

Make choice of whom your wisest Friends you will,
And they shall heare and iudge 'twixt you and me;
If by direct or by Colateral hand
They finde vs touch'd, we will our Kingdome giue,
Our Crowne, our Life, and all that we call Ours
To you in satisfaction. But if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to vs,
And we shall ioyntly labour with your soule
To giue it due content.

Laer. Let this be so:

His meanes of death, his obscure buriall;
No Trophee, Sword, nor Hatchment o're his bones,
No Noble rite, nor formall ostentation,
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from Heauen to Earth,
That I must call in question.

King. So you shall:

And where th'offence is, let the great Axe fall.
I pray you go with me.

Exeunt

Enter Horatio, with an Attendant.

Hora. What are they that would speake with me?

Ser. Saylors sir, they say they haue Letters for you.

Hor. Let them come in,

I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

Enter Saylor.

Say. God blesse you Sir.

Hor. Let him blesse thee too.

Say. Hee shall Sir, and't please him. There's a Letter
for you Sir: It comes from th'Ambassadours that was
bound for England, if your name be *Horatio*, as I am let
to know it is.

Reads the Letter.

HOratio, When thou shalt haue ouerlook'd this, giue these
Fellowes some meanes to the King: They haue Letters
for him. Ere we were two dayes old at Sea, a Pyrate of very
Warlike appointment gaue vs Chace. Finding our selues too
slow of Saile, we put on a compelled Valour. In the Grapple, I
boorded them: On the instant they got cleare of our Shippe, so
I alone became their Prisoner. They haue dealt with mee, like
Theeues of Mercy, but they knew what they did. I am to doe
a good turne for them. Let the King haue the Letters I haue
sent, and repaire thou to me with as much hast as thou wouldest
flye death. I haue words to speake in your eare, will make thee
dumbe, yet are they much too light for the bore of the Matter.
These good Fellowes will bring thee where I am. Rosinrance
and Guildensterne, hold their course for England. Of them
I haue much to tell thee, Farewell.

He that thou knowest thine,

Hamlet.

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

Exit.

Enter King and Laertes.

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for Friend,
Sith you haue heard, and with a knowing eare,
That he which hath your Noble Father slaine,
Pursued my life.

Laer. It well appeares. But tell me,
Why you proceeded not against these feates,
So crimefull, and so Capitall in Nature,
As by your Safety, Wisedome, all things else,

You mainly were stirr'd vp?

King. O for two speciall Reasons,
Which may to you (perhaps) seeme much vnfinnowed,
And yet to me they are strong. The Queen his Mother,
Liues almost by his lookes: and for my selfe,
My Vertue or my Plague, be it either which,
She's so coniunctiue to my life and soule;
That as the Starre moues not but in his Sphere,
I could not but by her. The other Motiue,
Why to a publike count I might not go,
Is the great loue the generall gender beare him,
Who dipping all his Faults in their affection,
Would like the Spring that turneth Wood to Stone,
Conuert his Gyues to Graces. So that my Arrowes
Too slightly timbred for so loud a Winde,
Would haue reuerted to my Bow againe,
And not where I had arm'd them.

Laer. And so haue I a Noble Father lost,
A Sister driuen into desperate tearmes,
Who was (if praises may go backe againe)
Stood Challenger on mount of all the Age
For her perfections. But my reuenge will come.

King. Breake not your sleepes for that,
You must not thinke
That we are made of stufte, so flat, and dull,
That we can let our Beard be shooke with danger,
And thinke it pastime. You shortly shall heare more,
I lou'd your Father, and we loue our Selfe,
And that I hope will teach you to imagine.

Enter a Messenger.

How now? What Newes?

Mes. Letters my Lord from Hamlet. This to your
Maiesty: this to the Queene.

King. From Hamlet? Who brought them?

Mes. Saylors my Lord they say, I saw them not:
They were giuen me by *Claudio*, he receiu'd them.

King. Laertes you shall heare them:

Leaue vs.

Exit Messenger

*High and Mighty, you shall know I am set naked on your
Kingdome. To morrow shall I begge leaue to see your Kingly
Eyes. When I shall (first asking your Pardon thereunto) re-
count th'Occasions of my sodaine, and more strange returne.*

Hamlet.

What should this meane? Are all the rest come backe?
Or is it some abuse? Or no such thing?

Laer. Know you the hand?

King. 'Tis Hamlets Character, naked and in a Post-
script here he sayes alone: Can you aduise me?

Laer. I'm lost in it my Lord; but let him come,
It warms the very sicknesse in my heart,
That I shall liue and tell him to his teeth;
Thus diddest thou.

King. If it be so Laertes, as how should it be so:
How otherwise will you be rul'd by me?

Laer. If so you'l not o'rerule me to a peace.

King. To thine owne peace: if he be now return'd,
As checking at his Voyage, and that he meanes
No more to vndertake it; I will worke him
To an employt now ripe in my Deuice,
Vnder the which he shall not choose but fall;
And for his death no winde of blame shall breath,
But euen his Mother shall vncharge the practice,
And call it accident: Some two Monthes hence
Here was a Gentleman of Normandy,
I'ue seene my selfe, and seru'd against the French,
And they ran well on Horiebacke; but this Gallant

Had