



THE MAROWITZ HAMLET

BY CHARLES MAROWITZ



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PREFACE

I despise Hamlet.

He is a slob.

A talker, an analyzer, a rationalizer.

Like the parlour liberal or the paralyzed intellectual, he can describe every facet of a problem, yet never pull his finger out.

Is Hamlet a coward, as he himself suggests, or simply a *poseur*, a frustrated actor who *plays* the scholar, the courtier, and the soldier as an actor (a very bad actor) assuming a variety of roles?

And why does he keep saying everything twice?

And how can someone talk so pretty in such a rotten country with the sort of work he's got cut out for him?

You may think he's a sensitive, well-spoken fellow, but frankly, he gives me a pain in the ass.

THE MAROWITZ HAMLET was produced at the Phoenix Theatre at the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, opening on March 15, 2012. It was directed by Charles Marowitz and Fran Gebhard; the set and lighting designs were by Bryan Kenney; the costume design was by Michelle Lo; and the stage manager was Denay Amaral. The cast was as follows:

HAMLET Lucas Hall
OPHELIA Randi Edmundson
LAERTES Mik Byskov
FORTINBRAS Kale Penny
QUEEN Hayley Feigs
KING Luke Pennock
GHOST Robin Gadsby
ROSENCRANTZ Jonathan Mason
GUILDENSTERN Kieran Wilson
POLONIUS/CLOWN Alex Frankson
CAPTAIN/COMPANY MEMBER Ian Simms
COMPANY MEMBERS Carol Adamson, Molison Farmer

CHARACTERS

FORTINBRAS

HAMLET

CAPTAIN

GHOST

OPHELIA

QUEEN

KING

CLOWN

LAERTES

POLONIUS

ROSENCRANTZ

GUILDENSTERN

THE MAROWITZ HAMLET

Hamlet and Fortinbras stand facing each other. After a moment, Fortinbras moves down to meet the Captain. Hamlet falls in behind the Captain like a soldier in the ranks.

FORTINBRAS.

Go, Captain, from me greet the Danish King.
Tell him, that by his licence Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promis'd march
Over his Kingdom.

HAMLET. *(Aside to Captain.)*

Good sir, whose powers are these?

CAPTAIN. *(Aside to Hamlet.)*

They are of Norway, sir.

FORTINBRAS.

You know the rendezvous.

HAMLET. *(Aside.)*

How purpos'd, sir, I pray you?

CAPTAIN. *(Aside.)*

Against some part of Poland.

FORTINBRAS.

If that his Majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye,
And let him know so.

CAPTAIN. *(Marching offstage.)*

I will do't, my Lord.

HAMLET.

Who commands them, sir?

CAPTAIN. (*Almost offstage.*)

The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.
(*Hamlet moves downstage into a spot of his own. Fortinbras, standing strongly behind him, slowly fades out.*)

HAMLET.

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge. What is a man
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more:
Sure he that made us with such large discourse
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason.

FORTINBRAS. (*Accusingly.*)

To rust in us unus'd.

GHOST.

If thou hast Nature in thee bear it not.

(*Cut into new scene.*)

HAMLET.

Murder?

GHOST.

Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul and unnatural.

HAMLET.

Haste, haste me to know it,
That I with wings as a swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love
May sweep to my revenge.

QUEEN. (*Entering placating.*)

Come let me wipe thy face.

HAMLET. (*To Ghost.*)

Speak, I am bound to hear.

OPHELIA. (*Entering.*)

You are keen, my Lord, you are keen.

QUEEN.

I prithee stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

GHOST.

The serpent that did sting thy father's life ...

QUEEN.

Do not forever with thy veiled lids.
Seek for thy noble father in the dust.

GHOST.

Now wears his crown.

KING.

How is it the clouds still hang on you?

QUEEN.

Thou know'st 'tis common, all that lives must die ...

GHOST.

By a brother's hand

Of life, of crown, and Queen at once dispatch'd.

QUEEN.

Passing through Nature, to Eternity.

HAMLET. (*To Ghost.*)

Mine Uncle?

GHOST.

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,

With witchcraft of his wits, with traitorous gifts won to his shameful lust

The will of my most seeming-virtuous Queen.

QUEEN.

Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET. (*To Queen.*)

Seems, Madam? Nay, it is: I know not seems!

(The next two speeches are counterpoint with the King's in prominence, and the Ghost's as a dulled accompaniment.)

KING.

GHOST.

"Tis sweet and commendable
in your nature, Hamlet,

To give these mourning
duties to your father.

But you must know your
father lost a father,
That father lost, lost his,
and the survivor bound

In filial obligation for some
term

To do obsequious sorrow.

With juice of cursed
hebenon in a vial
... swift as quicksilver it
courses through

The natural gates and
alleys of the body;
And with sudden vigour
it doth posset

And curd, like eager
droppings into milk,

The thin and wholesome
blood ...

HAMLET. (*To himself.*)

Hold my heart:

And you my sinews grow not instant old:

But bear me stiffly up.
KING.

Fie, 'tis a fault to Heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to Nature,
To reason most absurd whose common theme
Is death of fathers.

HAMLET.

If he but blench I know my course.

CLOWN. (*Suddenly appearing.*) What is he that builds stronger
than either the mason, the shipwright or the carpenter?

HAMLET. (*Soberly to the Clown.*) The gallows-maker, for that frame
outlives a thousand tenants.

CLOWN. I like thy wit well, in good faith, the gallows does well;
but how does it well? It does well to those that do ill. To't gain.
Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright or a carpenter?

KING.

We pray you throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father.

(*Sound-Montage: The following lines are chanted and overlap.*)

FORTINBRAS.

Think of us as of a father.

CLOWN.

Think of *us* as of a father.

QUEEN.

Thou has thy father much offended.

LAERTES.

And so have I a noble father lost.

(*Coming out of Sound-Montage.*)

GHOST.

If thou didst ever thy dear father love ...

KING.

Remain

Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

HAMLET.

O villain, villain, smiling damned villain!

KING.

Why 'tis a loving and a fair reply.

CLOWN. (*Coming in for a tag-line.*) Cudgel thy brains no more

about it: say a grave-maker, the houses that he makes last ...
GHOST.

'Til the foul crimes done in my days of Nature
Are burnt and purged away.

CLOWN. (*Seeing Ghost — backing away.*)

How long will aman lie in the earth ere he not?

GHOST. (*To Hamlet.*)

By a brother's hand

Of life, of crown, and Queen at once dispatch'd.

HAMLET.

Mine uncle.

GHOST.

Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,

Unhouse'd ...

HAMLET.

A murderer and a villain ...

GHOST.

Disappointed ...

HAMLET.

A slave ...

GHOST.

Unaneled ...

HAMLET.

A cutpurse of the empire and the rule ...

GHOST.

No reckoning made, but sent to my account

With all my imperfections on my head.

HAMLET.

A king of shreds and patches!

(*Cut into new scene. King and Laertes play oblivious of Hamlet.*)

LAERTES. (*Suddenly.*)

Where is my father?

KING.

Dead.

LAERTES.

I'll not be juggled with.

To hell allegiance; vows to the blackest devil.

HAMLET. (*Weakly trying to match Laertes' passion.*)

Yea, from the table of my memory

I'll wipe away all trivial fond records ...

THE MAROWITZ HAMLET

by Charles Marowitz

"I despise Hamlet. He is a slob, a talker, an analyser, a rationalizer. Like the parlour liberal or the paralysed intellectual, he can describe every facet of a problem, yet never pull his finger out."

10M, 3W (doubling, flexible casting)

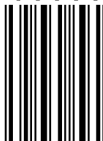
Considering the play imprisoned by three-and-a-half centuries of critical appreciation and grand acting, Marowitz has taken it bodily, broken it into pieces and reassembled it in a collage which, he hopes, makes its meaning real again.

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