

HAMLET Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue. But if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently, for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant. It out-herods Herod. Pray you avoid it.

PLAYER I warrant your honor.

HAMLET Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature. For anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others.

(III ii: 1-26)

HAMLET Nay, do not think I flatter.  
For what advancement may I hope from thee,  
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits  
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be  
flattered?  
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,  
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee  
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?  
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice  
And could of men distinguish her election,  
S' hath sealed thee for herself, for thou hast been  
As one in suff'ring all that suffers nothing,  
A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards  
Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and blest are those  
Whose blood and judgment are so well commedled  
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger  
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
As I do thee.

(III ii: 52-70)

HAMLET O God, your only jig-maker! What should a man do but be merry? For look you how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within's two hours.

OPHELIA Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

HAMLET So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year. But, by'r Lady, 'a must build churches then, or else shall 'a suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is 'For O, for O, the hobby-horse is forgot!'

KING

I do believe you think what now you speak,  
But what we do determine oft we break.  
Purpose is but the slave to memory,  
Of violent birth, but poor validity,  
Which now like fruit unripe sticks on the tree,  
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.  
Most necessary 'tis that we forget  
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt.  
What to ourselves in passion we propose,  
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.  
The violence of either grief or joy  
Their own enactures with themselves destroy.  
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;  
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.  
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange  
That even our loves should with our fortunes change,  
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,  
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.  
The great man down, you mark his favorite flies,  
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies;  
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend,  
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,  
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,  
Directly seasons him his enemy.  
But, orderly to end where I begun,  
Our wills and fates do so contrary run  
That our devices still are overthrown;  
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own.  
So think thou wilt no second husband wed,  
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

QUEEN

Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light,  
Sport and repose lock from me day and night,  
To desperation turn my trust and hope,  
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope,  
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy  
Meet what I would have well, and it destroy,  
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,  
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

HAMLET If she should break it now!

KING

'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile.  
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile  
The tedious day with sleep.

QUEEN

Sleep rock thy brain,  
And never come mischance between us twain!

HAMLET Madam, how like you this play?

QUEEN The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

(III ii: 178-222)

(III ii: 119-129)