

Hamlet

1.3

Enter Laertes and Ophelia, his sister

LAERTES

My necessities are inbarqued. Farewell.
And, sister, as the winds give benefit
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep
But let me hear from you.

OPHELIA

Do you doubt that?

LAERTES

For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour, 5
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 and suppliance of a minute,
No more.

OPHELIA

No more but so?

LAERTES

Think it no more.

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For nature crescent does not grow alone
In thews and bulk, but as his temple waxes
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch 15
The virtue of his will; but you must fear,
His greatness weighed, 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 20
The sanity and health of the whole state;
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it 25
As he in his peculiar sect and force
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, 30

Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
 To his unmastered importunity.
 Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
 And keep within the rear of your affection,
 Out of the shot and danger of desire. 35
 The chariest maid is prodigal enough
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon.
 Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes.
 The canker galls the infants of the spring
 Too oft before their buttons be disclosed, 40
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.
 Be wary then; best safety lies in fear;
 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPHELIA

I shall th'effect of this good lesson keep 45
 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
 Whilst like a puffed and reckless libertine
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads 50
 And recks not his own rede.

LAERTES

O fear me not.

Enter Polonius

I stay too long±±but here my father comes.
 A double blessing is a double grace;
 Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

POLONIUS

Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame! 55
 The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
 And you are stayed 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. 60
 Be thou familiar but by no means vulgar.
 The 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 65

Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,
Bear't that th'opposeÁd may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear but few thy voice.
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy, 70
But not expressed in fancy; rich not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are of all most select and generous chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be, 75
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all±±to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man. 80
Farewell±±my blessing season this in thee.

LAERTES

Most humbly do I take my leave, my 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, 85

And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

LAERTES Farewell.

Exit

POLONIUS

What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

OPHELIA

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

POLONIUS Marry, well bethought. 90

'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 95
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.
What is between you? Give me up the truth.

OPHELIA

He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me. 100

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.

POLONIUS

Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby 105
That you have ta'en his tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly,
Or±±not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Running it thus±±you'll tender me a fool.

OPHELIA

My lord, he hath importuned me with love 110
In honourable fashion±±

POLONIUS

Ay, fashion you may call it. Go to, go to.

OPHELIA

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

POLONIUS

Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know 115
When the blood burns how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows. These blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both
Even in their promise as it is a-making,
You must not take for fire. From this time, daughter, 120
Be somewhat scanter 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 125
Than may be given you. In few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers,
Not of the dye which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,
Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds 130
The better to beguile. 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.
Look to't, I charge you. Come your ways.

135

OPHELIA I shall obey, my lord.

Exeunt