

Hamlet abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 2

Disillusionment

Situation: Being aware that the king and queen have asked Hamlet's classmates Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to meet with him and "to gather so much as from occasion you may glean," Hamlet lets them know how he feels about life.

HAMLET: Come, come, deal justly with me. Come, nay, speak.

GUILDENSTERN: What should we say, my lord?

HAMLET: Anything but to th' purpose. I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ: To what end, my lord.

HAMLET: That you must teach me. By the rights of our fellowship, be even and direct with me whether you were sent for or no.

GUILDENSTERN: My lord, we were sent for.

Hamlet to Guildenstern and Rosencrantz

That your pledge to the king and queen need not
Be disclosed, as to break their secret sought,
I will tell you why. I have lost my mirth
And forsaken exercise. Indeed, my
Disposition's so bad that this good earth
Seems a sterile rock and this air, the sky,
This brave overhanging arch, fretted with
The golden fire appeareth as a myth,
As a pestilent set of vapors. What
A piece of work is a man. Nobel must
Be he in reason, form and action, but
Yet to me, what's this quintessence of dust?
Man delights me not, nor women I know,
Though by your smiling you seem to say so.

ROSENCRANTZ: My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.