

ACT IV SCENE I. A room in the Castle.

Rapier- sword

Providence- control,
responsibility

[Enter King, Queen, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]

CLAUDIUS

There's matter in these sighs. These profound
heaves

You must translate: 'tis fit we understand them.

Where is your son?

GERTRUDE

Bestow this place on us a little while.

[To Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who go
out.]

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night!

CLAUDIUS

What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

GERTRUDE

Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend

Which is the mightier: in his lawless fit

Behind the arras hearing something stir,

Whips out his rapier, cries 'A rat, a rat!'

And in this brainish apprehension, kills

The unseen good old man.

CLAUDIUS

O heavy deed!

It had been so with us, had we been there:

His liberty is full of threats to all;

To you yourself, to us, to every one.

Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?

It will be laid to us, whose providence

Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt

This mad young man. But so much was our love

We would not understand what was most fit;

But, like the owner of a foul disease,

To keep it from divulging, let it feed

Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

GERTRUDE

To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:

O'er whom his very madness, like some ore

Among a mineral of metals base,

Shows itself pure: he weeps for what is done.

CLAUDIUS

O Gertrude, come away!

The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch

But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed

We must with all our majesty and skill

Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

[Re-enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:

Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,

And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:

Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body

Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;

A. In what state is Gertrude when she first sees Claudius?

B. In your interpretation is Gertrude speaking her mind when she says Hamlet is mad or is she doing what Hamlet asked and not telling Claudius that Hamlet is mad in craft?

C. What is Claudius's reaction to Hamlet's killing of Polonius?

D. Explain Claudius's metaphor?

A. What does Gertrude say of Hamlet's behavior that we did not see in the previous scene?

B. What does Claudius understand about the consequences of Hamlet's deed?

HAMLET

The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing,

GUILDENSTERN

A thing, my lord!

HAMLET

Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.
[Exeunt.]

ACT IV SCENE III. Another room in the Castle.

Scourge- whip used in punishment
Convocation - gathering
Cicatrice- scar

[Enter King, attended.]

CLAUDIUS

I have sent to seek him and to find the body.
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!
Yet must not we put the strong law on him:
He's lov'd of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;
And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause: diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are reliev'd,
Or not at all.

[Enter Rosencrantz.]

How now! What hath befall'n?

ROSENCRANTZ

Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

CLAUDIUS

But where is he?

ROSENCRANTZ

Without, my lord, guarded, to know your
pleasure.

CLAUDIUS

Bring him before us.

ROSENCRANTZ

Ho, Guildenstern! Bring in my lord.

[Enter Hamlet and Guildenstern.]

CLAUDIUS

Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAMLET

At supper.

CLAUDIUS

At supper! Where?

HAMLET

Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain
convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your
worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all
creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for
maggots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but
variable service, two dishes, but to one table: that's
the end.

[Hide fox, and all after- the call in a game of chasing.]

D. How does public opinion limit how Claudius can deal with Hamlet?

A. What sort of desperate action do you think Claudius is going to take?

B. Hamlet's teasing becomes bitterer. Follow the worm in the speech. What does Hamlet finally get to call Claudius?

CLAUDIUS

Alas, alas!

HAMLET

A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

CLAUDIUS

What dost thou mean by this?

HAMLET

Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

CLAUDIUS

Where is Polonius?

HAMLET

In heaven: send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But, indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

CLAUDIUS

Go seek him there. [To some Attendants.]

HAMLET

He will stay till you come.

[Exeunt Attendants.]

CLAUDIUS

Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done, must send thee
hence
With fiery quickness: therefore prepare thyself;
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,
The associates tend, and everything is bent
For England.

HAMLET

For England!

CLAUDIUS

Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET

Good.

CLAUDIUS

So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

HAMLET

I see a cherub that sees them. But, come, for England! Farewell, dear mother.

CLAUDIUS

Thy loving father, Hamlet.

HAMLET

My mother: father and mother is man and wife;
man and wife is one flesh; and so, my
mother. Come, for England!

[Exit.]

CLAUDIUS

Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard;
Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night:
Away! For everything is seal'd and done
That else leans on the affair: pray you, make haste.

C. And the end product of that "progress" is?

D. Hamlet tells Claudius to go to _____?

A. What does Claudius say the reason for Hamlet's trip to England is?

[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us, thou mayst not coldly set
Our sovereign process; which imports at full,
By letters conjuring to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me: till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.
[Exit.]

ACT IV SCENE IV. A plain in Denmark.

Conveyance- carrying Scruple- hesitation,
Impostume- sore or abscess unwillingness
Fust- become moldy Imminent- threatening, near at
Craven- cowardly hand

[Enter Fortinbras, and Forces marching.]

FORTINBRAS

Go, Captain, from me greet the Danish king:
Tell him that, by his license, Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promis'd march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
If that his majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye;
And let him know so.

CAPTAIN

I will do't, my lord.

FORTINBRAS

Go softly on.

[Exeunt all FORTINBRAS and Forces.]

[Enter Hamlet, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, &c.]

HAMLET

Good sir, whose powers are these?

CAPTAIN

They are of Norway, sir.

HAMLET

How purpos'd, sir, I pray you?

CAPTAIN

Against some part of Poland.

HAMLET

Who commands them, sir?

CAPTAIN

The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

HAMLET

Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?

CAPTAIN

Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;

How does Claudius plan to get rid of his Hamlet problem?

[*Macbeth* readers: Compare “Doubtful joy” and “restless ecstasy.”]

B. In case we've forgotten, Fortinbras nicely reminds us of what was decided in act II scene II (Page 30). And that is?

C. How important is the patch of Poland Fortinbras plans to fight for?

Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

HAMLET

Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

CAPTAIN

Yes, it is already garrison'd.

HAMLET

Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw:
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.

CAPTAIN

God b' wi' you, sir.

[Exit.]

ROSENCRANTZ

Will't please you go, my lord?

HAMLET

I'll be with you straight. Go a little before.
[Exeunt all but Hamlet.]

How all occasions do inform against me
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event,
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part
wisdom
And ever three parts coward, I do not know
Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do;'
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me:
Witness this army, of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince;
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
Makes mouths at the invisible event;
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I, then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep? While, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds; fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,

D. How is the cause of this war ironic?

[*Macbeth* readers: Compare this speech about what makes a man to Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's discussion of the same question in Act I Scene VII.]

A. In Hamlet's mind, what is a human being's primary gift?

B. What cause for his delay does Hamlet suggest here?

C. How does Fortinbras provide a contrasting example to Hamlet's behavior?

D. Restate this in your own words.

[Sings.]

He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass green turf,
At his heels a stone.

GERTRUDE

Nay, but Ophelia!

OPHELIA

Pray you, mark.

[Sings.]

White his shroud as the mountain snow,
[Enter CLAUDIUS]

GERTRUDE

Alas, look here, my lord!

OPHELIA

[Sings.]

Larded all with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did go
With true-love showers.

CLAUDIUS

How do you, pretty lady?

OPHELIA

Well, God dild 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!

CLAUDIUS

Conceit upon her father.

OPHELIA

Pray you, let's have no words of this; but when they
ask you what it means, say you this:

[Sings.]

To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day
All in the morning bedtime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.

Then up he rose and donn'd his clothes,
And dupp'd the chamber door,
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.

CLAUDIUS

Pretty Ophelia!

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;
By cock, they are to blame.

Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promis'd me to wed.
So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.

CLAUDIUS

B. Explain how this insight applies to the play.

C. What betrayals take place in the song and in the play?

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 would lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it: and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach!! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night.

[Exit.]

CLAUDIUS

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,
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

For good Polonius' death; and we have done but
greenly

In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,
Without the which we are pictures or mere beasts:
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France;
Feeds on his 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 beggar'd,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering piece, in many places
Give, me superfluous death.

[A noise within.]

GERTRUDE

Alack, what noise is this?

CLAUDIUS

Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

[Enter a Gentleman.]

What is the matter?

GENTLEMAN

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'rbears your offices. The rabble call him lord;
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,
'Laertes shall be king! Laertes king!'

GERTRUDE

D. To what danger does this return us?

A. What "battalion" of sorrows does Claudius list here?

B. Claudius ends the speech with a military metaphor, just as he began it. How does a cannon give "superfluous death"?

How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!

[A noise within.]

CLAUDIUS

The doors are broke.

[Enter Laertes, armed; Danes following.]

LAERTES

Where is this king? Sirs, stand you all without.

DANES

No, let's come in.

LAERTES

I pray you, give me leave.

DANES

We will, we will.

[They retire without the door.]

LAERTES

I thank you: keep the door. O thou vile king,
Give me my father!

GERTRUDE

Calmly, good Laertes.

LAERTES

That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me
bastard;
Cries cuckold to my father; brands the harlot
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow
Of my true mother.

CLAUDIUS

What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?
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 incens'd. Let him go, Gertrude:
Speak, man.

LAERTES

Where is my father?

CLAUDIUS

Dead.

GERTRUDE

But not by him.

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!
I dare damnation: to this point I stand,
That both the worlds, I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
Most thoroughly for my father.

CLAUDIUS

Who shall stay you?

LAERTES

My will, not all the world:

C. What does Gertie's hunting metaphor mean?

So here we have another son whose father has been murdered. Do you see any similarities or differences between Laertes and Hamlet?

D. How would such lines help us define "hypocrisy"?

A. Compare this to Hamlet's speech in act II scene II (Page 44).

And for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

CLAUDIUS

Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge
That, sweepstake, you will draw both friend and
foe,
Winner and loser?

LAERTES

None but his enemies.

CLAUDIUS

Will you know them then?

LAERTES

To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms;
And, like the kind life-rendering pelican,
Repast them with my blood.

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

DANES

[Within] Let her come in.

LAERTES

How now! What noise is that?
[Re-enter Ophelia, fantastically dressed with
straws and flowers.]
O heat, dry up my brains! Tears seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!!
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!!
O heavens! Is't possible a young maid's wits
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 barefac'd on the bier
Hey no nonny, nonny, hey nonny
And on his grave rain'd many a tear.
Fare you well, my dove!

LAERTES

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

OPHELIA

You must sing 'Down a-down, an 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.

B. When a person loses a dear friend or relative, the mourner often says that he or she feels as if part of them died. How does this common description fit these lines?

OPHELIA

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray,
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 herb
of grace o' Sundays: O, you must wear your rue
with a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you
some violets, but they wither'd all when my father
died: they say he made a good end, [Sings.]

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy,

LAERTES

Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

OPHELIA

[Sings.]

And will he not come again?

And will he not come again?

No, no, he is dead,

Go to thy death-bed,

He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,

All flaxen was his poll:

He is gone, he is gone,

And we cast away moan:

God ha' mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God b' wi'
ye.

[Exit.]

LAERTES

Do you see this, O God?

CLAUDIUS

Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
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 touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
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;
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,

**Why are Ophelia's choices about whom to give which
flowers appropriate?**

Laertes- rosemary and pansies

**Gertrude- fennel and columbines (signifying
infidelity)**

Claudius - rue (repentance)

Daisies- love and violets (faithfulness)

C. How does Claudius propose to prove to Laertes that Claudius
is guiltless in Laertes' father's murder?

D. In addition to his father's murder, what other insult angers
Laertes?

That I must call't in question.

CLAUDIUS

So you shall;

And where the offence is let the great axe fall.

I pray you go with me.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV SCENE VI. Another room in the Castle.

[Enter Horatio and a SERVANT]

HORATIO

What are they that would speak with me?

SERVANT

Sailors, sir: they say they have letters for you.

HORATIO

Let them come in.

[Exit Servant]

I do not know from what part of the world

I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

[Enter Sailors.]

FIRST SAILOR

God bless you, sir.

HORATIO

Let him bless thee too.

FIRST SAILOR

He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you,

sir, it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

HORATIO

[Reads.] 'Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king: they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy: but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell. He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.'

Come, I will give you way for these your letters; And do't the speedier, that you may direct me To him from whom you brought them.

[Exeunt.]

A. Whom is Claudius thinking of?

B. Though Hamlet has accused himself of cowardice for delaying to revenge his father, what does his action at sea prove about his courage?

Who brings Hamlet back to Denmark?

ACT IV SCENE VII. Another room in the Castle.

Acquittance- innocence	Abatements- haltings
Sith- since	Unbated- without the blunt tip;
Unsinew'd- unmusclcd, weak	hence, sharpened
Conjunctive- joined	Requite- pay back
Practice- scheme	Unction- poison
Livery – clothing	Mountebank- villain
Sables- furs	Cataplasm- medicated bandaid
Weeds- clothes	Gall- touch, scratch
Incorps'd- made part of	Pendant- hanging
Demi-nature'd- sharing in the	Snatches- parts
qualities of	Incapable- unaware
Brooch- jewelry	Indu'd- become part of
Scrimers- fencers	Lay- song
Plurisy- excess	

[Enter King and Laertes.]

CLAUDIUS

Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend,
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he which hath your noble father slain
Pursu'd my life.

LAERTES

It well appears: but tell me
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

CLAUDIUS

O, for two special reasons;
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinew'd,
But yet to me they are strong. The queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself,
My virtue or my plague, be it either which,
She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a public count I might not go,
Is the great love the general gender bear him;
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

LAERTES

And so have I a noble father lost;
A sister driven into desperate terms,
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections: but my revenge will come.

CLAUDIUS

Break not your sleeps for that: you must not think
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull
That we can let our beard be shook with danger,
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more:
I lov'd your father, and we love ourself;
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine,

[Enter a Messenger.]

What does Claudius want in addition to Laertes' forgiveness?

What are the two special reasons Claudius says he did not take action against Hamlet? Do you think these reasons are genuine?

How now! What news?

MESSENGER

Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:

This to your majesty; this to the queen.

CLAUDIUS

From Hamlet! Who brought them?

MESSENGER

Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not:

They were given me by Claudio: he receiv'd them

Of him that brought them.

CLAUDIUS

Laertes, you shall hear them.

Leave us.

[Exit Messenger.]

[Reads] 'High and mighty, You shall know I am set
naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg
leave to see your kingly eyes: when I shall, first
asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasions
of my sudden and more strange return. HAMLET.'

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?

Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

LAERTES

Know you the hand?

CLAUDIUS

'Tis Hamlet's character: 'Naked!'

And in a postscript here, he says 'alone.'

Can you advise me?

LAERTES

I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come;

It warms the very sickness in my heart

That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,

'Thus didest thou.'

CLAUDIUS

If it be so, Laertes,

As how should it be so? How otherwise?

Will you be rul'd by me?

LAERTES

Ay, my lord;

So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

CLAUDIUS

To thine own peace. If he be now return'd!

As checking at his voyage, and that he means

No more to undertake it, I will work him

To exploit, now ripe in my device,

Under the which he shall not choose but fall:

And for his death no wind shall breathe;

But even his mother shall uncharge the practice

And call it accident.

LAERTES

My lord, I will be rul'd;

The rather if you could devise it so

That I might be the organ.

CLAUDIUS

It falls right.

[hand- handwriting.]

C. What action is Laertes set upon?

D. Under what condition is Laertes willing to be part of Claudio's devious plan?

You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein they say you shine: your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him
As did that one; and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.

LAERTES

What part is that, my lord?

CLAUDIUS

A very riband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness. Two months since,
Here was a gentleman of Normandy,
I've seen myself, and serv'd against, the French,
And they can well on horseback: but this gallant
Had witchcraft in't: he grew unto his seat;
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,
As had he been incorp'd and demi-natur'd
With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Come short of what he did.

LAERTES

A Norman was't?

CLAUDIUS

A Norman.

LAERTES

Upon my life, Lamond.

CLAUDIUS

The very same.

LAERTES

I know him well: he is the brooch indeed
And gem of all the nation.

CLAUDIUS

He made confession of you;
And gave you such a masterly report
For art and exercise in your defence,
And for your rapier most especially,
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed
If one could match you: the scrimers of their nation
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you oppos'd them. Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.
Now, out of this,

LAERTES

What out of this, my lord?

CLAUDIUS

Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

LAERTES

Why ask you this?

A. Claudius finally names the skill that Laertes has and that Hamlet is jealous of. What is that skill, and what was the point of all that stuff about youth that preceded it?

B. Compare what Claudius says here to Laertes to what he said to Hamlet in act I scene II.

CLAUDIUS

Not that I think you did not love your father;
But that I know love is begun by time,
And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it;
And nothing is at a like goodness still;
For goodness, growing to a pluriy,
Dies in his own too much: that we would do,
We should do when we would; for this 'would'
changes,
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
And then this 'should' is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing. But to the quick o' the ulcer:
Hamlet comes back: what would you undertake
To show yourself your father's son in deed
More than in words?

LAERTES

To cut his throat i' the church.

CLAUDIUS

No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home:
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you; bring you in fine
together
And wager on your heads: he, being remiss,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and, in a pass of practice,
Requite him for your father.

LAERTES

I will do't:
And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
This is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

CLAUDIUS

Let's further think of this;
Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape: if this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad
performance.
'Twere better not assay'd: therefore this project
Should have a back or second, that might hold

C. Here is another in a series of speeches about remembering and forgetting dead loved ones. What earlier speeches can you find?

D. How does this idea compare to Hamlet's idea of rank overgrowth in his speech in act I scene II? (Page 10)

How does this distinguish Laertes from Hamlet?

A. What quality in Hamlet does Claudius rely upon in order to pull off the deceit?

Wanting to be part of the plan, what extra feature does Laertes add to the plan?

Talk about pluriy!! What extra layer does Claudius add to his plan? Why does Claudius indulge in this overkill?

If this did blast in proof. Soft! Let me see:
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings,
I ha't:

When in your motion you are hot and dry,
As make your bouts more violent to that end,
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepar'd him
A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there.

[Enter Gertrude]

How now, sweet queen!

GERTRUDE

One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow: your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

LAERTES

Drown'd! O, where?

GERTRUDE

There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crowflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.
There, on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds
Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliver broke;
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up;
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes;
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indu'd
Unto that element: but long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

LAERTES

Alas, then she is drown'd?

GERTRUDE

Drown'd, drown'd.

LAERTES

Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears: but yet
It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,
The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord:
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly doubts it.

[Exit.]

CLAUDIUS

Let's follow, Gertrude;
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I this will give it start again;
Therefore let's follow.

[Exeunt.]

B. How do the details of Ophelia's death suit her?

How does this last description finish the portrait of real madness?

**What do you think about Laertes at his moment in the play?
How do you balance his sufferings with his planned actions?**