

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,

(MORE)

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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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