grunt and sweat under this weary life,
 When that he may his full Quietus make,
 With a bare bodkin--

HAMLET

Who would this endure,
 But for a hope of something after death?

HORATIO

Which puzzles the brain, and doth confound the sense,
 Which makes us rather bear those evils we have,
 Than fly to others that we know not of.

HAMLET

Aye, that. O, this conscience makes cowards of us all.

UL

SCENE II.

Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, LAERTES, and OPHELIA.

R

KING CLAUDIUS

Start line on entrance

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
 The memory be green, and that it us befitted
 To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
 To be contracted in one brow of woe,
 Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
 That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
 Together with remembrance of ourselves.
 Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
 Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,--
 With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage--
 Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
 Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
 With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
 And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
 And loose your voice: what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,

C

That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
 The head is not more native to the heart,
 The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
 Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
 What wouldest thou have, Laertes?

LAERTES

My dread lord,
 Your leave and favour to return to France;
 From whence though willingly I came to Denmark
 To show my duty in your coronation,
 My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France
 And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

KING CLAUDIUS

Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

LORD POLONIUS

He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
 By laboursome petition, and at last
 Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:
 I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

KING CLAUDIUS

Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,
 And thy best graces spend it at thy will!
 But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,--

HAMLET

[*Aside*] A little more than kin, and less than kind.

KING CLAUDIUS

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET

Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
 And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
 Do not for ever with thy vailed lids
 Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
 Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,
 Passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET

Ay, madam, it is common.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET

Seems, madam! nay it is; I know not 'seems.'
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:
But I have that within which passeth show;
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING CLAUDIUS

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father:
But, you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his: but to persevere
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief;
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
To reason most absurd--We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father: for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne;
And with no less nobility of love
Than that which dearest father bears his son,
Do I impart toward you. For your intent Applause
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire:
And we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

HAMLET

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

KING CLAUDIUS

Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;

Exeunt all but HAMLET

R

Hamlet urges Horatio off

HAMLET

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month--
Let me not think on't--Frailty, thy name is woman!--
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears:--why she, even she--
O, God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer--married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules: within a month:
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not nor it cannot come to good:
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

Direct to audience

Walk up the aisle?

Exit

L

SCENE III. A room in Polonius' house.*Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA***R****LAERTES**

My necessaries are embark'd: farewell:
 And, sister, as the winds give benefit
 And convey is assistant, do not sleep,
 But let me hear from you.

OPHELIA

Do you doubt that?

Reading love letters?

LAERTES

For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour,
 Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
 Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
 The perfume and suppliance of a minute; No more.

OPHELIA

No more but so?

LAERTES

Think it no more;
 Perhaps he loves you now, but you must fear,
 His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
 For he himself is subject to his birth:
 He may not, as unvalued persons do,
 Carve for himself; for on his choice depends
 The safety and health of this whole state;
 Then if he says he loves you,
 It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
 As he in his particular act and place
 May give his saying deed; which is no further
 Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
 Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
 If with too credent ear you list his songs,
 Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
 To his unmaster'd importunity.
 Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister.

OPHELIA

I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
 As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
 Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;

Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads.

LAERTES

O, fear me not.
I stay too long: but here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS

R

LORD POLONIUS

Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!
And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Beware of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be.
This above all: to thine ownself be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!

Board?

Cash?

LAERTES

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.
Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well
What I have said to you.

OPHELIA

'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

LAERTES

Farewell.

Exit

L

LORD POLONIUS

What is't, Ophelia, ~~be~~ hath said to you?

OPHELIA

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

LORD POLONIUS

Marry, well bethought:

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous:
If it be so, as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution, I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.
What is between you? give me up the truth.

[Letters?](#)

OPHELIA

He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.

LORD POLONIUS

Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl.
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

OPHELIA

I do not know, my lord, what I should think. [Submissive or unruly?](#)

LORD POLONIUS

Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby;
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;
Or you'll tender me a fool.

OPHELIA

My lord, he hath importuned me with love
In honourable fashion--

LORD POLONIUS

Go to, go to.

OPHELIA

--And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven--

LORD POLONIUS

Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,

Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,
 You must not take for fire. From this time
 Be somewhat scanner of your maiden presence;
 Set your entreatments at a higher rate
 Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,
 Believe so much in him, that he is young
 And with a larger tether may he walk
 Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,
 Do not believe his vows. This is for all:
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
 Have you so slander any moment leisure,
 As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.

OPHELIA

I shall obey, my lord.

Exeunt

R

SCENE V.

Enter HAMLET. Hamlet listens to tape-recorder.

L

[*voice-over*]

HORATIO

To be, or not to be--

HAMLET

Aye, there's the point.

HORATIO

To Die, to sleep...

HAMLET

Is that all?

HORATIO

Aye, all.

HAMLET

No, to sleep, to dream--

HORATIO

Aye, mary, there it goes,
 For in that dream of death...

Static.

Ghost

Mark me.

HAMLET

I will. Response, then reaction

Drop script

P

Ghost

My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

HAMLET

Alas, poor ghost!

Ghost

Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

HAMLET

Speak; I am bound to hear.

Ghost

So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAMLET

What?

Ghost

I am thy father's spirit. List, list, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love--

HAMLET

O God!

Ghost

Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET

Murder!

Ghost

Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

HAMLET

Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift
 As meditation or the thoughts of love,
 May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost

'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
 A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
 Is by a forged process of my death
 Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,
 The serpent that did sting thy father's life
 Now wears his crown.

HAMLET

O my prophetic soul!
 My uncle!

Ghost

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
 With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,--
 O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
 So to seduce!--won to his shameful lust
 The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen:
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
 Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
 With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
 And in the porches of my ears did pour
 The leperous distilment.
 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd,
 No reckoning made, but sent to my account
 With all my imperfections on my head:
O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
 A couch for luxury and damned incest.
 But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
 Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
 Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember **me.**

Holding tape recorder; move into audience

**HAMLET**

O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?
 And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my heart;

Enter HORATIO, unseen.

R

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
 But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee!
 Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
 In this distracted globe. Remember thee!
 Yea, from the table of my memory
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
 That youth and observation copied there;
 And thy commandment all alone shall live
 Within the book and volume of my brain,
 Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!
 O most pernicious woman!
 O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
 My tables,--**meet it is I set it down,**
 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
 At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark:

Writing.

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;
 It is 'Adieu, adieu! **remember me!**' Hamlet starts to exit
 I have sworn 't.

HORATIO

What news, my lord?

HAMLET

O, wonderful!

HORATIO

Good my lord, tell it.

HAMLET

No; you'll reveal it.

HORATIO

O day and night, but this is wondrous **strange!**

HAMLET

And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
 There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
 Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come;
 Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
 How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,

As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
 To put an antic disposition on,
 That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
 With arms encumber'd thus, or this headshake,
 Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
 As 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, an if we would,'
 Or 'If we list to speak,' or 'There be, an if they might,'
 Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
 That you know aught of me: this not to do,
 So grace and mercy at your most need help you, Swear.

HORATIO **swears.**

~~Let us go in together;~~
 And still your finger on your lips, I pray.
 The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
 That ever I was born to set it right!

Horatio L

Exeunt

Ophelia enters R. Pantomime c

ACT II

SCENE I. Enter POLONIUS and OPHELIA **Ophelia cries out.**

POLONIUS

R

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

OPHELIA

0, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

LORD POLONIUS

With what, i' the name of God?

OPHELIA

My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
 Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced;
 No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
 Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle;
 Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
 And with a look so piteous in purport
 As if he had been loosed out of hell
 To speak of horrors,--he comes before me.

LORD POLONIUS

Mad for thy love?

OPHELIA

My lord, I do not know;
But truly, I do fear it.

LORD POLONIUS

What said he?

OPHELIA

He took me by the wrist and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
At last, a little shaking of mine arm
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being: that done, he lets me go:
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o' doors he went without their helps,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

LORD POLONIUS

Come, go with me: I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love.
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

OPHELIA

No, my good lord, but, as you did command,
I did repel his fetters and denied
His access to me.

LORD POLONIUS

That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted him: I fear'd he did but trifle,
And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!
Come, go we to the king:
This must be known.

Exeunt L

SCENE II. A room in the castle.

Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

R

KING CLAUDIUS

Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!
 Something have you heard
 Of Hamlet's transformation; so call it,
 Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man
 Resembles that it was. What it should be,
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
 So much from the understanding of himself,
 I cannot dream of: I entreat you both
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
 Some little time: so by your companies
 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,
 Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
 That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you;
 And sure I am two men there are not living
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
 To show us so much gentry and good will
 As to expend your time with us awhile,
 Your visitation shall receive such thanks
 As fits a king's remembrance.

ROSENCRANTZ

Both your majesties
 Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
 Put your dread pleasures more into command
 Than to entreaty.

GUILDENSTERN

But we both obey,
 And here give up ourselves, in the full bent
 To lay our service freely at your feet,
 To be commanded.

KING CLAUDIUS

Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz:
 And I beseech you instantly to visit

My too much changed son.

GUILDENSTERN

Heavens make our presence and our practises
Pleasant and helpful to him!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Ay, amen!

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN.

R

Enter POLONIUS and OPHELIA.

L

KING CLAUDIUS

Thou still hast been the father of good news?

LORD POLONIUS

Have I, my lord? I assure my good liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious king:
And I do think, or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As it hath used to do, that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

KING CLAUDIUS

O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

[*Aside*] I doubt it is no other but the main;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

KING CLAUDIUS

Well, we shall sift him.

LORD POLONIUS

My liege, and madam, to expostulate
What majesty should be, what duty is,
Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
Were nothing but to waste night, day and time.
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief: your noble son is mad:
Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,
What is't but to be nothing else but mad?
But let that go.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

More matter, with less art.

LORD POLONIUS

Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
 That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true 'tis pity;
 And pity 'tis true: a foolish figure;
 But farewell it, for I will use no art.
 Mad let us grant him, then: and now remains
 That we find out the cause of this effect,
 Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
 For this effect defective comes by cause:
 Thus it remains, and the remainder thus. Perpend.
 I have a daughter--have while she is mine--
 Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
 Hath given me this: now gather, and surmise.

Reads

'To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most
 beautified Ophelia,'-- Prop: love note
 That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is
 a vile phrase: but you shall hear. Thus:

Reads

'In her excellent white bosom, these, & c.'

OPHELIA snatches letter.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Came this from Hamlet to her?

LORD POLONIUS

Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.

OPHELIA [*reading*]

'Doubt thou the stars are fire;
 Doubt that the sun doth move;
 Doubt truth to be a liar;
 But never doubt I love.
 'O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers;
 I have not art to reckon my groans: but that
 I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.
 'Thine evermore most dear lady, whilst
 this machine is to him, HAMLET.'

KING CLAUDIUS

But how hath she
Received his love?

LORD POLONIUS

What do you think of me?

KING CLAUDIUS

As of a man faithful and honourable.

LORD POLONIUS

I would fain prove so. But what might you think,
When I had seen this hot love on the wing--
If I had play'd the desk or table-book,
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;
What might you think? No, I went round to work,
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;
This must not be:' and then I precepts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort;
And he, repulsed--a short tale to make--
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,
Into the madness wherein now he raves.

KING CLAUDIUS

Do you think 'tis this?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

It may be, very like.

LORD POLONIUS

Hath there been such a time--I'd fain know that--
That I have positively said 'Tis so,'
When it proved otherwise?

KING CLAUDIUS

Not that I know.

LORD POLONIUS

[*Pointing to his head and shoulder*]
Take this from this, if this be otherwise:
If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed

Within the centre.

KING CLAUDIUS

How may we try it further?

LORD POLONIUS

You know, sometimes he walks four hours together
Here in the lobby.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

So he does indeed.

LORD POLONIUS

At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him:
Be you and I behind an arras then;
Mark the encounter: if he love her not
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.

KING CLAUDIUS

We will try it.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

LORD POLONIUS

Away, I do beseech you, both away:
I'll board him presently.

Exeunt KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, and Attendants

R

Enter HAMLET, reading [Script](#)

L

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

HAMLET

Well, God-a-mercy.

LORD POLONIUS

Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET

Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

LORD POLONIUS

Not I, my lord.

HAMLET

Then I would you were so honest a man.

LORD POLONIUS

Honest, my lord!

HAMLET

Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be
one man picked out of ten thousand.

LORD POLONIUS

That's very true, my lord.

HAMLET

For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a
god kissing carrion,--Have you a daughter?

LORD POLONIUS

I have, my lord.

HAMLET

Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a
blessing: but not as your daughter may conceive.
Friend, look to 't.

LORD POLONIUS

[*Aside*] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter.
What do you read, my lord?

HAMLET

Words, words, words.

LORD POLONIUS

What is the matter, my lord?

HAMLET

Between who?

LORD POLONIUS

I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

HAMLET

Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here

that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

LORD POLONIUS

[*Aside*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't.
Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

HAMLET

Into my grave.

LORD POLONIUS

Indeed, that is out o' the air.
[*Aside*] How pregnant sometimes his replies are!
My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

HAMLET

You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal: except my life, except my life, except my life.

Exit POLONIUS

R

HAMLET

These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

R

GUILDENSTERN

My honoured lord!

ROSENCRANTZ

My most dear lord!

HAMLET

My excellent good friends! How dost thou,
Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

ROSENCRANTZ

As the indifferent children of the earth.

GUILDENSTERN

Happy, in that we are not over-happy;
On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

HAMLET

Nor the soles of her shoe?

ROSENCRANTZ

Neither, my lord.

HAMLET

Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of
her favours?

GUILDENSTERN

'Faith, her privates we.

HAMLET

In the secret parts of fortune? O, most true; she
is a strumpet. What's the news?

ROSENCRANTZ

None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

HAMLET

Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true.
Let me question more in particular: what have you,
my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune,
that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN

Prison, my lord!

HAMLET

Denmark's a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ

Then is the world one.

HAMLET

A goodly one; in which there are many confines,
wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

ROSENCRANTZ

We think not so, my lord.

HAMLET

Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ

Why then, your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

HAMLET

O God, I could be bounded in a nut shell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

ROSENCRANTZ

To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

HAMLET

Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

GUILDENSTERN

What should we say, my lord?

HAMLET

Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ

To what end, my lord?

HAMLET

That you must teach me. Be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

ROSENCRANTZ

[*Aside to GUILDENSTERN*] What say you?

HAMLET

[*Aside*] Nay, then, I have an eye of you.-- If you love me, hold not off.

GUILDENSTERN

My lord, we were sent for.

HAMLET

I will tell you why; I have of late--but
wherefore I know not--lost all my mirth, forgone all
custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily
with my disposition that this goodly frame, the
earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most
excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave
o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted
with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to
me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.
What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason!
how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how
express and admirable! in action how like an angel!
in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the
world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me,
what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not
me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling
you seem to say so.

ROSENCRANTZ

My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

HAMLET

Why did you laugh then, when I said 'man delights not me'?

ROSENCRANTZ

To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what
lenten entertainment the players shall receive from
you: we coted them on the way; and hither are they
coming, to offer you service.

HAMLET

He that plays the king shall be welcome. What players are they?

ROSENCRANTZ

Even those you were wont to take delight in, the
tragedians of the city.

Flourish of trumpets within.

HAMLET

Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore: but my
uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

GUILDENSTERN

In what, my dear lord?

HAMLET

I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Enter POLONIUS

R

LORD POLONIUS

Well be with you, gentlemen!

HAMLET

Hark you, Guildenstern; and you too: at each ear a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. You say right, sir: o' Monday morning; 'twas so indeed.

LORD POLONIUS

My lord, I have news to tell you.

HAMLET

My lord, I have news to tell you.
When Roscius was an actor in Rome,--

LORD POLONIUS

The actors are come hither, my lord.

HAMLET

Buz, buz!

LORD POLONIUS

The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited.

HAMLET

O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

LORD POLONIUS

What a treasure had he, my lord?

HAMLET

Why,
'One fair daughter and no more,
The which he loved passing well.'

LORD POLONIUS

[*Aside*] Still on my daughter.

HAMLET

Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

LORD POLONIUS

If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter
that I love passing well.

HAMLET

Nay, that follows not.

LORD POLONIUS

What follows, then, my lord?

HAMLET

Why,
'As by lot, God wot,'
and then, you know,
'It came to pass, as most like it was,'--
the first row of the pious chanson will show you
more; for look, where my abridgement comes.

Enter four or five Players

L

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad
to see thee well. Welcome, good friends.

We'll have a speech straight: come, give us a taste
of your quality; come, a passionate speech. Record speech?

First Player

What speech, my lord?

HAMLET

I heard thee speak me a speech once--an excellent play, well
digested in the scenes, set down with as much
modesty as cunning. One speech in it I
chiefly loved: 'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido; and
thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of
Priam's slaughter: if it live in your memory, begin

at this line: let me see, let me see--
 'The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,'--
 it is not so:--it begins with Pyrrhus:--
 'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
 Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
 When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
 Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
 With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
 Now is he total gules; horridly trick'd
 With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
 Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
 That lend a tyrannous and damned light
 To their lord's murder: roasted in wrath and fire,
 And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
 With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
 Old grandsire Priam seeks.'
 So, proceed you.

Poorly

Shatneresque?

LORD POLONIUS

'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and
 good discretion.

First Player

'Anon he finds him
 Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
 Repugnant to command: unequal match'd,
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;
 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
 The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
 Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword,
 Which was declining on the milky head
 Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:
 So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,
 And like a neutral to his will and matter,
 Did nothing.
 But, as we often see, against some storm,
 A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
 The bold winds speechless and the orb below
 As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
 Doth rend the region, so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
 Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work;
 And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
 On Mars's armour forged for proof eterne

With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.

LORD POLONIUS

This is too long.

HAMLET

It shall to the barber's, with your beard. Prithee,
say on: he's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he
sleeps: say on: come to Hecuba.

First Player

'But who, O, who had seen the mobled queen--'

HAMLET

'The mobled queen?'

LORD POLONIUS

That's good; 'mobled queen' is good.

First Player

'Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames
With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up;
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced:
But if the gods themselves did see her then
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made,
Unless things mortal move them not at all,
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
And passion in the gods.'

LORD POLONIUS

Look, whether he has not turned his colour and has
tears in's eyes. Pray you, no more.

HAMLET

'Tis well: I'll have thee speak out the rest soon.
Good my lord, will you see the players well
bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; for
they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the
time: after your death you were better have a bad

epitaph than their ill report while you live.

LORD POLONIUS

My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

HAMLET

God's bodykins, man, much better: use every man
after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?
Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less
they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty.

LORD POLONIUS

Come, sirs.

HAMLET

Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow.

Exit POLONIUS with all the Players but the First

R

Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the
Murder of Gonzago?

First Player

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need,
study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which
I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

First Player

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him
not.

Exit First Player

R

My good friends, I'll leave you till night: you are
welcome to Elsinore.

ROSENCRANTZ

Good my lord!

HAMLET

Ay, so, God be wi' ye;

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

R

Now I am alone.
 O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
 Is it not monstrous that this player here,
 But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
 Could force his soul so to his own conceit
 That from her working all his visage wann'd,
 Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
 A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
 With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
 For Hecuba!
 What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
 That he should weep for her? What would he do,
 Had he the motive and the cue for passion
 That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
 And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
 Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
 Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
 The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,
 A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
 Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
 And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
 Upon whose property and most dear life
 A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
 Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
 Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
 Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,
 As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?
 Ha! 'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be
 But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall
 To make oppression bitter, or ere this
 I should have fatted all the region kites
 With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!
 Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
 Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
 That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
 Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
 Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
 And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
 A scullion! Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain!
 Hum, I have heard
 That guilty creatures sitting at a play

Have by the very cunning of the scene
 Been struck so to the soul that presently
 They have proclaim'd their malefactions;
 For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
 With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
 Play something like the murder of my father
 Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;
 I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,
 I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
 May be the devil: and the devil hath power
 To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
 Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
 As he is very potent with such spirits,
 Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds
 More relative than this: the play 's the thing
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

Exit

L

ACT III

SCENE I.

Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN R

KING CLAUDIUS

And can you, by no drift of circumstance,
 Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
 Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
 With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

ROSENCRANTZ

He does confess he feels himself distracted;
 But from what cause he will by no means speak.

GUILDENSTERN

Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,
 But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
 When we would bring him on to some confession
 Of his true state.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Did he receive you well?

ROSENCRANTZ

Most like a gentleman.

GUILDENSTERN

But with much forcing of his disposition.

ROSENCRANTZ

Niggard of question; but, of our demands,
Most free in his reply.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Did you assay him?
To any pastime?

ROSENCRANTZ

Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
We o'er-raught on the way: of these we told him;
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it: they are about the court,
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

LORD POLONIUS

'Tis most true:
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties
To hear and see the matter.

KING CLAUDIUS

With all my heart; and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclined.
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

ROSENCRANTZ

We shall, my lord.

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

L

KING CLAUDIUS

Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia: Her father and myself
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge,
And gather by him, as he is behaved,

If 't be the affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

I shall obey you.
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness: so shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again.

OPHELIA

Madam, I wish it may.

Exit QUEEN GERTRUDE

R

LORD POLONIUS

Ophelia, walk you here. (Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves.)

Ophelia at UR; hides behind pillar duri

To OPHELIA

Read on this book;
That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,--
'Tis too much proved--that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.
I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord.

Book? Love letters hidden inside?

Exeunt KING CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS

R

Enter HAMLET, listening to tape-recorder.

[*voice-over*]

HORATIO

To be, or not to be--

HAMLET

Aye, there's the point.

HAMLET shuts off tape-recorder.

HAMLET

--No, that is the question:
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
 And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
 No more; and by a sleep to say we end
 The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
 To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
 Must give us pause: there's the respect
 That makes calamity of so long life;
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office and the spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make
 With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death,
 The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
 No traveller returns, puzzles the will
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have
 Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
 And enterprises of great pith and moment
 With this regard their currents turn awry,
 And lose the name of action.--Soft you now!
 The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
 Be all my sins remember'd.

[Whiteboard?](#)

OPHELIA

Good my lord,
 How does your honour for this many a day?

HAMLET

I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

OPHELIA

My lord, I have remembrances of yours,

That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

HAMLET

No, not I;
I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA

My honour'd lord, you know right well you did;
And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed
As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,
Take these again; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

HAMLET

Ha, ha! are you honest?

OPHELIA

My lord?

HAMLET

Are you fair?

OPHELIA

What means your lordship?

HAMLET

That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should
admit no discourse to your beauty.

OPHELIA

Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than
with honesty?

HAMLET

Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner
transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the
force of honesty can translate beauty into his
likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the
time gives it proof. I did love you once.

OPHELIA

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAMLET

You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

OPHELIA

I was the more deceived.

HAMLET

Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

OPHELIA

At home, my lord.

HAMLET

Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

OPHELIA

O, help him, you sweet heavens!

HAMLET

If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell.

OPHELIA

O heavenly powers, restore him!

HAMLET

I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves

another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and
 nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness
 your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath
 made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages:
 those that are married already, all but one, shall
 live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a
 nunnery, go.

Exit L

OPHELIA

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
 The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword;
 The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!
 And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
 That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
 Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
 Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;
 That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
 Blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me,
 To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Re-enter KING CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS R

KING CLAUDIUS

Love! his affections do not that way tend;
 Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
 Was not like madness. There's something in his soul,
 O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;
 And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
 Will be some danger: which for to prevent,
 I have in quick determination
 Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England,
 For the demand of our neglected tribute.
 What think you on't?

LORD POLONIUS

It shall do well: but yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia!
 You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;
 We heard it all. My lord, do as you please;
 But, if you hold it fit, after the play
 Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
 To show his grief: let her be round with him;
 And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear

Of all their conference. If she find him not,
To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

KING CLAUDIUS

It shall be so:
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.

Exeunt

R

SCENE II.

Enter HAMLET and Players

L

HAMLET

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumbshows and noise: pray you, avoid it.

Pedantic advice delivered DC; actor

First Player

I warrant your honour.

HAMLET

Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so

strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

First Player

I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

HAMLET

O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.

Exeunt Players

L

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN

R

How now, my lord! Will the king hear this piece of work?

LORD POLONIUS

And the queen too, and that presently.

HAMLET

Bid the players make haste.

L

Exit POLONIUS

Will you two help to hasten them?

ROSENCRANTZ GUILDENSTERN

We will, my lord.

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

L

HAMLET

What ho! Horatio!

Enter HORATIO

R

HORATIO

Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAMLET

Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

HORATIO

O, my dear lord,--

HAMLET

Nay, do not think I flatter;
Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.
There is a play to-night before the king;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death:
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
Observe mine uncle: if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that I have heard,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.

HORATIO

Well, my lord.

HAMLET

They are coming to the play; I must be idle:
Get you a place.

*A flourish. Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ,
GULDENSTERN, and oth*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

How fares our cousin Hamlet?

R or L; take seats in audience; nobl

HAMLET

Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish: I eat
the air, promise-crammed: you cannot feed capons so.

KING CLAUDIUS

I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words
are not mine.

HAMLET

No, nor mine now.

To POLONIUS

My lord, you played once i' the university, you say?

LORD POLONIUS

That did I, my lord; and was accounted a good actor.

HAMLET

What did you enact?

LORD POLONIUS

I did enact Julius Caesar: I was killed i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me.

HAMLET

It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. Be the players ready?

ROSENCRANTZ

Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAMLET

No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

LORD POLONIUS

[To KING CLAUDIUS] O, ho! do you mark that?

HAMLET

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

Lying down at OPHELIA's feet

OPHELIA

No, my lord.

HAMLET

I mean, my head upon your lap?

OPHELIA

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

Do you think I meant country matters?

OPHELIA

I think nothing, my lord.

HAMLET

That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

OPHELIA

What is, my lord?

HAMLET

Nothing.

OPHELIA

You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET

Who, I?

OPHELIA

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

What should a man do
but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my
mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

OPHELIA

Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

HAMLET

So long? O heavens! die two months ago,
and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope
a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year!

Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters L

Music? Joey on Mandolin?

Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly; the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The

Props: poison bottle, crown, gi

Masks?

Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love

Exeunt

L

OPHELIA

What means this, my lord?

HAMLET

Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

OPHELIA

Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue

L

HAMLET

We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

OPHELIA

Will he tell us what this show meant?

HAMLET

Ay, or any show that you'll show him: be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

OPHELIA

You are naught, you are naught: I'll mark the play.

Prologue (Lucianus)

For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.

Exit

L

HAMLET

Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

OPHELIA

'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET

As woman's love.

Enter two Players, King and Queen L

Player King

Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round
 Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground,
 And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen
 About the world have times twelve thirties been,
 Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
 Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

Player Queen

So many journeys may the sun and moon
 Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
 But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
 So far from cheer and from your former state,
 That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
 Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:
 For women's fear and love holds quantity;
 In neither aught, or in extremity.

Player King

'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
 My operant powers their functions leave to do:
 And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
 Honour'd, beloved; and haply one as kind
 For husband shalt thou--

Player Queen

O, confound the rest!

Such love must needs be treason in my breast:
 In second husband let me be accurst!
 None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

HAMLET

[*Aside*] Wormwood, wormwood.

Player Queen

A second time I kill my husband dead,
 When second husband kisses me in bed.

Player King

I do believe you think what now you speak;
 But what we do determine oft we break.
 What to ourselves in passion we propose,
 The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
 So think thou wilt no second husband wed;

But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

Player Queen

Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!
 Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
 Each opposite that blanks the face of joy
 Meet what I would have well and it destroy!
 Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
 If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

HAMLET

If she should break it now!

Player King

'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile;
 My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
 The tedious day with sleep.

Sleeps

Player Queen

Sleep rock thy brain,
 And never come mischance between us twain!

Exit

L

HAMLET

Madam, how like you this play?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

The lady protests too much, methinks.

HAMLET

O, but she'll keep her word.

KING CLAUDIUS

Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in 't?

HAMLET

No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence
 i' the world.

KING CLAUDIUS

What do you call the play?

HAMLET

The Mouse-trap. This play
 is the image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is
 the duke's name; his wife, Baptista: you shall see
 anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: but what o'
 that? your majesty and we that have free souls, it
 touches us not.

L

Enter LUCIANUS

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

OPHELIA

You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

HAMLET

I could interpret between you and your love, if I
 could see the puppets dallying. Begin, murderer;
 pox, leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come:
 'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.'

LUCIANUS

Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;
 Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
 Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
 With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
 Thy natural magic and dire property,
 On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears]

HAMLET

He poisons him i' the garden for's estate. His
 name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and writ in
 choice Italian: you shall see anon how the murderer
 gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

OPHELIA

The king rises.

HAMLET

What, frightened with false fire!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

How fares my lord?

LORD POLONIUS
Give o'er the play.

Players react

KING CLAUDIUS
Give me some light: away!

Servant turns on house lights, lower

All
Lights, lights, lights!

Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO

Players L and nobles R

HAMLET
O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

HORATIO
Very well, my lord.

HAMLET
Upon the talk of the poisoning?

HORATIO
I did very well note him.

HAMLET
Ah, ha! Come, some music! come, the recorders!
For if the king like not the comedy,
Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.
Come, some music!

Grab recorder

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

R

GUILDENSTERN
Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

HAMLET
Sir, a whole history.

GUILDENSTERN
The king, sir,--

HAMLET
Ay, sir, what of him?

GUILDENSTERN
Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

HAMLET

With drink, sir?

GUILDENSTERN

No, my lord, rather with choler.

HAMLET

Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

GUILDENSTERN

Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame and start not so wildly from my affair.

HAMLET

I am tame, sir: pronounce.

GUILDENSTERN

The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

HAMLET

You are welcome.

GUILDENSTERN

Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment.

HAMLET

Sir, I cannot.

GUILDENSTERN

What, my lord?

HAMLET

Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: my mother, you say,--

ROSENCRANTZ

Then thus she says; your behavior hath struck her

into amazement and admiration.

HAMLET

O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother!

ROSENCRANTZ

She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

HAMLET

We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

ROSENCRANTZ

My lord, you once did love me.

HAMLET

So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

ROSENCRANTZ

Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

HAMLET

Sir, I lack advancement.

ROSENCRANTZ

How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

HAMLET

Ay, but sir, 'While the grass grows,'--the proverb is something musty.

HAMLET picks up a pipe. **Pipe!!!**

Will you play upon this pipe?

GUILDENSTERN

My lord, I cannot.

HAMLET

I pray you.

GUILDENSTERN

Believe me, I cannot.

HAMLET

I do beseech you.

GUILDENSTERN

I know no touch of it, my lord.

HAMLET

'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

GUILDENSTERN

But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

HAMLET

Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.

Enter POLONIUS

R

God bless you, sir!

LORD POLONIUS

My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

HAMLET

Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

LORD POLONIUS

By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

HAMLET

Methinks it is like a weasel.

LORD POLONIUS

It is backed like a weasel.

HAMLET

Or like a whale?

LORD POLONIUS

Very like a whale.

HAMLET

Then I will come to my mother by and by.

LORD POLONIUS

I will say so.

HAMLET

By and by is easily said.

*Exit POLONIUS*R

Leave me, friends.

*Exeunt all but HAMLET*R

Tis now the very witching time of night,
 When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
 Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,
 And do such bitter business as the day
 Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother.
 O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
 The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom:
 Let me be cruel, not unnatural:
 I will speak daggers to her, but use none;
 My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites;
 How in my words soever she be shent,
 To give them seals never, my soul, consent!

*Exit*L

SCENE III.

Enter KING CLAUDIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN R

KING CLAUDIUS

I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
 To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you;
 I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
 And he to England shall along with you:
 The terms of our estate may not endure
 Hazard so dangerous as doth hourly grow
 Out of his lunacies.

GUILDENSTERN

We will ourselves provide:
 Most holy and religious fear it is
 To keep those many many bodies safe
 That live and feed upon your majesty.

ROSENCRANTZ

Never alone
 Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN R

Enter POLONIUS R

LORD POLONIUS

My lord, he's going to his mother's closet:
 Behind the arras I'll convey myself,
 To hear the process. Fare you well, my liege:
 I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
 And tell you what I know.

KING CLAUDIUS

Thanks, dear my lord.

R

Exit POLONIUS

KING CLAUDIUS

O, my offence is rank it smells to heaven;
 It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
 A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
 Though inclination be as sharp as will:
 My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
 And, like a man to double business bound,
 I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
 And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
 Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
 Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
 To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
 But to confront the visage of offence?
 And what's in prayer but this two-fold force,
 To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
 Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;
 My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
 Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder'?
 That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
 Of those effects for which I did the murder,
 My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.
 May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?
 In the corrupted currents of this world
 Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
 And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
 Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above;
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies
 In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
 Try what repentance can: what can it not?
 Yet what can it when one can not repent?
 Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart with strings of steel,
 Be soft as sinews of the newborn babe!
 All may be well.

Retires and kneels

UC; board? Or DC?

Enter HAMLET

L; armed

HAMLET

Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
 And now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven;
 And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd:
 A villain kills my father; and for that,
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send
 To heaven.
 O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
 He took my father grossly, full of bread;
 With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
 And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?
 But in our circumstance and course of thought,
 'Tis heavy with him: and am I then revenged,
 To take him in the purging of his soul,
 When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
 No!
 Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:
 When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
 Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;
 At gaming, swearing, or about some act
 That has no relish of salvation in't;
 Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
 And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
 As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays:
 This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

Exit R

KING CLAUDIUS

[Rising] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
 Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

Exit L

SCENE IV. The Queen's closet.

Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE and POLONIUS R

LORD POLONIUS

He will come straight. Look you lay home to him:
 Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
 And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between
 Much heat and him. I'll sconce me even here.
 Pray you, be round with him.

HAMLET

[Within] Mother, mother, mother!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

I'll warrant you,
Fear me not: withdraw, I hear him coming.

POLONIUS hides behind the arras Pillar R

Enter HAMLET

R

HAMLET

Now, mother, what's the matter?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET

Mother, you have my father much offended.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Why, how now, Hamlet!

HAMLET

What's the matter now?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Have you forgot me?

HAMLET

No, by the rood, not so:
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
And--would it were not so!--you are my mother.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.

HAMLET

Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;
You go not till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!

LORD POLONIUS

[*Behind*] What, ho! help, help, help!

HAMLET

[*Drawing*] How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!

[*Makes a pass through the arras*]

Polonius falls and dies. Stumbles out right

QUEEN GERTRUDE

O me, what hast thou done?

HAMLET

Nay, I know not: is it the king?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAMLET

A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

As kill a king!

HAMLET

Ay, lady, 'twas my word.

Lifts up the array and discovers POLONIUS Closely inspects body

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune.
Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you down,
And let me wring your heart.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

What have I done, that thou darest wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?

HAMLET

Such an act
 That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
 Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
 From the fair forehead of an innocent love
 And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows
 As false as dicers' oaths.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Ay me, what act,
 That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?

HAMLET

Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
 The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
 See, what a grace was seated on this brow;
 Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
 An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
 This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:
 Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
 Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
 You cannot call it love; for at your age
 The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
 And waits upon the judgment: and what judgment
 Would step from this to this? What devil was't
 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
 O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
 If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
 To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
 And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame
 When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn
 And reason panders will.

Props??? Cash???

QUEEN GERTRUDE

O Hamlet, speak no more:
 Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;
 And there I see such black and grained spots
 As will not leave their tinct.

HAMLET

Nay, but to live
 In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,
 Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love
 Over the nasty sty,--

QUEEN GERTRUDE

O, speak to me no more!
These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears;
No more, sweet Hamlet.

HAMLET

A murderer and a villain;
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord--

QUEEN GERTRUDE

No more!

HAMLET

--A king of shreds and patches,--
Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Alas, he's mad!

HAMLET

Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command? O, say!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?
O gentle son, whereon do you look?

HAMLET

On him, on him! Look you, how pale he glares!
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable. Do not look upon me.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

To whom do you speak this?

HAMLET

Do you see nothing there?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

HAMLET

Nor did you nothing hear?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

No, nothing but ourselves.

HAMLET

Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!
My father, in his habit as he lived!
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

This the very coinage of your brain:
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.

HAMLET

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music: it is not madness
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word; which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that mattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks.
Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,
To make them ranker.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

HAMLET

O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence: the next more easy.
Once more, good night:
And when you are desirous to be bless'd,
I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,

[*Pointing to POLONIUS*]

I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,
 To punish me with this and this with me,
 That I must be their scourge and minister.
 I must be cruel, only to be kind:
 Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.
 One word more, good lady.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

What shall I do?

HAMLET

Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
 Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed;
 Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse;
 And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
 Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,
 That I essentially am not in madness,
 But mad in craft.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,
 And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
 What thou hast said to me.

HAMLET

I must to England; you know that?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Alack,

I had forgot: 'tis so concluded on.

HAMLET

There's letters seal'd: and my two schoolfellows,
 Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
 They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
 And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;
 For 'tis the sport to have the engineer
 Hoist with his own petard: and 't shall go hard
 But I will delve one yard below their mines,
 And blow them at the moon: O, 'tis most sweet,
 When in one line two crafts directly meet.
 This man shall set me packing:
 I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.
 Mother, good night. Indeed this counsellor
 Is now most still, most secret and most grave,

Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
 Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.
 Good night, mother.

Exit HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS

R, shut door

ACT IV

SCENE I.

Enter KING CLAUDIUS.

L

KING CLAUDIUS

There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves:
 You must translate: 'tis fit we understand them.
 Where is your son?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night!

KING CLAUDIUS

What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend
 Which is the mightier: in his lawless fit,
 Behind the arras hearing something stir,
~~Whips out his rapier, cries, 'A rat, a rat!'~~
~~And,~~ in this brainish apprehension, kills
 The unseen good old man.

KING CLAUDIUS

It had been so with us, had we been there:
 His liberty is full of threats to all;
 Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
 Where is he gone?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:
 He weeps for what is done.

KING CLAUDIUS

O Gertrude, come away!
 The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
 But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed
 We must, with all our majesty and skill,

Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

R

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:
 Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
 And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:
 Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
 Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

R

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;
 And let them know, both what we mean to do,
 And what's untimely done. O, come away!
 My soul is full of discord and dismay.

Exeunt

L

SCENE II.

Enter HAMLET

R

HAMLET

Safely stowed.

ROSENCRANTZ: GUILDENSTERN:
 [Within] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

HAMLET

What noise? who calls on Hamlet?
 O, here they come.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

R

ROSENCRANTZ

What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

HAMLET

Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

ROSENCRANTZ

Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence
 And bear it to the chapel.

HAMLET

Do not believe it.

ROSENCRANTZ

Believe what?

HAMLET

That I can keep your counsel and not mine own.
Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! what
replication should be made by the son of a king?

ROSENCRANTZ

Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

HAMLET

Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his
rewards, his authorities: when he needs what you have
gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you
shall be dry again.

ROSENCRANTZ

I understand you not, my lord.

HAMLET

I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in a
foolish ear.

ROSENCRANTZ

My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go
with us to the king.

HAMLET

The body is with the king, but the king is not with
the body. The king is a thing--

GUILDENSTERN

A thing, my lord!

HAMLET

Of nothing: bring me to him.

SCENE III.

Enter KING CLAUDIUS, attended

L

KING CLAUDIUS

Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAMLET

At supper.

KING CLAUDIUS

At supper! where?

HAMLET

Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes, but to one table: that's the end.

KING CLAUDIUS

Alas, alas!

HAMLET

A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and cat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

KING CLAUDIUS

What dost you mean by this?

HAMLET

Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

KING CLAUDIUS

Where is Polonius?

HAMLET

In heaven; send hither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

KING CLAUDIUS

Go seek him there.

To some Attendants

Alex?

HAMLET

He will stay till ye come.

Exeunt Attendants

R

KING CLAUDIUS

Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,--
 Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
 For that which thou hast done,--must send thee hence
 With fiery quickness: therefore prepare thyself;
 The bark is ready, and the wind at help,
 The associates tend, and every thing is bent
 For England.

HAMLET

For England!

KING CLAUDIUS

Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET

Good.

KING CLAUDIUS

So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

HAMLET

I see a cherub that sees them. But, come; for
 England! Farewell, dear mother.

KING CLAUDIUS

Thy loving father, Hamlet.

HAMLET

My mother: father and mother is man and wife; man
 and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother. Come, for England!

Exeunt HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, and GULDENSTERN.

L

KING CLAUDIUS

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,

thou mayst not coldly set
 Our sovereign process; which imports at full,
 By letters congruing to that effect,
 The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England.

Exit R

SCENE V.

Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE and HORATIO L

QUEEN GERTRUDE

I will not speak with her.

HORATIO

She is importunate, indeed distract:
 Her mood will needs be pitied.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

What would she have?

HORATIO

She speaks much of her father.
 'Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew
 Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Let her come in.

Exit HORATIO L

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
 Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:
 So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
 It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

Re-enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA L

OPHELIA

Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

How now, Ophelia!

OPHELIA

How should I your true love know
 From another one?
 By his cockle hat and staff,
 And his sandal shoon.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPHELIA

Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

He is dead and gone, lady,
 He is dead and gone;
 At his head a grass-green turf,
 At his heels a stone.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Nay, but, Ophelia,--

OPHELIA

Pray you, mark.

White his shroud as the mountain snow,--

Enter KING CLAUDIUS R

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Alas, look here, my lord.

OPHELIA

Larded with sweet flowers
 Which bewept to the grave did go
 With true-love showers.

KING CLAUDIUS

How do you, pretty lady?

OPHELIA

Well, God 'ild you! They say the owl was a baker's
 daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not
 what we may be. God be at your table!

KING CLAUDIUS

Conceit upon her father.

OPHELIA

Pray you, let's have no words of this; but when they

ask you what it means, say you this:

To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
 All in the morning betime,
 And I a maid at your window,
 To be your Valentine.
 Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,
 And dupp'd the chamber-door;
 Let in the maid, that out a maid
 Never departed more.

KING CLAUDIUS

Pretty Ophelia!

OPHELIA

Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on't:

By Gis and by Saint Charity,
 Alack, and fie for shame!
 Young men will do't, if they come to't;
 By cock, they are to blame.
 Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
 You promised me to wed.
 So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
 An thou hadst not come to my bed.

KING CLAUDIUS

How long hath she been thus?

OPHELIA

I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I
 cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him
 i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it:
 and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my
 coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies;
 good night, good night.

Exit

[L](#)

KING CLAUDIUS

Follow her close; give her good watch,
 I pray you.

Exit HORATIO

[L](#)

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
 All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,
 When sorrows come, they come not single spies

But in battalions. First, her father slain:
 Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
 Of his own just remove: the people muddied,
 Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,
 For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly,
 In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia
 Divided from herself and her fair judgment.
 Last, and as much containing as all these,
 Her brother is in secret come from France;
 Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
 And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
 With pestilent speeches of his father's death.

A noise within Crashing (slammed door?) stage left

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Alack, what noise is this?

KING CLAUDIUS

Where are my soldiers? Let them guard the door.

Noise within

Enter LAERTES, armed.

L

LAERTES

Where is this king? Give me my father!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Calmly, good Laertes.

LAERTES

That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard.

KING CLAUDIUS

What is the cause, Laertes,
 That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?
 Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person:
 There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
 That treason can but peep to what it would,
 Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,
 Why thou art thus incensed. Let him go, Gertrude.
 Speak, man.

LAERTES

Where is my father?

KING CLAUDIUS

Dead.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

But not by him.

KING CLAUDIUS

Let him demand his fill.

LAERTES

How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:
 To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
 I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
 Let come what comes; only I'll be revenged
 Most thoroughly for my father.

KING CLAUDIUS

Good Laertes, Is't writ in your revenge,
 That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
 Winner and loser?

LAERTES

None but his enemies.

KING CLAUDIUS

Will you know them then?

LAERTES

To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms.

Lower guard, hand on shoulc

KING CLAUDIUS

Why, now you speak
 Like a good child and a true gentleman.
 That I am guiltless of your father's death,
 And am most sensible in grief for it,
 It shall as level to your judgment pierce
 As day does to your eye.

Re-enter OPHELIA

L

Visibly mad?

LAERTES

O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt,
 Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!
 Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
 O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
 Should be as mortal as an old man's life?

OPHELIA

They bore him barefaced on the bier;
 Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;
 And in his grave rain'd many a tear:--
 Fare you well, my dove!

LAERTES

Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
 It could not move thus.

OPHELIA

You must sing a-down a-down,
 An you call him a-down-a.
 O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false
 steward, that stole his master's daughter.

LAERTES

This nothing's more than matter.

OPHELIA

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray,
 love, remember: and there is pansies. that's for thoughts.

Props

LAERTES

A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

OPHELIA

There's fennel for you, and columbines: there's rue
 for you; and here's some for me: we may call it
 herb-grace o' Sundays: O you must wear your rue with
 a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you
 some violets, but they withered all when my father
 died: they say he made a good end,--

Sings

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

LAERTES

Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
 She turns to favour and to prettiness.

OPHELIA

And will he not come again?
 And will he not come again?
 No, no, he is dead:
 Go to thy death-bed:
 He never will come again.
 His beard was as white as snow,
 All flaxen was his poll:
 He is gone, he is gone,
 And we cast away moan:
 God ha' mercy on his soul!
 And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' ye.

*Exit*L**LAERTES**

Do you see this, O God?

KING CLAUDIUS

Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
 Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
 Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will.
 And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:
 If by direct or by collateral hand
 They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
 Our crown, our life, and all that we can ours,
 To you in satisfaction; but if not,
 Be you content to lend your patience to us,
 And we shall jointly labour with your soul
 To give it due content.

LAERTES

Let this be so;
 His means of death, his obscure funeral,
 Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
 That I must call't in question.

KING CLAUDIUS

So you shall;
 And where the offense is let the great axe fall.
 I pray you, go with me.

*Exeunt*R

SCENE VI.*Enter HAMLET, led by ROSENCRANTZ and GULDENSTERN*

L Alone or led?

HAMLET

How all occasions do inform against me,
 And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
 If his chief good and market of his time
 Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
 Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
 Looking before and after, gave us not
 That capability and god-like reason
 To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be
 Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
 Of thinking too precisely on the event,
 A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom
 And ever three parts coward, I do not know
 Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do;'
 Sith I have cause and will and strength and means
 To do't. O, from this time forth,
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

Exeunt.

L

SCENE VII.*Enter KING CLAUDIUS and LAERTES*

R

KING CLAUDIUS

Now must your conscience my acquaintance seal,
 And you must put me in your heart for friend,
 Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
 That he which hath your noble father slain
 Pursued my life.

LAERTES

It well appears: but tell me
 Why you proceeded not against these feats,
 So crimeful and so capital in nature.

KING CLAUDIUS

O, for two special reasons;
 The queen his mother
 Lives almost by his looks; and for myself,
 She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,
 That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,

I could not but by her. The other motive,
 Is the great love the general gender bear him;
 Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
 Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
 Convert his gyves to graces.

LAERTES

And so have I a noble father lost;
 A sister driven into desperate terms:
 but my revenge will come.

Enter SERVANT L, with Prop: note

SERVANT

Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:
 This to your majesty; this to the queen.

KING CLAUDIUS

From Hamlet! who brought them?

SERVANT

Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not.

KING CLAUDIUS

Laertes, you shall hear them. Leave us.

Exit SERVANT L

Reads

'High and mighty, You shall know I am set naked on
 your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see
 your kingly eyes: when I shall, first asking your
 pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden
 and more strange return. 'HAMLET.'
 What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?
 If it be so, Laertes--
 Will you be ruled by me?

LAERTES

Ay, my lord;
 So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

KING CLAUDIUS

To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,
 As checking at his voyage, and that he means

No more to undertake it, I will work him
 To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
 Under the which he shall not choose but fall:
 And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,
 But even his mother shall uncharge the practice
 And call it accident.

LAERTES

My lord, I will be ruled;
 The rather, if you could devise it so
 That I might be the organ.

KING CLAUDIUS

It falls right.
 You have been talk'd of since your travel much:
 One made confession of you,
 And gave you such a masterly report
 For art and exercise in your defence
 And for your rapier most especially,
 That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,
 If one could match you. Sir, this report of his
 Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy
 That he could nothing do but wish and beg
 Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.
 Now, out of this,--

LAERTES

What out of this, my lord?

KING CLAUDIUS

Laertes, was your father dear to you?
 Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
 A face without a heart?

LAERTES

Why ask you this?

KING CLAUDIUS

Not that I think you did not love your father;
 But that I know love is begun by time;
 And that I see, in passages of proof,
 Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
 Hamlet comes back: what would you undertake,
 To show yourself your father's son in deed
 More than in words?

LAERTES

To cut his throat i' the church.

KING CLAUDIUS

No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;
 Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
 Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
 Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home:
 We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
 bring you in fine together
 And wager on your heads: he, being remiss,
 Most generous and free from all contriving,
 Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,
 Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
 A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
 Requite him for your father.

LAERTES

I will do't:

And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
 I bought an unction of a mountebank,
 So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
 Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
 Collected from all simples that have virtue
 Under the moon, can save the thing from death
 That is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point
 With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
 It may be death.

KING CLAUDIUS

Let's further think of this. Soft! let me see:
 We'll make a solemn wager on your cunning: I ha't.
 When in your motion you are hot and dry,
 And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him
 A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
 Our purpose may hold there.

Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE

L

How now, sweet queen!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
 So fast they follow; your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

LAERTES

Drown'd! O, where?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
 That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
 There with fantastic garlands did she come
 Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples
 That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
 But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:
 There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
 Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
 When down her weedy trophies and herself
 Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;
 And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up:
 Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes;
 As one incapable of her own distress,
 Or like a creature native and indued
 Unto that element: but long it could not be
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
 Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
 To muddy death.

LAERTES

Alas, then, she is drown'd?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Drown'd, drown'd.

LAERTES

Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
 And therefore I forbid my tears: Adieu, my lord:
 I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
 But that this folly douts it.

Exit

R

KING CLAUDIUS

Let's follow, Gertrude:
 How much I had to do to calm his rage!
 Now fear I this will give it start again.

Exeunt

R

ACT V**SCENE I.**

Enter two Clowns, with spades. L, spades, bones!

First Clown

Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

Second Clown

I tell thee she is: and therefore make her grave straight.

First Clown

How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

Second Clown

Why, 'tis found so.

First Clown

It must be 'se offendendo;' it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three branches: it is, to act, to do, to perform: argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

Props?

Second Clown

Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,--

First Clown

Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good; if the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes,--mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

Second Clown

But is this law?

First Clown

Ay, marry, is't.

Second Clown

Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been
a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o'
Christian burial.

First Clown

Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that
great folk should have countenance in this world to
drown or hang themselves, more than their even
Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient
gentleman but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers:
they hold up Adam's profession.

Second Clown

Was he a gentleman?

First Clown

He was the first that ever bore arms.

Second Clown

Why, he had none.

First Clown

What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the
Scripture? The Scripture says 'Adam digged:'
could he dig without arms? I'll put another
question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the
purpose, confess thyself--

Second Clown

Go to.

First Clown

What is he that builds stronger than either the
mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

Second Clown

The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a
thousand tenants.

First Clown

I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows
does well; but how does it well? it does well to
those that do in: now thou dost ill to say the
gallows is built stronger than the church: argal,
the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.

Second Clown

'Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?'

First Clown

Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

Second Clown

Marry, now I can tell.

First Clown

To't.

Second Clown

Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance

L

First Clown

Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and, when you are asked this question next, say 'a grave-maker: 'the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee in and fetch me a stoup of liquor.

Exit Second Clown

R

He digs and sings

In youth, when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet,
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,
O, methought, there was nothing meet.

HAMLET

Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

HORATIO

Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

HAMLET

'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

First Clown

But age, with his stealing steps,
 Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
 And hath shipped me into the land,
 As if I had never been such.

Throws up a skull

Bones and skulls!

HAMLET

That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once:
 how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were
 Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It
 might be the pate of a politician, which this ass
 now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God,
 might it not?

HORATIO

It might, my lord.

HAMLET

Or of a courtier; which could say 'Good morrow,
 sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?'

First Clown

A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,
 For and a shrouding sheet:
 O, a pit of clay for to be made
 For such a guest is meet.

Throws up another skull

HAMLET

There's another: why may not that be the skull of a
 lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quilletts,
 his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he
 suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the
 sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of
 his action of battery? Hum! I will speak to this
 fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

First Clown

Mine, sir.

O, a pit of clay for to be made
 For such a guest is meet.

HAMLET

I think it be thine, indeed; for thou liest in't.

First Clown

You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not
yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

HAMLET

'Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine:
'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

First Clown

'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away gain, from me to you.

HAMLET

What man dost thou dig it for?

First Clown

For no man, sir.

HAMLET

What woman, then?

First Clown

For none, neither.

HAMLET

Who is to be buried in't?

First Clown

One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

HAMLET

How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the
card, or equivocation will undo us. How long hast
thou been a grave-maker?

First Clown

Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that day
that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

HAMLET

How long is that since?

First Clown

Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it

was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he that is mad, and sent into England.

HAMLET

Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

First Clown

Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

HAMLET

Why?

First Clown

'Twill, a not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

HAMLET

How came he mad?

First Clown

Very strangely, they say.

HAMLET

How strangely?

First Clown

Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

HAMLET

Upon what ground?

First Clown

Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

HAMLET

How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

First Clown

I' faith, if he be not rotten before he die--as we have many pocky corses now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in--he will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

HAMLET

Why he more than another?

First Clown

Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that
he will keep out water a great while; and your water
is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body.
Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth
three and twenty years.

HAMLET

Whose was it?

First Clown

A whoreson mad fellow's it was: whose do you think it was?

HAMLET

Nay, I know not.

First Clown

A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! a' poured a
flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull,
sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

HAMLET

This?

First Clown

E'en that.

HAMLET

Let me see.

Takes the skull

Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow
of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath
borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how
abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rims at
it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know
not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your
gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment,
that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one
now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen?
Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HORATIO

What's that, my lord?

HAMLET

Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i'
the earth?

HORATIO

E'en so.

HAMLET

And smelt so? pah!

Puts down the skull

HORATIO

E'en so, my lord.

HAMLET

To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may
not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander,
till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

HORATIO

'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

HAMLET

No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with
modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: as
thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried,
Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of
earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he
was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?
Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter flaw!
But soft! but soft! ~~aside~~: here comes the king.

Enter Priest, & c. in procession; the Corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following; R
KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, their trains, & c

The queen, the courtiers: who is this they follow?
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken
The corse they follow did with desperate hand
Fordo its own life: 'twas of some estate.

Urn

Couch we awhile, and mark.

Retiring with HORATIO Audience aisle L

LAERTES

What ceremony else?

HAMLET

That is Laertes,
A very noble youth: mark.

LAERTES

What ceremony else?

First Priest

Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
As we have warrantise: her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
Till the last trumpet.

LAERTES

Must there no more be done?

First Priest

No more be done:

We should profane the service of the dead
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

LAERTES

Lay her i' the earth:

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

HAMLET

What, the fair Ophelia!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

Scattering flowers

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;

I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave.

LAERTES

O, treble woe
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

Leaps into the grave

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made.

HAMLET

[Advancing] What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane.

Leaps into the grave

LAERTES

The devil take thy soul!

Grappling with him

HAMLET

Thou pray'st not well.
I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat.

KING CLAUDIUS

Pluck them asunder.

Shovel?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Hamlet, Hamlet!

All

Gentlemen,--

HORATIO

Good my lord, be quiet.

The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave

?

HAMLET

Why I will fight with him upon this theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

O my son, what theme?

HAMLET

I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

KING CLAUDIUS

O, he is mad, Laertes.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

For love of God, forbear him.

HAMLET

'Swounds, show me what thou'l do:
Woul't weep? woul't fight? woul't fast? woul't tear thyself?
Woul't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile?
I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I:
I'll rant as well as thou.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

This is mere madness:
And thus awhile the fit will work on him.

HAMLET

What is the reason that you use me thus?
I loved you ever: but it is no matter;
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew and dog will have his day.

Exit HAMLET and HORATIO

L

KING CLAUDIUS

[To LAERTES]

Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;
We'll put the matter to the present push.
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.

Exeunt R

SCENE II.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO L

HAMLET

So much for this, sir: now shall you see the other;
You do remember all the circumstance?

HORATIO

Remember it, my lord?

HAMLET

In my heart there was a kind of fighting,
That would not let me sleep: methought I lay
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,
And praised be rashness for it, let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall: and that should teach us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.

HORATIO

That is most certain.

HAMLET

Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Groped I to find out them; had my desire.
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew
To mine own room again; making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,--
O royal knavery!--an exact command,
Larded with many several sorts of reasons
Importing Denmark's health and England's too,
With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

HORATIO

Is't possible?

HAMLET

I sat me down,
 Devised a new commission, wrote it fair:
 An earnest conjuration from the king,
 As England was his faithful tributary,
 That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
 Without debatement further, more or less,
 He should the bearers put to sudden death,
 Not shriving-time allow'd.

HORATIO

So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

HAMLET

Why, they did make love to this employment;
 They are not near my conscience; their defeat
 Does by their own insinuation grow:
 'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
 Between the pass and fell incensed points
 Of mighty opposites.

HORATIO

Why, what a king is this!

HAMLET

Does it not, think'st thee, stand me now upon--
 He that hath kill'd my king and whored my mother,
 Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,
 Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
 And with such cozenage--is't not perfect conscience,
 To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be damn'd,
 To let this canker of our nature come
 In further evil?

HORATIO

It must be shortly known to him from England
 What is the issue of the business there.

HAMLET

It will be short: the interim is mine;
 And a man's life's no more than to say 'One.'
 But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
 That to Laertes I forgot myself;
 For, by the image of my cause, I see
 The portraiture of his: I'll court his favours.
 But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me

Into a towering passion.

HORATIO

Peace! who comes here?

Enter  *Messenger*, who hands a letter to Horatio.

R

Reads.

Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.
 You are not ignorant of what excellency Laertes is.
 The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes
 between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you
 three hits: he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it
 would come to immediate trial, if your lordship
 would vouchsafe the answer.

HAMLET

I will walk here in the hall: if it please his
 majesty, 'tis the breathing time of day with me; let
 the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the
 king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can;
 if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

HORATIO

You will lose this wager, my lord.

HAMLET

I do not think so: since he went into France, I
 have been in continual practise: I shall win at the
 odds. But thou wouldest not think how ill all's here
 about my heart: but it is no matter.

HORATIO

If your mind dislike any thing, obey it: I will
 forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

HAMLET

Not a whit, we defy augury: there's a special
 providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now,
 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be
 now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the
 readiness is all: since no man has aught of what he
 leaves, what is't to leave betimes?

Horatio calls in the others.

R

Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, LAERTES, Lords, SERVANT, and Attendants with foils, & c

R

KING CLAUDIUS

Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

KING CLAUDIUS puts LAERTES' hand into HAMLET's

HAMLET

Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong;
 But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.
 This presence knows,
 And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd
 With sore distraction. What I have done,
 That might your nature, honour and exception
 Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
 Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:
 If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
 And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
 Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
 Who does it, then? His madness: if't be so,
 Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
 His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
 Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
 Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
 That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,
 And hurt my brother.

LAERTES

I am satisfied in nature,
 Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
 To my revenge: but in my terms of honour
 I stand aloof; and will no reconciliation,
 Till by some elder masters, of known honour,
 I have a voice and precedent of peace,
 To keep my name ungored. But till that time,
 I do receive your offer'd love like love,
 And will not wrong it.

HAMLET

I embrace it freely;
 And will this brother's wager frankly play.
 Give us the foils.

LAERTES

Come, one for me.

HAMLET

I'll be your foil, Laertes: in mine ignorance
 Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
 Stick fiery off indeed.

LAERTES

You mock me, sir.

HAMLET

No, by this hand.

KING CLAUDIUS

Give them the foils. Cousin Hamlet,
 You know the wager?

HAMLET

Very well, my lord
 Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

KING CLAUDIUS

I do not fear it; I have seen you both:
 But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

LAERTES

This is too heavy, let me see another.

HAMLET

This likes me well. These foils have all a length?

They prepare to play

SERVANT

Ay, my good lord.

KING CLAUDIUS

Set me the stoops of wine upon that table.
 If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
~~Let all the battlements their ordnance fire:~~
 The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;
 And in the cup an union shall he throw,
 Richer than that which four successive kings
 In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups.
 'Now the king drinks to Hamlet.' Come, begin:

Prop

HAMLET

Come on, sir.

LAERTES

Come, my lord.

They play.

HAMLET

One.

LAERTES

No.

HAMLET

Judgment.

SERVANT

A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAERTES

Well; again.

KING CLAUDIUS

Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;
Here's to thy health.

Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within

Give him the cup.

HAMLET

I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile. Come.

They play

Another hit; what say you?

LAERTES

A touch, a touch, I do confess.

KING CLAUDIUS

Our son shall win.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

He's fat, and scant of breath.

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows;
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

HAMLET

Good madam!

KING CLAUDIUS

Gertrude, do not drink.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.

KING CLAUDIUS

[*Aside*] It is the poison'd cup: it is too late.

HAMLET

I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Come, let me wipe thy face.

LAERTES

My lord, I'll hit him now.

KING CLAUDIUS

I do not think't.

LAERTES

[*Aside*] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

HAMLET

Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally.

LAERTES

Say you so? come on.

They play

SERVANT

Nothing, neither way.

LAERTES

Have at you now!

LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then in scuffling, they change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES

KING CLAUDIUS

Part them; they are incensed.

HAMLET

Nay, come, again.

QUEEN GERTRUDE falls

SERVANT

Look to the queen there, ho!

HORATIO

They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

SERVANT

How is't, Laertes?

LAERTES

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

HAMLET

How does the queen?

KING CLAUDIUS

She swounds to see them bleed.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

No, no, the drink, the drink,--O my dear Hamlet,--
The drink, the drink! I am poison'd.

Dies

HAMLET

O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd:
Treachery! Seek it out.

LAERTES

It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;
No medicine in the world can do thee good;
In thee there is not half an hour of life;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practise
Hath turn'd itself on me lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd:
I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.

HAMLET

The point!--envenom'd too!
Then, venom, to thy work.

Stabs KING CLAUDIUS

All

Treason! treason!

KING CLAUDIUS

O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.

HAMLET

Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?

Follow my mother.

KING CLAUDIUS dies

LAERTES

He is justly served;
It is a poison temper'd by himself.
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me.

Dies

HAMLET

Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time--as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest--O, I could tell you--
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

HORATIO

Never believe it:
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane:
Here's yet some liquor left.

HAMLET

Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll have't.
O good Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story. The rest is...

Dies.

HORATIO

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince:
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!