

Hamlet abbreviated

Act 3, Scene 2

Insight

Situation: The play “The Murder of Gonzago” begins. Hamlet takes a seat between Ophelia and his mother. The play depicts the set of actions that led to King Hamlet’s death as told to Hamlet by the late king’s ghost. As the play unfolds, Claudius quickly leaves the theater crying “give me some light.”

PLAYER QUEEN: O, confound the rest! In second husband let me be accurst. None wed the second but who killed the first.

HAMLET: That’s wormwood!

PLAYER QUEEN: The instances that second marriage move are base respects of thrift, but none of love. A second time I kill my husband dead when second husband kisses me in bed.

PLAYER KING: I do believe you think what now you speak.

Player King to Player Queen

Passion breeds promises too soon broken
When passion ends, like fruit falls unshaken
From a tree when mellow. We forget to
Pay ourselves what we said we owed ourselves.
Joy and grief can change quickly and they do;
Where passionate vows lead, no one foretells.
This world’s not forever; so ‘tis not strange
That even love should with our fortunes change.
The question’s left for us to prove whether
Love leads to fate or through fate comes love. Our
Will and fates wonder knowing not what lure
Awaits. Our thought ours, though their ends may sour.
You say thou wilt no second husband wed,
But thy thoughts die when thy first love is dead.

PLAYER QUEEN: Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light, sport and repose lock from me day and night, to desperation turn my trust and hope, an anchor’s cheer in prison be my scope. PLAYER KING: Sweet, leave me here awhile. My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile the tedious day with sleep.

He sleeps.

PLAYER QUEEN: Sleep rock thy brain, and never come mischance between us twain.

Player Queen exits.

HAMLET: Madam, how like you this play?

QUEEN: The lady doth protest too much, methinks.