

—a *LIGHTING CHANGE* sufficient to alter the exterior mood into interior, but nothing violent. *MUSIC CUE 3 & C.* And *OPHELIA* runs on in some alarm, holding up her skirts—followed by *HAMLET*. *OPHELIA* has been sewing and she holds the garment. They are both mute. *HAMLET*, with his doublet all unbraced, no hat upon his head, his stockings fouled, ungartered and downgyved to his ankle, pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other . . . and with a look so piteous, he takes her by the wrist and holds her hard, then he goes to the length of his arm, and with his other hand over his brow, falls to such perusal of her face as he would draw it. . . . At last, with a little shaking of his arm, and thrice his head waving up and down, he raises a sigh so piteous and profound that it does seem to shatter all his bulk and end his being. That done he lets her go, and with his head over his shoulder turned, he goes out backwards without taking his eyes off her . . . she runs off in the opposite direction. *ROS* and *GUIL* have frozen. *GUIL* unfreezes first. He jumps at *ROS*.)

Start

GUIL. Come on!

(*But a flourish—enter CLAUDIUS and GERTRUDE, attended. MUSIC CUE D.*)

CLAUDIUS. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz . . . (*He raises a hand at GUIL while ROS bows—GUIL bows late and hurriedly.*) and Guildenstern. (*He raises a hand at ROS while GUIL bows to him—ROS is still straightening up from his previous bow and halfway up he bows down again. With his head down, he twists to look at GUIL, who is on the way up.*)

Moreover that we did much long to see you,
The need we have to use you did provoke
Our hasty sending.

(Ros and GUIL still adjusting their clothing for CLAUDIUS's presence.)

Something have you heard
 Of Hamle's transformation, so call it,
 Sith nor th'exterior nor the inward man
 Resembles that it was. What it should be,
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him,
 So much from th'understanding of himself,
 I cannot dream of. I entreat you both
 That, being of so young days brought up with him
 And sith so neighboured to his youth and haviour
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
 Some little time, so by your companies
 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
 So much as from occasion you may glean,
 Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus,
 That opened lies within our remedy.

GERTRUDE. Good (*Fractional suspense.*) gentlemen . . .

(*They BOTH bow.*)

He hath much talked of you,
 And sure I am, two men there is not living
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
 To show us so much gentry and goodwill
 As to expand your time with us awhile
 For the supply and profit of our hope,
 Your visitation shall receive such thanks
 As fits a king's remembrance.

Ros.

Both your majesties
 Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
 Put your dread pleasures more into command
 Than to entreaty.

GUIL.

But we both obey,

And here give up ourselves in the full bent
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

CLAUDIUS. Thanks, Rosencrantz (*Turning to Ros who is caught unprepared, while GUIL bows.*) and gentle Guildenstern (*Turning to GUIL who is bent double.*)

GERTRUDE. (*Correcting.*) Thanks, Guildenstern (*Turning to Ros, who bows as GUIL checks upward movement to bow too— BOTH bent double, squinting at each other.*) . . . and gentle Rosencrantz (*Turning to GUIL, BOTH straightening up—GUIL checks again and bows again.*)

And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son. Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

(*Two ATTENDANTS exit backwards, indicating that Ros and GUIL should follow.*)

GUIL.
Heaven make our presence and our practices
Pleasant and helpful to him.

GERTRUDE. Ay, amen!

(*ROS and GUIL move towards a Downstage wing. Before they get there, POLONIUS enters. They stop and bow to him. He nods and hurries Upstage to CLAUDIUS. They turn to look at him.*)

POLONIUS. The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord, are joyfully returned.

CLAUDIUS. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

POLONIUS.
Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,
I hold my duty as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious King;
And I do think, or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure

As it hath used to do, that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy. . . .

(*Exeunt—leaving Ros and GUIL.*)

ROS. I want to go home.

GUIL. Don't let them confuse you.

ROS. I'm out of my step here—

GUIL. We'll soon be home and high—dry and home—
I'll—

ROS. It's all over my *depth*—

GUIL. —I'll hie you home and—

ROS. —out of my head—

GUIL. —dry you high and—

ROS. (*Cracking, high.*) —over my step over my head
body!—I tell you it's all stopping to a death, it's boding
to a depth, stepping to a head, it's all heading to a dead
stop—

GUIL. (*The nursemaid.*) There! . . . and we'll soon be
home and dry . . . and *high* and dry . . . (*Rapidly.*)
Has it ever happened to you that all of a sudden and for
no reason at all you haven't the faintest idea how to spell
the word—"wife"—or "house"—because when you write
it down you just can't remember ever having seen those
letters in that order before . . . ?

ROS. I remember—

GUIL. Yes?

ROS. I remember when there were no questions.

GUIL. There were always questions. To exchange one
set for another is no great matter.

ROS. Answers, yes. There were answers to everything.

GUIL. You've forgotten.

ROS. (*Flaring.*) I haven't forgotten—how I used to re-
member my own name—and yours, oh, *yes!* There were
answers everywhere you *looked*. There was no question
about it—people knew who I was and if they didn't they
asked and I told them.

GUIL. You did, the trouble is, each of them is . . .

End