

Hamlet abbreviated

Act 3, Scene 4

Son to Mother

Situation: Hamlet stabs Polonius to death, Polonius having cried out “What ho! Help,” having hidden himself behind the drapes in the queen’s chambers. Hamlet had blindly stabbed at the noise behind the drapes. Hamlet criticizes his mother. It’s at this point when the two of them are visited by his late father’s ghost, seen only by Hamlet.

HAMLET: Look here upon this picture and on this, the counterfeit presentment of two brothers. This was your husband. Look you now what follows. Here is your husband, like a mildewed ear of corn blasting his wholesome brother.

Hamlet to his Mother

Have you eyes? This cannot be called love, for
At your age the thrill in the blood is more
Tame. Your senses must be paralyzed or
Your mind enslaved; what judgment would have stepped
To this? Madness would not err like this nor
Should bliss be so bonding for you to’ve leapt
To this fantasy; not reserving some
Quantity of choice. What devil has come
To trick you at blind man’s bluff? If this love,
Love is mad. If thou in matron’s bones lacks
Reason and will, how can the virtue of
A flaming maid not melt as heated wax?
Shaming youth for ardor is not your turn
When frost itself as actively doth burn.

QUEEN: O Hamlet, speak no more! These words like daggers enter in my ears. No more, sweet Hamlet
The Ghost enters.

HAMLET: What would your gracious figure?

QUEEN: Alas, he’s mad.

HAMLET: Do you not come your tardy son to chide, that, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by th’
important acting of your dread command?

GHOST: Do not forget. But look, amazement on thy mother sits. O, step between her and her fighting
soul. Speak to her, Hamlet.