

# Hamlet

## 4.5

*Enter Queen Gertrude and Horatio*

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

I will not speak with her.

**HORATIO**

She is importunate,  
Indeed distraught. Her mood will needs be pitied.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE** What would she have?

**HORATIO**

She speaks much of her father, says she hears  
There's tricks i'th' world, and hems, and beats her  
heart, 5  
Spurns enviously at straws, speaks things in doubt  
That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,  
Yet the unshape'd use of it doth move  
The hearers to collection. They aim at it,  
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts, 10  
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,  
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,  
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may strew  
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds. 15  
Let her come in.

*[Horatio withdraws to admit Ophelia]*

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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. 20

*Enter Ophelia mad, [her hair down, with a lute]*

**OPHELIA**

Where is the Beauteous majesty of Denmark?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE** How now, Ophelia?

**OPHELIA** *(sings)*

How should I your true love know  
From another one?±±  
By his cockle hat and staff, 25

And his sandal shoon.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

**OPHELIA** Say you? Nay, pray you, mark.

*(Sings)*

He is dead and gone, lady,

He is dead and gone.

30

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE** Nay, but Ophelia±±

**OPHELIA** Pray you, mark.

*(Sings)*

White his shroud as the mountain snow±±

35

*Enter King Claudius*

**QUEEN GERTRUDE** Alas, look here, my lord.

**OPHELIA** *(sings)*

Larded with sweet flowers,

Which bewept to the grave did±±not±±go

With true-love showers.

**KING CLAUDIUS** How do ye, pretty lady? 40

**OPHELIA** Well, God'ield 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** *(to Gertrude)* Conceit upon her father.

**OPHELIA** Pray you, let's have no words of this, but when 45  
they ask you what it means, say you this.

*(Sings)*

Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day,

All in the morning betime,

And I a maid at your window

To be your Valentine.

50

Then up he rose, and donned his clothes,

And duppered the chamber door;

Let in the maid, that out a maid

Never departed more.

**KING CLAUDIUS** Pretty Ophelia±± 55

**OPHELIA** Indeed, la? Without an oath, I'll make an end  
on't.

*(Sings)*

By Gis, and by Saint Charity,

Alack, and fie for shame!  
Young men will do't if they come to't, 60  
By Cock, they are to blame.

Quoth she `Before you tumbled me,  
You promised me to wed.'  
So would I 'a' done, by yonder sun,  
An thou hadst not come to my bed. 65

**KING CLAUDIUS** *(to Gertrude)* 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'th' cold ground. My brother shall know of it. And so  
I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! 70  
Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night,  
good night.

*Exit*

**KING CLAUDIUS** *(to Horatio)*

Follow her close. Give her good watch, I pray you.

*Exit Horatio*

O, this is the poison of deep grief! It springs  
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude, 75  
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 80  
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but  
greenly

In hugger-mugger to inter him; poor Ophelia  
Divided from herself and her fair judgement,  
Without the which we are pictures or mere beasts;  
Last, and as much containing as all these, 85  
Her brother is in secret come from France,  
Feeds on this wonder, keeps himself in clouds,  
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear  
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;  
Wherein necessity, of matter beggared, 90  
Will nothing stick our persons to arraign  
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,  
Like to a murd'ring-piece, in many places  
Gives me superfluous death.

*A noise within*

**QUEEN GERTRUDE** Alack, what noise is this?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Where is my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

95

*Enter a Messenger*

What is the matter?

**MESSENGER** Save yourself, my lord.

The ocean, overpeering of his list,

Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste

Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,

O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord, 100

And, as the world were now but to begin,

Antiquity forgot, custom not known,

The ratifiers and props of every word,

They cry 'Choose we! Laertes shall be king.'

Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds, 105

'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king.'

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!

*A noise within*

O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!

**KING CLAUDIUS** The doors are broke.

*Enter Laertes [with his followers at the door]*

**LAERTES**

Where is the King?±±Sirs, stand you all without. 110

**ALL HIS FOLLOWERS** No, let's come in.

**LAERTES** I pray you, give me leave.

**ALL HIS FOLLOWERS** We will, we will.

**LAERTES**

I thank you. Keep the door.

*[Exeunt followers]*

O thou vile

king,

Give me my father.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE** Calmly, good Laertes. 115

**LAERTES**

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

Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot

Even here between the chaste unsmirch'd brow

Of my true mother.

**KING CLAUDIUS** What is the cause, Laertes,  
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?±± 120  
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.±± 125  
Speak, man.

**LAERTES** Where is my father?

**KING CLAUDIUS** Dead.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE** (*to Laertes*)  
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!  
Conscience and grace to the profoundest pit! 130  
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,  
That both the worlds I give to negligence,  
Let come what comes. Only I'll be revenged  
Most thoroughly for my father.

**KING CLAUDIUS** Who shall stay you? 135

**LAERTES** My will, not all the world;  
And for my means, I'll husband them so well  
They shall go far with little.

**KING CLAUDIUS** Good Laertes,  
If you desire to know the certainty  
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge 140  
That, sweepstake, 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, 145  
And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,  
Repast them with my blood.

**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 sensibly in grief for it, 150

It shall as level to your judgement pierce  
As day does to your eye.

*A noise within*

**VOICES** (*within*) Let her come in.

**LAERTES** How now, what noise is that?

*Enter Ophelia as before*

O heat dry up my brains! Tears seven times salt 155  
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!  
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight  
Till our scale turns the beam. O rose of May,  
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!  
O heavens, is't possible a young maid's wits 160  
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?  
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine  
It sends some precious instance of itself  
After the thing it loves.

**OPHELIA** (*sings*)

They bore him barefaced on the bier, 165  
Hey non nony, nony, hey nony,  
And on his grave rained many a tear±±  
Fare you well, my dove.

**LAERTES**

Hadst thou thy wits and didst persuade revenge,  
It could not move thus. 170

**OPHELIA** You must sing 'Down, a-down', and 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, 175  
love, remember. And there is pansies; that's for  
thoughts.

**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 180  
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 a made a good end.

(Sings) For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy. 185  
**LAERTES**  
 Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself  
 She turns to favour and to prettiness.  
**OPHELIA** (sings)  
 And will a not come again,  
 And will a not come again?  
 No, no, he is dead, 190  
 Go to thy death-bed,  
 He never will come again.  
 His beard as white as snow,  
 All flaxen was his poll.  
 He is gone, he is gone, 195  
 And we cast away moan.  
 God 'a' mercy on his soul.  
 And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God b'wi' ye.  
*[Exeunt Ophelia and Gertrude]*  
**LAERTES** Do you see this, O God?  
**KING CLAUDIUS**  
 Laertes, I must commune with your grief, 200  
 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 touched, we will our kingdom give, 205  
 Our crown, our life, and all that we call 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. 210  
 His means of death, his obscure burial±±  
 No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,  
 No noble rite nor formal ostentation±±  
 Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,  
 That I must call't in question.  
**KING CLAUDIUS** So you shall; 215  
 And where th'offence is, let the great axe fall.  
 I pray you go with me.  
*Exeunt*