

Hamlet abbreviated

Act 4, Scene 3

Tease

Situation: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern learn little from Hamlet, having been asked by the king to find out where Hamlet has taken the body of Polonius. Hamlet only tells them that Polonius has been “safely stowed.” The king then takes it on himself to ask Hamlet directly where he has taken the corpse.

KING: Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAMLET: At supper.

KING: At supper where?

Hamlet to Claudius

It's not where he eats, but where he's eaten.
A group of crafty worms are e'en 'im.
Your worm is the emperor of eaters.
We fatten all creatures to fatten us,
And the fattening of ourselves defers
To the maggots and worms. The worms don't fuss
Over a fat king and skinny beggar,
Considering them both fine meals; rather
Like two different dishes at one table.
A man may fish with the worm that was led
To a king and eat the fish 'twas able
To feed on that worm, which shows a king fed
May progress through a beggar. You shall all
Nose him as you go up into the hall.

KING TO ATTENDANTS: Go, seek him there.

HAMLET: He will stay till you come.