

Act 1, Scene 3 A room in Polonius' house

(*LAERTES and OPHELIA.*)

LAERTES

My necessaries are embarked.* Farewell.
And sister, do not sleep but let me hear from you.

OPHELIA

Do you doubt that?

LAERTES

For Hamlet and the trifling of his favor,* hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
a violet in the youth of primy* nature, forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
the perfume 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 weighed, his will is not his own.
For he is subject to his birth, and 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 honor may sustain, if with too credent* ear you list* his songs,
or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure* open to his unmastered importunity.*
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, and keep you out of the shot and danger of desire.

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 puffed and reckless libertine himself the primrose path of dalliance treads.

LAERTES

O, fear me not.
I stay too long.
Here my father comes.

(*Enter POLONIUS.*)

LORD POLONIUS

Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder* of your sail, and you are stayed* for.

necessaries are embarked - luggage is loaded, *the trifling of his favor* - his frivolous attention,
primy - springtime? sexual?, *credent* - trustful, *list* - listen to, *treasure* - virginity,
importunity - insistent demands, *in the shoulder* - at the back, *stayed* - waited

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.*
 Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,* grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel,
 but do not dull* thy palm with entertainment of* each new hatched, unfledged* comrade.
 Beware of entrance to a quarrel, but being in, bear it that the opposed may beware of thee.
 Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice.
 Costly thy habit* as thy purse can buy, but not expressed in fancy;
 rich, not gaudy, for the apparel oft proclaims the man.
 Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
 for loan oft loses both itself and friend, and borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.*
 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!

LAERTES

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

LORD POLONIUS

The time invites you. Go, your servants tend.

LAERTES

Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well what I have said to you.

OPHELIA

'Tis in my memory locked, and you yourself shall keep the key of it.

LAERTES

Farewell.

(Exit LAERTES.)

LORD POLONIUS

What is it, Ophelia, he 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, I must tell you you do not understand yourself so clearly as it behoves my daughter and your honor.
 What is between you? Give me up the truth.

character - engrave, *Be...vulgar.* - associate easily but never promiscuously
adoption tried - suitability as friends proven, *dull* - make callous, *with entertainment of* - by giving a friendly
 reception to, *unfledged* - untried, *habit* - clothing, *husbandry* - thriftiness,
season - ripen and make fruitful, *audience* - time spent listening to him

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, unsifted* in such perilous circumstance. Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

OPHELIA

I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

LORD POLONIUS

Marry, I'll teach you. Tender yourself more dearly,* or you'll tender me a fool.

OPHELIA

My lord, he hath importuned* me with love in honorable fashion.

LORD POLONIUS

Ay, fashion you may call it. 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.

From this time be somewhat scanted of your maiden presence.

Set your entreatments* at a higher rate than a command to parley.*

For Lord Hamlet, he is young and with a larger tether may he walk than may be given you.

Ophelia, do not believe his vows,

for they are brokers,* breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,* the better to beguile.*

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.

Look to it, I charge you.

OPHELIA

I shall obey, my lord.

(Exeunt.)

tenders - offers, *unsifted* - untried; untested

dearly - expensively, *importuned* - urged, *countenance* - confirmation,

springes - traps, *woodcocks* - stupid birds easily trapped,

prodigal - lavishly, *entreatments* - interviews, *parley* - discuss,

brokers - middlemen, *bawds* - usually women who keeps houses of prostitution, *beguile* - deceive

Act 4, Scene 3 Another room in the castle

(Enter KING CLAUDIUS, attended.)

KING CLAUDIUS

I have sent to seek him and to find the body.
 How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!
 Yet must not we put the strong law on him:
 he's loved of the distracted multitude, who like not in their judgment, but their eyes,
 and where tis so, the offender's scourge* is weighed, but never the offence.
 To bear all smooth and even,* this sudden sending him away must seem deliberate pause.*

(Enter ROSENCRANTZ.)

How now! What hath befallen?

ROSENCRANTZ

Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord, we cannot get from him.

KING CLAUDIUS

But where is he?

ROSENCRANTZ

Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

KING CLAUDIUS

Bring him before us.

ROSENCRANTZ

Ho, Guildenstern! Bring in my lord.

(Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.)

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.

scourge - punishment, *To bear all smooth and even* - To handle the matter with every appearance of composure and impartiality, *deliberate pause* - the result of careful deliberation, *politic* - shrewd, *e'en* - even, *service* - food served up

That's the end.

KING CLAUDIUS

Alas, alas!

HAMLET

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

HAMLET

He will stay till ye come.

(Exeunt attendants.)

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, the wind at help, 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.

tender - value, *bark* - ship

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!

(Exit HAMLET.)

KING CLAUDIUS

Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard. Delay it not; I'll have him hence tonight.
Pray you, make haste.

(Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)

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, for like the hectic* in my blood he rages, and thou must cure me.
Till I know 'tis done, howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

(Exit CLAUDIUS.)

cherub - The cherubim, or second order of angels excelled in knowledge and keenness of vision,
England - King of England, **ought** - anything,
coldly set our sovereign process - coolly disregard our royal command (at this time in history Denmark maintained considerable political power over England),
congruing - agreeing, **hectic** - fever

Act 5, Scene 1 A churchyard

(Two CLOWNS.)

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.*
The crowner* hath sat* on her, and finds it Christian burial.*

FIRST CLOWN

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.

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.
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

Will you have the truth of it?
If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out of Christian burial.

FIRST CLOWN

Why, there thou sayest.
And the more pity that great folk should have countenance* in this world to drown or hang themselves,
more than their fellow Christian.
Come, my spade.
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?

Christian burial - in consecrated ground with the prescribed services of the Church (a burial denied to suicides),
salvation - he means damnation, *straight* - at once, *crowner* - coroner, *sat* - held an inquest,
finds it a Christian burial - finds Ophelia not guilty of suicide,
Argal - therefore (a vulgar perversion of the Latin ergo), *have countenance* - be privileged

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 ill.

To it 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 it.

SECOND CLOWN

Mass, I cannot tell.

(Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.)

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.)

(FIRST CLOWN digs and sings.) In youth, when I did love, did love,

Methought it was very sweet,

To contract,* O, the time, for, ah, my betrothed,

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 even so. The hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.*

unyoke - unharness your powers of thought, *stoup* - large mug, *contract* - shorten,

a property of easiness - a job about which he has no qualms, *hath the daintier sense* - is more sensitive

FIRST CLOWN

(Sings.) For age, with stealing steps,
 Hath clawed me in his clutch,
 And hath shipped into the land,
 As if I had never been such.*

(FIRST CLOWN throws up a skull.)

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 over-reaches.*
 Or of a courtier, which could say 'Good morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?'
 Might it not?

HORATIO

Ay, my lord.

FIRST CLOWN

(Sings.) A pick axe, and a spade, a spade,
 And eke a shrouding sheet;
 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 quillets,* 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?
 I will speak to this fellow.
 Whose grave's this, sirrah?

FIRST CLOWN

Mine, sir.
(Sings.) A house of clay for to be made
 For such a guest is meet.

HAMLET

I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in it.

FIRST CLOWN

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

such - i.e. a young man in love, *jowls* - dashes, *politician* - unprincipled schemer, *over-reaches* - gets the better of, *meet* - appropriate, *quiddities* - subtleties, *quilllets* - quibbles, *tenures* - holdings of properties, *sconce* head

HAMLET

'Thou dost lie in it, to be in it 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 again 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 it?

FIRST CLOWN

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

HAMLET

How absolute* the knave is!
By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken a note of it,
the age is grown so picked* that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier he galls his kibe.*
How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

FIRST CLOWN

Of all the days in the year, I came to it 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.

quick - living, *absolute* - a stickler for accuracy, *picked* - refined, *kibe* - chilblain (painful swelling of the feet)

HAMLET

Why?

FIRST CLOWN

'Twill 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, even 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 in the earth ere he rot?

FIRST CLOWN

In faith, if he be not rotten before he die

(as we have many pocky* corpses 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 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?

pocky - pox-ridden; syphilitic, *hold the laying in* - hold together while being buried

HAMLET

Nay, I know not.

FIRST CLOWN

A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! He 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

Even that.

HAMLET

Let me see.

(HAMLET 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.

Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft.

Where be your gambols* now, 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 chapfallen.*

Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor* she must come.

Make her laugh at that.

Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HORATIO

What's that, my lord?

HAMLET

Dost thou think Alexander looked of this fashion in the earth?

HORATIO

Even so.

HAMLET

And smelt so? Pah!

(HAMLET puts down the skull.)

HORATIO

Even so, my lord.

HAMLET

To what base uses we may return, Horatio!

gambols - playful skipping, *chapfallen* - lacking a lower jaw, *favor* - appearance

Imperious Caesar, dead and turned 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 t'expel the winter's flaw.
 But soft! But soft! *Aside.**
 Here comes the King.

(HAMLET and HORATIO stand aside. Enter PRIEST, etc. in procession; the corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and mourners following; KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, their trains, etc.)

Couch* we awhile, and mark.

LAERTES
 What ceremony else?

HAMLET
 That is Laertes, a very noble youth.

LAERTES
 What ceremony else?

PRIEST
 Her obsequies* have been as far enlarged as we have warranty.*
 Her death was doubtful;
 and, but that great command overweighs the order,* she should in ground unsanctified have lodged.

LAERTES
 Must there no more be done?

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 in 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 decked, sweet maid, and not have strewed thy grave.

aside - stand aside, *couch* - hide, *obsequies* - funeral rites,
warranty - official authorization, *order* - laws of the church

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.

(LAERTES leaps into the grave.)

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead
 till of this flat a mountain you have made to overtop blue Olympus.*

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.

(HAMLET leaps into the grave.)

LAERTES

The devil take thy soul!

(LAERTES grapples with HAMLET.)

HAMLET

Thou prayest not well.
 I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat!

KING CLAUDIUS

Pluck them asunder.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Hamlet, Hamlet!

ALL

Gentlemen—

HORATIO

Good my lord—

(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?

ingenious sense - quick intelligence,

Olympus - a mountain in Greece believed to be the dwelling place of the ancient Greek gods

HAMLET

I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers could not with all their quantity of love make up my sum.

KING CLAUDIUS

O, he is mad, Laertes.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

For love of God, forbear him.*

HAMLET

'Swounds, show me what thou wilt do.

Would weep? Would fight? Would fast? Would tear thyself? Would drink up eisel?* Eat a crocodile? I'll do it.

Dost thou come here to whine? To outface me with leaping in her grave?

Be buried quick with her, and so will I.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

This is mere madness.

HAMLET

Hear you, sir. What is the reason that you use me thus? I loved you ever.

But it is no matter.

(Exit HAMLET.)

KING CLAUDIUS

I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.

(Exit HORATIO.)

(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.)