

## ACT III

## Scene 1

*A room in the castle. Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

KING: And can you by no drift of conference<sup>2</sup>  
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,  
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet  
With turbulent<sup>3</sup> and dangerous lunacy?

5 ROSENCRANTZ: He does confess he feels himself distracted,  
But from what cause 'a will by no means speak.

GUILDENSTERN: Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,<sup>4</sup>  
But with a crafty madness keeps aloof  
When we would bring him on to some confession  
Of his true state.

10 QUEEN: Did he receive you well?

ROSENCRANTZ: Most like a gentleman.

GUILDENSTERN: But with much forcing of his disposition.<sup>5</sup>

ROSENCRANTZ: Niggard of question, but of our demands<sup>6</sup>  
Most free in his reply.

QUEEN: Did you assay<sup>7</sup> him

15 To any pastime?

ROSENCRANTZ: Madam, it so fell out that certain players  
We o'er-raught<sup>8</sup> on the way. Of these we told him,  
And there did seem in him a kind of joy  
To hear of it. They are here about the court,  
20 And as I think, they have already order  
This night to play before him.

POLONIUS: 'Tis most true,  
And he beseeched me to entreat your majesties  
To hear and see the matter.<sup>9</sup>

KING: With all my heart, and it doth much content me  
25 To hear him so inclined.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,  
And drive his purpose<sup>1</sup> into these delights.

ROSENCRANTZ: We shall, my lord. [*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

KING: Sweet Gertrude, leave us too,

2. Line of conversation. 3. Disturbing. 4. Questioned. *Forward*: eager. 5. Mood.  
6. To our questions. 7. Tempt. 8. Passed. 9. Performance. 1. Sharpen his intention.

For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,  
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here  
Affront<sup>2</sup> Ophelia.

Her father and myself (lawful espials<sup>3</sup>)  
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,  
We may of their encounter frankly judge,  
And gather by him, as he is behaved,  
If't be th' affliction of his love or no  
That thus he suffers for.

QUEEN: I shall obey you.—  
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish  
That your good beauties be the happy cause  
Of Hamlet's wildness. So shall I hope your virtues  
Will bring him to his wonted<sup>4</sup> way again,  
To both your honors.

OPHELIA: Madam, I wish it may. [Exit QUEEN.]

POLONIUS: Ophelia, walk you here.—Gracious,<sup>5</sup> so please you,  
We will bestow ourselves.—[To OPHELIA.] Read on this book,  
That show of such an exercise may color<sup>6</sup>  
Your loneliness.—We are oft to blame in this,  
'Tis too much proved, that with devotion's visage  
And pious action we do sugar o'er  
The devil himself.

KING: [Aside.] O, 'tis too true.  
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!  
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring<sup>7</sup> art,  
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it  
Than is my deed to my most painted word.  
O heavy burden!

POLONIUS: I hear him coming. Let's withdraw, my lord.  
[Exeunt KING and POLONIUS.]

[Enter HAMLET.]

HAMLET: To be, or not to be, that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep—  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end

2. Confront. 3. Justified spies. 4. Usual. 5. Majesty. 6. Explain. Exercise: act of devotion.  
7. Thickly painted.

The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks  
 That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation  
 Devoutly to be wished—to die, to sleep—  
 65 To sleep, perchance to dream, ay there's the rub;  
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil<sup>8</sup>  
 Must give us pause—there's the respect<sup>9</sup>  
 That makes calamity of so long life.  
 70 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
 Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,<sup>1</sup>  
 The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
 The insolence of office, and the spurns<sup>2</sup>  
 That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,  
 75 When he himself might his quietus<sup>3</sup> make  
 With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels<sup>4</sup> bear,  
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
 But that the dread of something after death,  
 The undiscovered country, from whose bourn<sup>5</sup>  
 80 No traveller returns, puzzles the will,  
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
 Than fly to others that we know not of?  
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;  
 And thus the native<sup>6</sup> hue of resolution  
 85 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
 And enterprises of great pitch and moment<sup>7</sup>  
 With this regard their currents turn awry  
 And lose the name of action.—Soft you now,  
 The fair Ophelia.—Nymph, in thy orisons<sup>8</sup>  
 Be all my sins remembered.

90 OPHELIA: Good my lord,  
 How does your honor for this many a day?

HAMLET: I humbly thank you, well, well, well.

OPHELIA: My lord, I have remembrances of yours  
 That I have longèd long to re-deliver.  
 I pray you now receive them.

95 HAMLET: No, not I,  
 I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA: My honored lord, you know right well you did,

8. Turmoil. 9. Consideration. 1. Insulting behavior. 2. Rejections. 3. Settlement.  
 4. Burdens. *Bodkin*: dagger. 5. Boundary. 6. Natural. 7. Importance. *Pitch*: height.  
 8. Prayers.