**Last Scene of Hamlet**

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and Attendants with foils, & c*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

*KING CLAUDIUS puts LAERTES' hand into HAMLET's*

**HAMLET**

Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong;

But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows,

And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd

With sore distraction. What I have done,

That might your nature, honour and exception

Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,

Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

Who does it, then? His madness: if't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir, in this audience,

Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,

That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,

And hurt my brother.

**LAERTES**

I am satisfied in nature,

Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most

To my revenge: but in my terms of honour

I stand aloof; and will no reconcilement,

Till by some elder masters, of known honour,

I have a voice and precedent of peace,

To keep my name ungored. But till that time,

I do receive your offer'd love like love,

And will not wrong it.

**HAMLET**

I embrace it freely;

And will this brother's wager frankly play.

Give us the foils. Come on.

**LAERTES**

Come, one for me.

**HAMLET**

I'll be your foil, Laertes: in mine ignorance

Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,

Stick fiery off indeed.

**LAERTES**

You mock me, sir.

**HAMLET**

No, by this hand.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,

You know the wager?

**HAMLET**

Very well, my lord

Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

I do not fear it; I have seen you both:

But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

**LAERTES**

This is too heavy, let me see another.

**HAMLET**

This likes me well. These foils have all a length?

*They prepare to play*

**OSRIC**

Ay, my good lord.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Set me the stoops of wine upon that table.

If Hamlet give the first or second hit,

Or quit in answer of the third exchange,

Let all the battlements their ordnance fire:

The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;

And in the cup an union shall he throw,

Richer than that which four successive kings

In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;

And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,

The trumpet to the cannoneer without,

The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,

'Now the king dunks to Hamlet.' Come, begin:

And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

**HAMLET**

Come on, sir.

**LAERTES**

Come, my lord.

*They play*

**HAMLET**

One.

**LAERTES**

No.

**HAMLET**

Judgment.

**OSRIC**

A hit, a very palpable hit.

**LAERTES**

Well; again.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;

Here's to thy health.

*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within*

Give him the cup.

**HAMLET**

I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile. Come.

*They play*

Another hit; what say you?

**LAERTES**

A touch, a touch, I do confess.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Our son shall win.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

He's fat, and scant of breath.

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows;

The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

**HAMLET**

Good madam!

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Gertrude, do not drink.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

[Aside] It is the poison'd cup: it is too late.

**HAMLET**

I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Come, let me wipe thy face.

**LAERTES**

My lord, I'll hit him now.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

I do not think't.

**LAERTES**

[Aside] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

**HAMLET**

Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;

I pray you, pass with your best violence;

I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

**LAERTES**

Say you so? come on.

*They play*

**OSRIC**

Nothing, neither way.

**LAERTES**

Have at you now!

*LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then in scuffling, they change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Part them; they are incensed.

**HAMLET**

Nay, come, again.

*QUEEN GERTRUDE falls*

**OSRIC**

Look to the queen there, ho!

**HORATIO**

They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

**OSRIC**

How is't, Laertes?

**LAERTES**

Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric;

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

**HAMLET**

How does the queen?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

She swounds to see them bleed.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

No, no, the drink, the drink,--O my dear Hamlet,--

The drink, the drink! I am poison'd.

*Dies*

**HAMLET**

O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd:

Treachery! Seek it out.

**LAERTES**

It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;

No medicine in the world can do thee good;

In thee there is not half an hour of life;

The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,

Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practise

Hath turn'd itself on me lo, here I lie,

Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd:

I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.

**HAMLET**

The point!--envenom'd too!

Then, venom, to thy work.

*Stabs KING CLAUDIUS*

**All**

Treason! treason!

**KING CLAUDIUS**

O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.

**HAMLET**

Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,

Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?

Follow my mother.

*KING CLAUDIUS dies*

**LAERTES**

He is justly served;

It is a poison temper'd by himself.

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:

Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,

Nor thine on me.

*Dies*

**HAMLET**

Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.

I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

That are but mutes or audience to this act,

Had I but time--as this fell sergeant, death,

Is strict in his arrest--O, I could tell you--

But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;

Thou livest; report me and my cause aright

To the unsatisfied.

**HORATIO**

Never believe it:

I am more an antique Roman than a Dane:

Here's yet some liquor left.

**HAMLET**

As thou'rt a man,

Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll have't.

O good Horatio, what a wounded name,

Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart

Absent thee from felicity awhile,

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,

To tell my story.

*March afar off, and shot within*

What warlike noise is this?

**OSRIC**

Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,

To the ambassadors of England gives

This warlike volley.

**HAMLET**

O, I die, Horatio;

The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:

I cannot live to hear the news from England;

But I do prophesy the election lights

On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;

So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,

Which have solicited. The rest is silence.

*Dies*

**HORATIO**

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince:

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

Why does the drum come hither?

*March within*

*Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors, and others*

**PRINCE FORTINBRAS**

Where is this sight?

**HORATIO**

What is it ye would see?

If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

**PRINCE FORTINBRAS**

This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,

That thou so many princes at a shot

So bloodily hast struck?

**First Ambassador**

The sight is dismal;

And our affairs from England come too late:

The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,

To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,

That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:

Where should we have our thanks?

**HORATIO**

Not from his mouth,

Had it the ability of life to thank you:

He never gave commandment for their death.

But since, so jump upon this bloody question,

You from the Polack wars, and you from England,

Are here arrived give order that these bodies

High on a stage be placed to the view;

And let me speak to the yet unknowing world

How these things came about: so shall you hear

Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,

Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,

Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,

And, in this upshot, purposes mistook

Fall'n on the inventors' reads: all this can I

Truly deliver.

**PRINCE FORTINBRAS**

Let us haste to hear it,

And call the noblest to the audience.

For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune:

I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,

Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

**HORATIO**

Of that I shall have also cause to speak,

And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more;

But let this same be presently perform'd,

Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mischance

On plots and errors, happen.

**PRINCE FORTINBRAS**

Let four captains

Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;

For he was likely, had he been put on,

To have proved most royally: and, for his passage,

The soldiers' music and the rites of war

Speak loudly for him.

Take up the bodies: such a sight as this

Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off*