

ENSEMBLE (Gertrude, Hamlet, Claudius, Ophelia, Lucianus, Horatio, Guildenstern, Rosencrantz) – Act 3 Sc 2 (lines 2397-2647 pg 57-62)

Gertrude.

The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Hamlet.

O, but she'll keep her word.

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' th'world.

Claudius.

What do you call the play?

Hamlet.

'The Mousetrap.' Marry, how? Tropically. 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.

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.

Ophelia.

You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

Hamlet.

It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.

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Ophelia.

Still better, and worse.

Hamlet.

So you must take your husbands.- Begin, murtherer. 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 in his ears)

Hamlet.

He poisons him i' th' garden for's estate. His name's Gonzago.

The story is extant, and written in very choice Italian. You shall see anon how the furtherer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Ophelia.

The King rises.

Hamlet.

What, frighted with false fire?

Gertrude.

How fares my lord?

Polonius.

Give o'er the play.

Claudius.

Give me some light! Away!

Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio.

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Hamlet.

Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
The Hart ungalled play
While some must watch, while some must sleep
Thus runs the world away.
Would not this, sir, get me a fellowship in a cry of players?

Horatio.

Half a share.

Hamlet.

A whole one I!
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.

Aha! 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!

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Guildenstern.

Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Hamlet.

Sir, a whole history.

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Guildenstern.

The King, sir-

Hamlet.

Ay, sir, what of him?

Guildenstern.

Is in his retirement, marvellous distemper'd.

Hamlet.

With drink, sir?

Guildenstern.

No, my lord; rather with choler.

Hamlet.

Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to the doctor; 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.

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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; if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

Hamlet.

Sir, I cannot.

Guildenstern.

What, my lord?

Hamlet.

Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseas'd. 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 behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Hamlet.

O wonderful son, that can so stonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration?

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? My lord, you once did love me.

Hamlet.

And 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.

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

[Enter the Players with recorders.]

O, the recorders! Let me see one. To withdraw with you- why do
you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me
into a toil?

Guildenstern.

O my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

Hamlet.

I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guildenstern.

My lord, I cannot.

Hamlet.

I do beseech you.

Guildenstern.

I know, no touch of it, my lord.

Hamlet.

It is as easy as lying. Govern these ventages with your
fingers and thumbs, give it breath with your mouth, and it will
discourse most excellent music. Look you, these are the stops

Guildenstern

. But these cannot I command to any utt'rance of harmony. I
have not the skill.

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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 play'd on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

[Enter Polonius.]

God bless you, sir!

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?

Polonius.

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

Hamlet.

Methinks it is like a weasel.

Polonius.

It is back'd like a weasel.

Hamlet.

Or like a whale.

Polonius.

Very like a whale