

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

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## SCENE I. A churchyard.

*Enter two Clowns, with spades, & c*

### First Clown

Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

### Second Clown

I tell thee she is: and therefore make her grave straight: the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

### First Clown

How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

### Second Clown

Why, 'tis found so.

### First Clown

It must be 'se offendendo;' it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three branches: it is, to act, to do, to perform: argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

### Second Clown

Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,--

### First Clown

Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good; if the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes,--mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

### Second Clown

But is this law?

**First Clown**

Ay, marry, is't; crowner's quest law.

**Second Clown**

Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

**First Clown**

Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentleman but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession.

**Second Clown**

Was he a gentleman?

**First Clown**

He was the first that ever bore arms.

**Second Clown**

Why, he had none.

**First Clown**

What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says 'Adam digged:' could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself--

**Second Clown**

Go to.

**First Clown**

What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

**Second Clown**

The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a

thousand tenants.

### **First Clown**

I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do in: now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.

### **Second Clown**

'Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?'

### **First Clown**

Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

### **Second Clown**

Marry, now I can tell.

### **First Clown**

To't.

### **Second Clown**

Mass, I cannot tell.

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance*

### **First Clown**

Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and, when you are asked this question next, say 'a grave-maker: 'the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan: fetch me a stoup of liquor.

*Exit Second Clown*

*He digs and sings*

In youth, when I did love, did love,  
Methought it was very sweet,  
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,  
O, methought, there was nothing meet.

### **HAMLET**

Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

## **HORATIO**

Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

## **HAMLET**

'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

## **First Clown**

[Sings]

But age, with his stealing steps,  
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,  
And hath shipped me intil the land,  
As if I had never been such.

*Throws up a skull*

## **HAMLET**

That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

## **HORATIO**

It might, my lord.

## **HAMLET**

Or of a courtier; which could say 'Good morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?' This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

## **HORATIO**

Ay, my lord.

## **HAMLET**

Why, e'en so: and now my Lady Worm's; chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with 'em? mine ache to think on't.

## First Clown

[Sings]

A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,  
For and a shrouding sheet:  
O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

*Throws up another skull*

## HAMLET

There's another: why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quilllets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

## HORATIO

Not a jot more, my lord.

## HAMLET

Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

## HORATIO

Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

## HAMLET

They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

## First Clown

Mine, sir.

*Sings*

O, a pit of clay for to be made

For such a guest is meet.

**HAMLET**

I think it be thine, indeed; for thou liest in't.

**First Clown**

You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

**HAMLET**

'Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine:  
'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

**First Clown**

'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away gain, from me to you.

**HAMLET**

What man dost thou dig it for?

**First Clown**

For no man, sir.

**HAMLET**

What woman, then?

**First Clown**

For none, neither.

**HAMLET**

Who is to be buried in't?

**First Clown**

One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

**HAMLET**

How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken a note of it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he gaffs his kibe. How long hast thou been a

grave-maker?

**First Clown**

Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that day  
that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

**HAMLET**

How long is that since?

**First Clown**

Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it  
was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he that  
is mad, and sent into England.

**HAMLET**

Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

**First Clown**

Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits  
there; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

**HAMLET**

Why?

**First Clown**

'Twill, a not be seen in him there; there the men  
are as mad as he.

**HAMLET**

How came he mad?

**First Clown**

Very strangely, they say.

**HAMLET**

How strangely?

**First Clown**

Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

**HAMLET**

Upon what ground?

**First Clown**

Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

**HAMLET**

How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

**First Clown**

I' faith, if he be not rotten before he die--as we have many pocky corses now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in--he will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

**HAMLET**

Why he more than another?

**First Clown**

Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years.

**HAMLET**

Whose was it?

**First Clown**

A whoreson mad fellow's it was: whose do you think it was?

**HAMLET**

Nay, I know not.

**First Clown**

A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! a' poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

**HAMLET**

This?

**First Clown**



E'en that.

**HAMLET**

Let me see.

*Takes the skull*

Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rims at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

**HORATIO**

What's that, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

**HORATIO**

E'en so.

**HAMLET**

And smelt so? pah!

*Puts down the skull*

**HORATIO**

E'en so, my lord.

**HAMLET**

To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

**HORATIO**

'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

## HAMLET

No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with  
modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: as  
thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried,  
Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of  
earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he  
was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?  
Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,  
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:  
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,  
Should patch a wall to expel the winter flaw!  
But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the king.

*Enter Priest, & c. in procession; the Corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following; KING  
CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, their trains, & c*

The queen, the courtiers: who is this they follow?  
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken  
The corse they follow did with desperate hand  
Fordo its own life: 'twas of some estate.  
Couch we awhile, and mark.

*Retiring with HORATIO*

## LAERTES

What ceremony else?

## HAMLET

That is Laertes,  
A very noble youth: mark.

## LAERTES

What ceremony else?

## First Priest

Her obsequies have been as far enlarged  
As we have warrantise: her death was doubtful;  
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,  
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged  
Till the last trumpet: for charitable prayers,  
Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her;  
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,  
Her maiden strewments and the bringing home  
Of bell and burial.

## LAERTES

Must there no more be done?

### **First Priest**

No more be done:  
We should profane the service of the dead  
To sing a requiem and such rest to her  
As to peace-parted souls.

### **LAERTES**

Lay her i' the earth:  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,  
A ministering angel shall my sister be,  
When thou liest howling.

### **HAMLET**

What, the fair Ophelia!

### **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

*Scattering flowers*

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;  
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,  
And not have strew'd thy grave.

### **LAERTES**

O, treble woe  
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,  
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense  
Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth awhile,  
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

*Leaps into the grave*

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,  
To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus.

### **HAMLET**

[Advancing] What is he whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow  
Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand  
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,

Hamlet the Dane.

*Leaps into the grave*

**LAERTES**

The devil take thy soul!

*Grappling with him*

**HAMLET**

Thou pray'st not well.  
I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;  
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,  
Yet have I something in me dangerous,  
Which let thy wiseness fear: hold off thy hand.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Pluck them asunder.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Hamlet, Hamlet!

**All**

Gentlemen,--

**HORATIO**

Good my lord, be quiet.

*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave*

**HAMLET**

Why I will fight with him upon this theme  
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

O my son, what theme?

**HAMLET**

I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers  
Could not, with all their quantity of love,  
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

O, he is mad, Laertes.

## QUEEN GERTRUDE

For love of God, forbear him.

## HAMLET

'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do:  
Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear thyself?  
Woo't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile?  
I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?  
To outface me with leaping in her grave?  
Be buried quick with her, and so will I:  
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw  
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,  
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,  
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,  
I'll rant as well as thou.

## QUEEN GERTRUDE

This is mere madness:  
And thus awhile the fit will work on him;  
Anon, as patient as the female dove,  
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,  
His silence will sit drooping.

## HAMLET

Hear you, sir;  
What is the reason that you use me thus?  
I loved you ever: but it is no matter;  
Let Hercules himself do what he may,  
The cat will mew and dog will have his day.

*Exit*

## KING CLAUDIUS

I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.

*Exit HORATIO*

*To LAERTES*

Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;  
We'll put the matter to the present push.  
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.  
This grave shall have a living monument:  
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;  
Till then, in patience our proceeding be.

