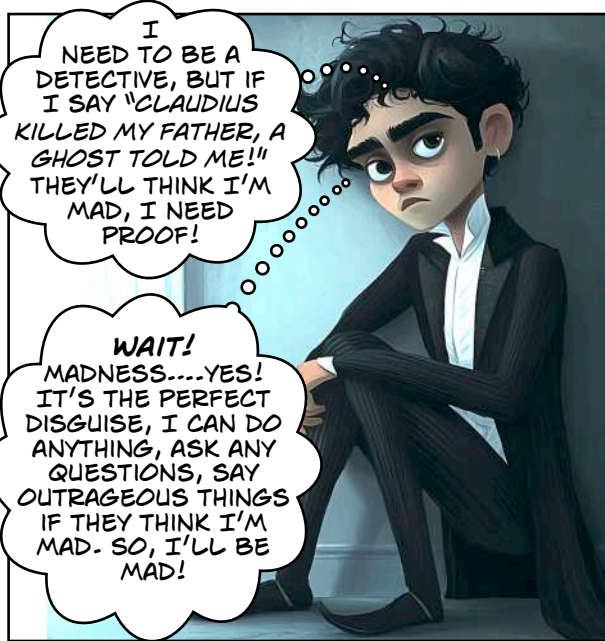


ACT 2

MAD FOR THY LOVE?

AS WE BEGIN ACT 2, HAMLET IS STARTING TO COME UP WITH A PLAN, BUT SO IS CLAUDIUS!



I NEED TO BE A DETECTIVE, BUT IF I SAY "CLAUDIUS KILLED MY FATHER, A GHOST TOLD ME!" THEY'LL THINK I'M MAD, I NEED PROOF!

WAIT! MADNESS....YES! IT'S THE PERFECT DISGUISE, I CAN DO ANYTHING, ASK ANY QUESTIONS, SAY OUTRAGEOUS THINGS IF THEY THINK I'M MAD. SO, I'LL BE MAD!



I NEED TO SEE INSIDE HIS HEAD. I MUST FIND OUT WHAT IS WRONG WITH HIM. DOES HE SUSPECT ME? MAYBE A COUPLE OF SPIES WOULD HELP, NOT THAT THEY SHOULD LOOK LIKE SPIES, FRIENDLY FACES WOULD BE BEST. I KNOW JUST THE PEOPLE...

WHO HAS CLAUDIUS DECIDED TO INVITE TO ELSINORE CASTLE FOR A "FRIENDLY VISIT" AND TO SECRETLY SPY ON HAMLET? IT'S HAMLET'S TWO COLLEGE FRIENDS ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN. HERE THEY ARE NOW, BEING WELCOMED INTO THE COURT...



WELCOME, DEAR ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN

WELCOME, DEAR GUILDENSTERN AND GENTLE ROSENCRANTZ



AT THAT MOMENT, OPHELIA BURSTS THROUGH THE DOOR IN TEARS!

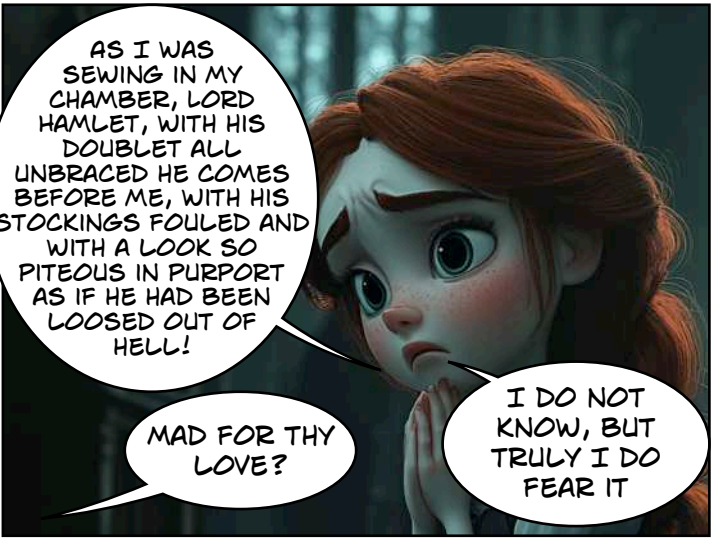
POLONIUS IS FURIOUS, SHE'S SHOWING HIM UP! THE KING AND QUEEN ARE SHOCKED! YOU DON'T JUST BURST INTO THE KING'S THRONE ROOM LIKE THIS!



HOW NOW OPHELIA, WHAT'S THE MATTER?

ALAS MY LORD, I HAVE BEEN SO AFFRIGHTED!

WITH WHAT, IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN?

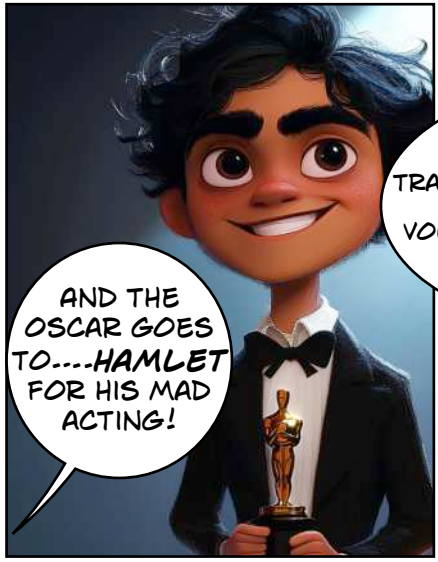


AS I WAS SEWING IN MY CHAMBER, LORD HAMLET, WITH HIS DOUBLET ALL UNBRACED HE COMES BEFORE ME, WITH HIS STOCKINGS FOULED AND WITH A LOOK SO PITEOUS IN PURPORT AS IF HE HAD BEEN LOOSED OUT OF HELL!

MAD FOR THY LOVE?

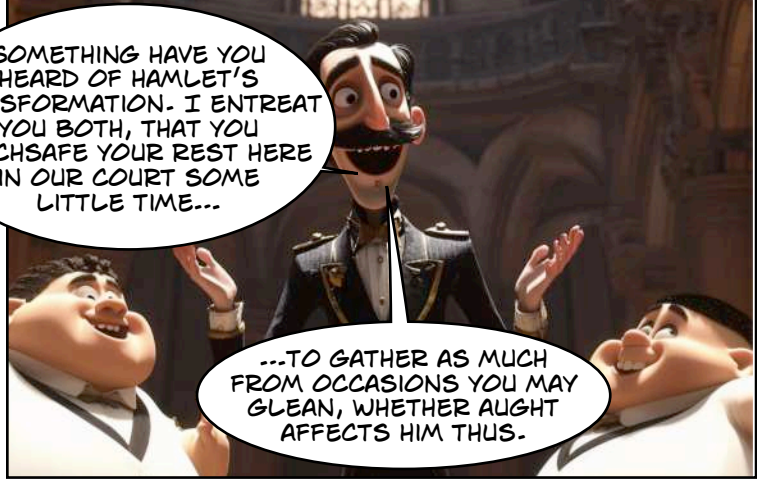
I DO NOT KNOW, BUT TRULY I DO FEAR IT

POOR OPHELIA!
HAMLET'S TRYING
HIS MAD ACT ON
HER - BURSTING
INTO HER ROOM
LIKE A SOUL
ESCAPING FROM
HELL, WITH HIS
SHIRT
UNBUTTONED, HIS
STOCKINGS FILTHY
AND HANGING
ROUND HIS
ANKLES. GREAT
ACTING HAMLET,
FIVE STARS!



AND THE
OSCAR GOES
TO...HAMLET
FOR HIS MAD
ACTING!

NOW CLAUDIUS HAS TO TRY TO EXPLAIN THE SITUATION
TO HIS NEW GUESTS...



SOMETHING HAVE YOU
HEARD OF HAMLET'S
TRANSFORMATION. I ENTREAT
YOU BOTH, THAT YOU
VOUCHSAFE YOUR REST HERE
IN OUR COURT SOME
LITTLE TIME...

...TO GATHER AS MUCH
FROM OCCASIONS YOU MAY
GLEAN, WHETHER AUGHT
AFFECTS HIM THUS.

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE SHOCKED AT THE NEWS THAT HAMLET IS SO CHANGED. AND, WHEN THE KING ASKS THEM TO STAY AND TRY TO FIND OUT WHY HE'S CHANGED CLAUDIUS SOUNDS SO CONCERNED THAT THE TWO FRIENDS FEEL QUITE WORRIED.

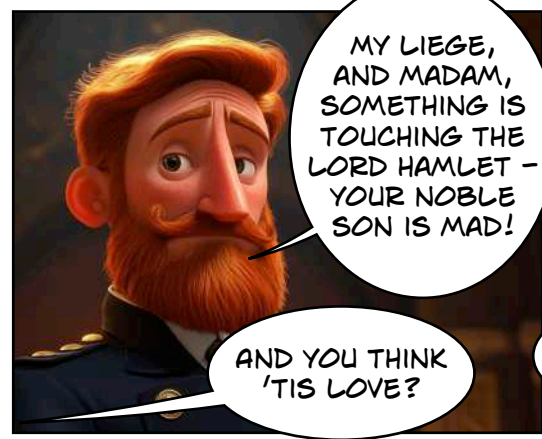
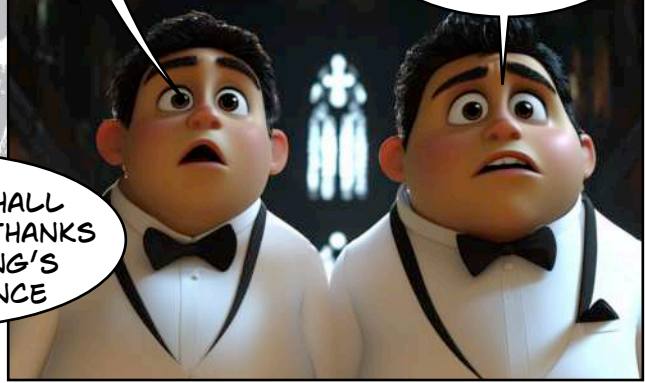


WE BOTH OBEY
AND HERE GIVE
OURSELVES UP IN
THE FULL BENT

TO LAY OUR
SERVICES FREELY AT
YOUR FEET, TO BE
COMMANDED

MAYBE THEY BOTH THINK
THAT IT'S NOT REALLY
SPYING IF YOU'RE JUST
LOOKING OUT FOR YOUR
FRIEND AND AS A WAY
OF CONVINCING THEM,
CLAUDIUS OFFERS THEM
SOME MONEY! THEY
LEAVE THE HALL
WATCHED BY POLONIUS,
CLAUDIUS AND
GERTRUDE. PERHAPS
THE THREE OF THEM CAN
TEST WHETHER IT IS
LOVE THAT IS DRIVING
HAMLET MAD...

YOUR
VISITATION SHALL
RECEIVE SUCH THANKS
AS FITS A KING'S
REMEMBRANCE



MY LIEGE,
AND MADAM,
SOMETHING IS
TOUCHING THE
LORD HAMLET -
YOUR NOBLE
SON IS MAD!

AND YOU THINK
'TIS LOVE?



HOW MAY
WE TRY IT
FURTHER?

YOU KNOW
SOMETIMES HE WALKS
FOUR HOURS HERE IN THE
LOBBY. AT SUCH TIME I'LL
LOOSE MY DAUGHTER TO HIM:
BE YOU AND I BEHIND AN
ARRAS THEN

OOOOH! SO
SNEAKY!! NOT
CONTENT WITH
SENDING
ROSENCRANTZ AND
GUILDENSTERN OFF
ON THEIR MISSION,
POLONIUS AND
CLAUDIUS ARE
GOING TO DO SOME
SNOOPING OF THEIR
OWN, HIDING BEHIND
THE CURTAIN IN THE
HALLWAY TO WATCH
HAMLET AND
OPHELIA.

AND SO BEGINS ROSENCRANTZ AND
GUILDENSTERN'S MISSION TO FIND OUT
WHAT'S MAKING HAMLET MAD...



THEY ARE PRETTY NERVOUS...



MY
EXCELLENT
GOOD FRIENDS,
HOW DOST THOU?
GOOD LADS HOW ARE
YOU BOTH?
GENTLEMEN, YOU
ARE WELCOME TO
ELSINORE

AT FIRST HAMLET IS HAPPY TO SEE THEM...

BUT HE'S ALSO SURPRISED THEY'RE HERE, AND A BIT SUSPICIOUS...



IS IT A FREE VISITATION? WERE YOU NOT SENT FOR? I KNOW THE KING AND QUEEN HAVE SENT FOR YOU. THERE IS A KIND OF CONFESSION IN YOUR LOOKS!



MY LORD, WE WERE SENT FOR

GOOD MY LORD, WHAT IS YOUR CAUSE OF DISTEMPER?

WELL, THE WORLD'S WORST SPIES HAVE BEEN UNCOVERED. HAMLET IMMEDIATELY KNEW BY THEIR GUILTY FACES THAT THEY WERE UP TO SOMETHING, SO THEY'VE ASKED HIM STRAIGHT OUT WHAT'S MAKING HIM BEHAVE SO STRANGELY. HE MAY WELL HAVE BEEN ABOUT TO ANSWER THEM, TO TELL THEM THE WHOLE STORY, WHEN SUDDENLY THE MOST BORING AND SELF-IMPORTANT MAN IN THE WORLD BURSTS IN...



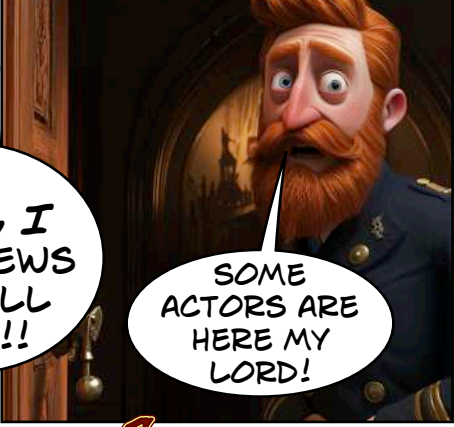
MY LORD, I HAVE NEWS TO TELL YOU

BUT HAMLET IS READY FOR HIM, PUTTING ON HIS MADDEST ACTING...



MY LORD, I HAVE NEWS TO TELL YOU!!!

POLONIUS IS A BIT SCARED...



SOME ACTORS ARE HERE MY LORD!




BUZZ BUZZ!!!



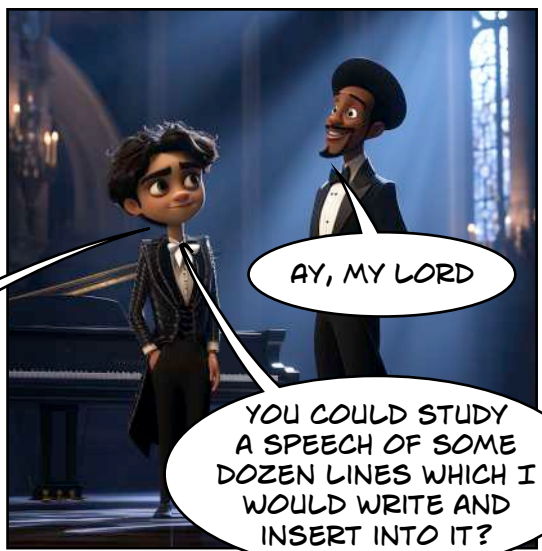
YOU ARE WELCOME MASTERS, WELCOME ALL! POLONIUS, SHOW THEM WHERE TO GET READY

Stuff you need to know!



TIME IN SHAKESPEARE'S GROUPS OF ACTORS TO TRAVEL AROUND THE COUNTRY PERFORMING THEIR PLAYS. BETTER THEY WERE, THE MORE MONEY THEY MADE. REMEMBER THERE WAS NO TV, NO INTERNET, NO NETFLIX! SO PEOPLE REALLY LOOKED FORWARD TO THIS ENTERTAINMENT - HAMLET HAS SEEN THESE ACTORS PERFORM BEFORE AND KNOWS THAT THEY ARE GOOD. HE'S GLAD THEY'RE HERE, HE HAS A PLAN!

AS POLONIUS SHOWS THE ACTORS TO THEIR ROOMS, HAMLET SECRETLY PULLS THEIR LEADER TO ONE SIDE. THERE'S A PARTICULAR PLAY HE WANTS THEM TO PERFORM...



AY, MY LORD

YOU COULD STUDY A SPEECH OF SOME DOZEN LINES WHICH I WOULD WRITE AND INSERT INTO IT?

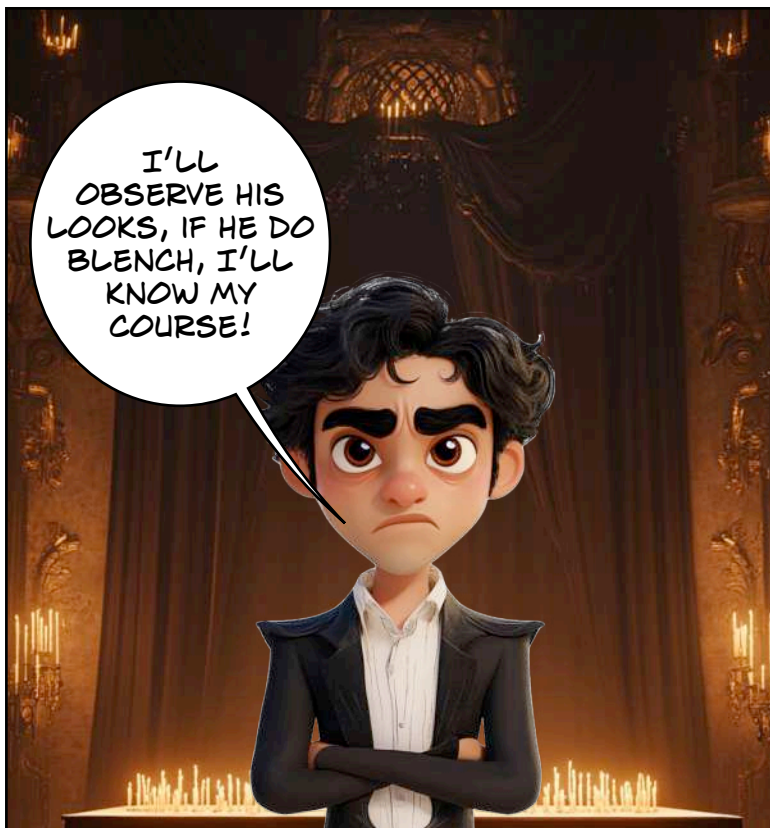
DOST THOU HEAR ME OLD FRIEND? CAN YOU PLAY THE MURDER OF GONZAGO???



AY, MY LORD

VERY WELL, I'LL LEAVE YOU TILL NIGHT

WHAT ON EARTH IS HAMLET UP TO? WHY ALL THE SECRECY? WHAT IS THE STORY OF THE MURDER OF GONZAGO? WHY DOES HE WANT THEM TO PERFORM IT? AND WHAT IS IN THE SPECIAL SPEECH HE HAS WRITTEN TO BE PERFORMED? A STAGE HAS BEEN SET UP IN THE HALL AT ELSINORE CASTLE. THE ACTORS ARE OFF IN THEIR ROOMS REHEARSING FOR THE SHOW AND HAMLET IS ALONE. IF YOU LISTEN CLOSELY, IT SEEMS HE'S TALKING TO HIMSELF...



SO, THIS IS THE PLAN! HAMLET HAS REWRITTEN THE MURDER OF GONZAGO, SO THAT THE DEATH SCENE IN IT WILL LOOK JUST LIKE HOW THE GHOST DESCRIBED HIS OWN DEATH! HOW WILL CLAUDIUS REACT?! WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE PLAY TO FIND OUT. MEANWHILE AT THE END OF ACT TWO, OPHELIA IS UPSET, POLONIUS IS CONFUSED, CLAUDIUS IS PLOTTING AND ROSENCRANTZ AND GUIDENSTERN WERE RUBBISH AT THEIR JOBS. WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN IN ACT THREE?