

## THE CLOSET SCENE

*The court assembles to watch the actors play and Hamlet's bitter and mocking language returns. At the sight of the poison being poured into the sleeping king's ears, Claudius leaves calling for light, and the play abruptly ends. Hamlet is in a state of excitement: he believes that the Ghost has told him the truth and that Claudius has revealed his guilt. Polonius then gives Hamlet the message that the Queen wants to speak to him, and hides behind the tapestry in Gertrude's closet where he is killed, unseen, by Hamlet.*

### HAMLET

Look here, upon this picture, and on this,  
The counterfeit presentment<sup>1</sup> of two brothers.  
See, what a grace was seated on this brow;  
Hyperion's curls; the front<sup>2</sup> of Jove himself;  
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;  
A station<sup>3</sup> like the herald Mercury  
New-lighted<sup>4</sup> on a heaven-kissing hill;  
A combination and a form indeed,  
Where every god did seem to set his seal,  
To give the world assurance of a man:  
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:  
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear<sup>5</sup>,  
Blasting<sup>6</sup> his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?  
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed<sup>7</sup>,  
And batten<sup>8</sup> on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?  
You cannot call it love; for at your age  
The hey-day<sup>9</sup> in the blood is tame, it's humble,  
And waits upon the judgment: and what judgment  
Would step from this to this? Sense<sup>10</sup>, sure, you have,  
Else could you not have motion; but sure, that sense  
Is apoplex'd<sup>11</sup>; for madness would not err,  
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd  
But<sup>12</sup> it reserved some quantity of choice,  
To serve in such a difference<sup>13</sup>. What devil was't  
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind<sup>14</sup>?  
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,  
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all<sup>15</sup>,  
Or but a sickly part of one true sense  
Could not so mope<sup>16</sup>.  
O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,

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1 counterfeit presentment: portrait

2 front: forehead

3 Station: bearing

4 New lighted: having just landed

5 Mildew'd ear: diseased ear of corn

6 Blasting: infecting

7 Leave to feed: stop grazing

8 Batten: get fat

9 Heyday: excitement

10 Sense: senses

11 Apoplexed: paralysed

12 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd but: the senses would never be such slaves to hallucination that

13 It ... difference: they kept in reserve no capacity to choose between these two alternatives

14 Cozen'd you at hoodman blind: deceived you into a game of blind man's buff (moscacieca)

15 Sans all: deprived of everything

16 Mope: be confused

If thou canst mutine<sup>17</sup> in a matron's<sup>18</sup> bones,  
To flaming<sup>19</sup> youth let virtue be as wax,  
And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame  
When the compulsive ardour<sup>20</sup> gives the charge,  
Since frost itself as actively doth burn  
And reason panders will<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Canst mutine: can mutiny

<sup>18</sup> Matron: married and polder woman

<sup>19</sup> Flaming: passionate

<sup>20</sup> Compulsive ardour: irresistible passion:

<sup>21</sup> reason panders will: reason procures what passion desires.