

Hamlet abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 3

Brother to Sister

Situation: As he is about to leave for France, Laertes offers his sister some brotherly advice, she being Hamlet's girlfriend. His father, Polonius, was a good friend of the late King Hamlet. Laertes assures her he'll remain on good behavior while in France, just as his father wishes.

LAERTES: For Hamlet, hold it as a temporary flirtation, a violet in the youth of nature, not lasting the pleasure of a minute, no more.

OPHELIA: No more but so?

LAERTES: Think it no more.

Laertes to Ophelia

**Note my dear sister that nature's crescent
Does not grow alone in muscle strength sent
In youth; the mind and soul grow wide withal.
Perhaps he loves you now, but his will is
Not his own, but of the whole state, so fall
With care. He may say he loves you, but his
Words go no further than the main voice of
Denmark, so weigh loss of honor above
The moment; a cautious maid's prodigal
Enough if she unmask to the moon. Lie
Not to thyself, knowing canker can gall
Buds of spring and fresh blossoms know not why.
Be wary, then; best safety lies in fear
Knowing youth itself rebels when love's near.**

OPHELIA: I shall the effect of this good lesson keep as watchman to my heart. But, good my brother, do not, as some ungracious pastors do, show me the steep and thorny way to heaven, whiles himself the primrose path of dalliance treads and heeds not his own advice.

LAERTES: O, fear me not.