

The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

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SCENE II. Another room in the castle.

Enter HAMLET

HAMLET

Safely stowed.

ROSENCRANTZ: GUILDENSTERN:

[Within] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

HAMLET

What noise? who calls on Hamlet?

O, here they come.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

ROSENCRANTZ

What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

HAMLET

Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

ROSENCRANTZ

Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence

And bear it to the chapel.

HAMLET

Do not believe it.

ROSENCRANTZ

Believe what?

HAMLET

That I can keep your counsel and not mine own.

Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! what replication should be made by the son of a king?

ROSENCRANTZ

Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

HAMLET

Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end: he keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed: when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

ROSENCRANTZ

I understand you not, my lord.

HAMLET

I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

ROSENCRANTZ

My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

HAMLET

The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing--

GUILDENSTERN

A thing, my lord!

HAMLET

Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.

Exeunt

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