

FIRST PLAYER

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

Very well. Follow that lord, and look you mock him not.

(Exit FIRST PLAYER.)

My good friends, I'll leave you till night. You are welcome to Elsinore.

ROSENCRANTZ

Good my lord.

(Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)

HAMLET

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!

Is it not monstrous that this player here, but in a fiction, in a dream of passion, could force his soul so to his own conceit that from her working all his visage waned,* tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect, a broken voice, and his whole function suiting with forms to his conceit?* And all for nothing! For Hecuba! What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba, that he should weep for her?

What would he do, had he the motive and the cue* for passion that I have?

He would drown the stage with tears and cleave the general ear with horrid speech, make mad the guilty and appall the free, confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed the very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I, a dull and muddy-mettled* rascal, can say nothing.

No, not for a king, upon whose property and most dear life a damned defeat was made.

Am I a coward? Who calls me villain? Breaks my pate* across? Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face? Tweaks me by the nose? Gives me the lie in the throat, as deep as to the lungs? Who does me this? Ha? 'Swounds,* I should take it,

for it cannot be but I am pigeon livered and lack gall* to make oppression bitter, or ere this I should have fatted all the region kites* with this slave's offal.*

Bloody, bawdy villain! Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless* villain! O, vengeance!

Why, what an ass am I.

This is most brave, that I, the son of a dear father murdered, prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell, must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words, and fall a cursing like a very drab,* a scullion!*

Fie upon it! Foh!

About,* my brain.

visage waned - face turned pale,

function...conceit - all his bodily powers responding with physical expressiveness to his imagination,

cue - stimulus, *muddy-mettled* - dull spirited, *pate* - head, *gives me...lungs* - calls me an out-and-out liar,

'*Swounds* - God's wounds, *pigeon-livered and lack gall* - pigeons are meek and it was believed their livers didn't secrete gall, the supposed source of anger, *kites* - predatory birds of the hawk family, *offal* - entrails,

kindless - inhuman; not of our kind, *drab* - whore, *scullion* - the lowest kitchen servant,

About - Turn about (think in a different direction)

I have heard that guilty creatures sitting at a play have by the very cunning of the scene
 been struck so to the soul that presently they have proclaimed their malefactions.*
 For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak with most miraculous organ.
 I'll have these players play something like the murder of my father before mine uncle.
 I'll observe his looks. I'll tent* him to the quick.* If he do blench,* I know my course.
 The spirit that I have seen may be the devil, and the devil hath power to assume a pleasing shape,
 yea, and perhaps out of my weakness and my melancholy, as he is very potent with such spirits,
 abuses me to damn me.*
 I'll have grounds more relative* than this.
 The play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.

(Exit HAMLET.)

malefactions - crimes, *tent* - probe (a tent was a roll of lint used to search and cleanse a wound),
quick - exposed flesh; vital core, *blench* - flinch,
The spirit... to damn me - the spirit may not be his father's Catholic spirit sent to help Hamlet, but a disguised
 Protestant devil sent to take advantage of Hamlet's vulnerable state to trick him and capture his soul,
relative - relevant