

HAMLET, Act 3 sc 4 from the First Folio, 1623

Enter Queene and Polonius.

Pol. He will come straight:

Looke you lay home to him,

Tell him his pranks haue been too broad to beare with,

And that your Grace hath scree'nd, and stode betweene

Much heate, and him. Ile silence me e'ene heere:

Pray you be round with him.

Ham. within. Mother, mother, mother.

Qu. Ile warrant you, feare me not.

Withdraw, I heare him comming.

Enter Hamlet.

Ham. Now Mother, what's the matter?

Qu. Hamlet, thou hast thy Father much offended.

Ham. Mother, you haue my Father much offended.

Qu. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Ham. Go, go, you question with an idle tongue.

Qu. Why how now Hamlet?

Ham. Whats the matter now?

Qu. Haue you forgot me?

Ham. No by the Rood, not so:

You are the Queene, your Husbands Brothers wife,

But would you were not so. You are my Mother.

Qu. Nay, then Ile set those to you that can speake.

Ham. Come, come, and sit you downe, you shall not
boudge:

You go not till I set you vp a glasse,

Where you may see the inmost part of you?

Qu. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murther me?

Helpe, helpe, hoa.

Pol. What hoa, helpe, helpe, helpe.

Ham. How now, a Rat? dead for a Ducate, dead.

Pol. Oh I am slaine.

Killes Polonius.

Qu. Oh me, what hast thou done?

Ham. Nay I know not, is it the King?

Qu. Oh what a rash, and bloody deed is this?

Ham. A bloody deed, almost as bad good Mother,

As kill a King, and marrie with his Brother.

Qu. As kill a King?

Ham. I Lady, 'twas my word.

Thou wretched, rash, intruding foole farewell,

I tooke thee for thy Betters, take thy Fortune,

Thou find'st to be too busie, is some danger.

Leaue wringing of your hands, peace, sit you downe,

And let me wring your heart, for so I shall

If it be made of penetrable stuffe;

If damned Custome haue not braz'd it so,

That it is prooffe and bulwarke against Sense.

Qu. What haue I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tong,

In noise so rude against me?

Ham. Such an Act

That blurres the grace and blush of Modestie,

Cals Vertue Hypocrite, takes off the Rose

From the faire forehead of an innocent loue,

And makes a blister there. Makes marriage vowes

As false as Dicers Oathes. Oh such a deed,

As from the body of Contraction pluckes

The very soule, and sweete Religion makes

A rapsodie of words. Heauens face doth glow,

Yea this solidity and compound masse,

With tristfull visage as against the doome,

Is thought-sicke at the act.

Qu. Aye me; what act, that roares so lowd, & thunders in the
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Ham. Looke heere vpon this Picture, and on this,

The counterfet presentment of two Brothers:

See what a grace was seated on his Brow,

Hyperions curles, the front of loue himselfe,

An eye like Mars, to threaten or command

A Station, like the Herald Mercurie

New lighted on a heauen-kissing hill:

A Combination, and a forme indeed,

Where euery God did seeme to set his Seale,

To giue the world assurance of a man.

This was your Husband. Looke you now what followes.

Heere is your Husband, like a Mildew'd eare
Blasting his wholsom breath. Haue you eyes?
Could you on this faire Mountaine leaue to feed,
And batten on this Moore? Ha? Haue you eyes?
You cannot call it Loue: For at your age,
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waites vpon the Iudgement: and what Iudgement
Would step from this, to this? What diuell was't,
That thus hath cousend you at hoodman-blinde?
O Shame! where is thy Blush? Rebellious Hell,
If thou canst mutine in a Matrons bones,
To flaming youth, let Vertue be as waxe,
And melt in her owne fire. Proclaime no shame,
When the compulsiue Ardure giues the charge,
Since Frost it selfe, as actiue doth burne,
As Reason panders Will.

Qu. O Hamlet, speake no more.

Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soule,
And there I see such blacke and grained spots,

As will not leaue their Tinct.

Ham. Nay, but to liue

In the ranke sweat of an enseamed bed,
Stew'd in Corruption; honying and making loue
Ouer the nasty Sty.

Qu. Oh speake to me, no more,
These words like Daggers enter in mine eares.
No more sweet Hamlet.

Ham. A Murderer, and a Villaine:
A Slaue, that is not twentieth patt the tythe
Of your precedent Lord. A vice of Kings,
A Cutpurse of the Empire and the Rule.
That from a shelve, the precious Diadem stole,
And put it in his Pocket.

Qu. No more.

Enter Ghost.

Ham. A King of shreds and patches.

Saue me; and houer o're me with your wings
You heauenly Guards. What would you gracious figure?

Qu. Alas he's mad.

Ham. Do you not come your tardy Sonne to chide,
That laps't in Time and Passion, lets go by
Th'important acting of your dread command? Oh say.

Ghost. Do not forget: this Visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But looke, Amazement on thy Mother sits;
O step betweene her, and her fighting Soule,
Conceit in weakest bodies, strongest workes.
Speake to her Hamlet.

Ham. How is it with you Lady?

Qu. Alas, how is't with you?
That you bend your eye on vacancie,
And with their corporall ayre do hold discourse.
Forth at your eyes, your spirits wildely peepe,
And as the sleeping Soldiours in th'Alarme,
Your bedded haire, like life in excrements,
Start vp, and stand an end. Oh gentle Sonne,
Vpon the heate and flame of thy distemper

Sprinkle coole patience. Whereon do you looke?

Ham. On him, on him: look you how pale he glares,
His forme and cause conioyn'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capeable. Do not looke vpon me,
Least with this pitteous action you conuert
My sterne effects: then what I haue to do,
Will want true colour; teares perchance for blood.

Qu. To who do you speake this?

Ham. Do you see nothing there?

Qu. Nothing at all, yet all that is I see.

Ham. Nor did you nothing heare?

Qu. No, nothing but our selues.

Ham. Why look you there: looke how it steals away:

My Father in his habite, as he liued,
Looke where he goes euen now out at the Portall.

Exit.

Qu. This is the very coynage of your Braine,
This bodillesse Creation extasie is very cunning in.

Ham. Extasie?

My Pulse as yours doth temperately keepe time,
And makes as healthfull Musicke. It is not madnesse
That I haue vttered; bring me to the Test
And I the matter will re-word: which madnesse
Would gamboll from. Mother, for loue of Grace,
Lay not a flattering Vnction to your soule,
That not your trespasse, but my madnesse speakes:
It will but skin and filme the Vlcerous place,
Whil'st ranke Corruption mining all within,
Infects vnseene. Confesse your selfe to Heauen,
Repent what's past, auoyd what is to come,
And do not spred the Compost or the Weedes,
To make them ranke. Forgiue me this my Vertue,
For in the fatnesse of this pursie times,
Vertue it selfe, of Vice must pardon begge,
Yea courb, and woe, for leaue to do him good.

Qu. Oh Hamlet,

Thou hast cleft my heart in twaine.

Ham. O throw away the worser part of it,

And liue the purer with the other halfe.

Good night, but go not to mine Vnkles bed,
Assume a Vertue, if you haue it not, refraine to night,
And that shall lend a kinde of easinesse
To the next abstinence. Once more goodnight,
And when you are desirous to be blest,
Ile blessing begge of you. For this same Lord,
I do repent: but heauen hath pleas'd it so,
To punish me with this, and this with me,
That I must be their Scourge and Minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gaue him: so againe, good night.
I must be cruell, onely to be kinde;
Thus bad begins, and worse remaines behinde.

Qu. What shall I do?

Ham. Not this by no meanes that I bid you do:

Let the blunt King tempt you againe to bed,
Pinch Wanton on your cheeke, call you his Mouse,
And let him for a paire of reechie kisses,

Or padling in your necke with his damn'd Fingers,
Make you to rauell all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madnesse,
But made in craft. 'Twere good you let him know,
For who that's but a Queene, faire, sober, wise,
Would from a Paddocke, from a Bat, a Gibbe,
Such deere concernings hide, Who would do so,
No in despight of Sense and Secrecie,
Vnpegge the Basket on the houses top:
Let the Birds flye, and like the famous Ape
To try Conclusions in the Basket, creepe
And breake your owne necke downe.

Qu. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life: I haue no life to breath
What thou hast saide to me.

Ham. I must to England, you know that?

Qu. Alacke I had forgot: 'Tis so concluded on.

Ham. This man shall set me packing:

Ile lugge the Guts into the Neighbor roome,

Mother goodnight. Indeede this Counsellor
Is now most still, most secret, and most graue,
Who was in life, a foolish prating Knaue.
Come sir, to draw toward an end with you.
Good night Mother.

Exit Hamlet tugging in Polonius.