

Global lights fade in (or anachronistic curtains rise).

Hamlet stands LSL addressing a crowd of players in USR.
Guards stand in the balcony.

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 your
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, the
whirlwind of 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
dumbshows and noise: I would
have such a fellow whipped for
o'erdoing Termagant; it out-
herods Herod: pray you, avoid it!

Hamlet returns to his director's position in the pits.
FIRST PLAYER steps out from the crowd of player,
approaching CS, but leave a respectful and possibly
fearful distance between Hamlet and FP.

FIRST PLAYER

I warrent your honour.

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 o'erstep not
the modesty of nature: for
anything so overdone is from the
purpose of playing, whose end,

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HAMLET (cont'd)

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.

FIRST PLAYER

I hope we have reformed that
indifferently with us, sir.

HAMLET

O, reform it altogether. And let
those that play your clowns
speak no more than is set down
for them; for there be of them
that will themselves laugh, to
set on some quantity of barren
spectators to laugh too; though,
in the mean time, some necessary
question of the play be then to
be considered: that's villanous,
and shows a most pitiful
ambition in the fool that uses
it. Go, make you ready.

Exeunt Players. Enter Polonius from right balcony.

HAMLET

How now, my lord! I will the
king hear this piece of work?

POLONIUS

And the queen too, and that
presently.

HAMLET

Bid the players make haste.

Exit Polonius right balcony. Curtains descend on
balconies. Enter Horatio from center door on main stage.

HAMLET

(walks up to stage
level to greet Horatio)

What ho! Horatio!

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HORATIO

Here, sweet lord, at your
service.

HAMLET

Horatio, thou art e'en as just a
man as e'er my conversation
coped withal.

HORATIO

O, my dear lord,--

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 flatter'd? No, let the
candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
and crook the pregnant hinges of
the knee where thrift may follow
fawning. Doest thou hear? Since
my dear soul was mistress of her
choice and could of men
distinguish, her election hath
seal'd thee for herself; for
thou hast been as one, in
suffering 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 commingled, that
they are not a pipe for futne'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.--Something too much of
this.--There is a play to-night
before the king; one scene of it
comes near the circumstance
which I have told thee of my
father's death: I prithee, when

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HAMLET (cont'd)
thou seest that act afoot, even
with the very comment of thy
soul observe mine uncle: if his
occulted guilt do not itself
unkennel in one speech, it is a
damned ghost that we have seen,
and my imaginations are as foul
as Vulcan's stithy. Give him
heedful note; for I mine eyes
will rivet to his face, and
after we will both our judgments
join in censure of his seeming.

(Non-speaking courtiers should be sitting behind
curtains in balcony level by now.)

HORATIO
Well, my lord: if he steal aught
the whilst this play is playing,
and 'scape detecting. I will pay
the theft.

Trumpets play announcing King's impending presence.
Curtains in balcony rise revealing the waiting court.

HAMLET
They are coming to the play; I
must be idle: get you a place.

Horatio exits center door.

Danish march. A flourish of avatars appear in the
balconies, including Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius,
Ophelia, and several extras in period garb.

Horatio walks to stand in the back of balcony.

CLAUDIUS
How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAMLET
Excellent, i'faith; of the
chameleon's dish: I eat the air,
promise-crammed: you cannot feed
capons so.

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CLAUDIUS

I have nothing with this answer,
Hamlet; these words are not mine.

Claudius sits down. Gertrude and Ophelia and others also sit. Polonius remains standing, staring at Hamlet.

HAMLET

No, nor mine now.
(To Polonius)
My lord, you played once i'the
university, you say?

POLONIUS

That did I, my lord; and was
accounted a good actor.

HAMLET

What did you enact?

POLONIUS

I did enact Julius Caesar: I was
killed i' the Capitol; Brutus
killed me.

HAMLET

It was a brute part of him to
kill so capital a calf there. Be
the players ready?

POLONIUS

(glances balcony right)
Aye, my lord; they stay upon
your patience.

Polonius sits. Gertrude stands.

GERTRUDE

Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit
by me.

HAMLET

(staring at the stage)
No, good mother, here's metal
more attractive.

Hamlet raises his head and glares at Ophelia.

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POLONIUS

(To Claudius:)

O, ho! do you mark that?

HAMLET

(yells with malice)

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

OPHELIA

No, my lord.

HAMLET

I mean, my head upon your lap?

OPHELIA

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

Do you think I meant country matters?

OPHELIA

I think nothing, my lord.

HAMLET

That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

OPHELIA

What is, my lord?

HAMLET

Nothing.

OPHELIA

You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET

Who, I?

OPHELIA

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

O God, your own jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry?

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HAMLET (cont'd)

For, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these 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, he must build churches, then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is 'For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.'

Hautboys play enter left door. The dumb-show enters from right door.

Enter PLAYER KING (bot) and PLAYER QUEEN (bot) very lovingly; the Queen embracing him, and he her.

She kneels and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him.

Anon comes in POISONER (bot), takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exits.

The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action.

The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her.

The dead body is carried away.

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The Poisoner woos the Queen with gifts: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.

Exeunt. The stage is once again empty.

OPHELIA
What means this, my lord?

HAMLET
Marry, this is miching mallecho;
it means mischief.

OPHELIA
Belike this show imports the
argument of the play.

Enter PROLOGUE from centerdoor.

HAMLET
We shall know by this fellow:
the players cannot keep counsel;
they'll tell all.

OPHELIA
Will he tell us what this show
meant?

HAMLET
Ay, or any show that you'll show
him: be not you ashamed to show,
he'll not shame to tell you what
it means.

OPHELIA
You are naught, you are naught:
I'll mark the play.

PROLOGUE
For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg you hearing patiently.

HAMLET
Is this a prologue, or the posy
of a ring?

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OPHELIA

'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET

As woman's love.

Enter PLAYER KING from right door and PLAYER QUEEN from left door. Lights fade slightly.

PLAYER KING

Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground, And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen about the world have times twelve thirties been, since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands unite commutual in most sacred bands.

PLAYER QUEEN

So many journeys may the sun and moon make us again count o'er ere love be done! But, woe is me, you are so sick of late, so far from cheer and from your former state, that I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust, discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must: for women's fear and love holds quantity; in neither aught, or in extremity. Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know; and as my love is sized, my fear is so: where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear; where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

PLAYER KING

Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too; my operant powers their functions leave to do: and thou shalt live in this fair world behind, Honour'd,

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PLAYER KING (cont'd)
beloved; and haply one as kind
for husband shalt thou--

PLAYER QUEEN
O, confound the rest! Such love
must needs be treason in my
breast: in second husband let me
be accurst! None wed the second
but who kill'd the first.

HAMLET
(aside)
Wormwood, wormwood.

PLAYER QUEEN
The instances that second
marriage move are base respects
of thrift, but none of love: a
second time I kill my husband
dead, when second husband kisses
me in bed.

PLAYER 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
(MORE)

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PLAYER KING (cont'd)

fortunes change; for 'tis a question left us yet to prove, whether love lead ofrtune, 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.

PLAYER QUEEN

Nor earth to give me 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!

PLAYER KING

Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile; my spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile the tedious day with sleep.

(He sleeps.)

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PLAYER QUEEN

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

Player Queen exits right door.

HAMLET

Madam, how like you this play?

GERTRUDE

The lady protests too much,
methinks!

HAMLET

O, but she'll keep her word.

CLAUDIUS

Have you heard the argument? Is
there no offence in 't?

HAMLET

No, no, they do but jest, poison
in jest; no offence i' the world.

CLAUDIUS

What do you call this play?

Dramatic moment. Hamlet climbs back onstage.

HAMLET

(facing the audience)

The Mouse-trap.

(pivots back to face
King, et al.)

Marry, how? Tropically. This
play is the image of a murder
done in Vienna: Gonzago is the
duke's name; his wife, Baptista:
you shall see anon; 'tis a
knavish piece of work: but what
o' that? Your majesty and we
that have free souls, it touches
us not: let the galled jade
wince, our withers are unwrung.

Enter LUCIANUS from leftdoor. Hamlet stalks him (while
announcing his presence), half in mockery, half as if an

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assistant third director trying to puppeteer an actor without strings.

HAMLET

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

OPHELIA

You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

HAMLET

I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

OPHELIA

You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

HAMLET

It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.

OPHELIA

Still better, and worse.

HAMLET

So you must take your husbands. Begin, murderer; pox, leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come: 'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.'

LUCIANUS AND HAMLET CHORUS!

Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing; confederate season, else no creature seeing; Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected, with hectate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected, thy natural magic and dire property, on wholesome life usurp immediately.

Lucianus pours the poison into the sleeper's ears.

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Hamlet is right besides him as if his conscience.

HAMLET

He poisons him i'the garden
for's estate. His name's
Gonzago: the story is extant,
and writ in choice Italian: you
shall see anon how the murderer
gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Claudius rises.

OPHELIA

The king rises.

All rise.

HAMLET

(spins to face balcony)
What, frighted with false fire!

GERTRUDE

How fares my lord?

POLONIUS

Give o'er the play.

CLAUDIUS

Give me some lights: away!

ALL

Lights, lights, lights!
(incantation)

Lights fade back. Claudius exits in a rush left balcony
and all follow. Balcony curtains fall.

Horatio enters left door.

Hamlet is still on the stage. He stands hauntingly still
as if in tableau, facing the audience.

HAMLET

Why, let the stricken deer go
weep, the hart ungalled play;
for some must watch, while some
(MORE)

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HAMLET (cont'd)
must sleep: so runs the world
away. Would not this, sir, and a
forest of feathers--if the rest
of my fortunes turn Turk with me--
with two Provincial roses on my
razed shoes, get me a fellowship
in a cry of players, sir?

HORATIO
Half a share.

HAMLET
A whole one, I. For thou dost
know, O Damon dear, this realm
dismantled was of Jove himself;
and now reigns here a very, very-
-pajock.

HORATIO
You might have rhymed.

HAMLET
O good Horatio,
(turns to face Horatio)
I'll take the ghost's word for
a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

HORATIO
Very well, my lord.

HAMLET
Upon the talk of the poisoning?

HORATIO
I did very well note him.

HAMLET
Ah, ha! Come, some music! come,
the recorders! For if the king
like not the comedy, why then,
belike, he likes it not, perdy.
Come, some music!

Hautboys enter from centerdoor and music ensues, players
follow.

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