

**SHAKESPEARIENCE!**

***Swords, Scenes & Soliloquies***

**HAMLET**

Act II, scene 2: *Denmark's a Prison*  
Hamlet, Rosencrantz & Guildenstern

**GUILDENSTERN**

My honoured lord!

**ROSENCRANTZ**

My most dear lord!

**HAMLET**

My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz!  
Good lads, how do ye both?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

As the indifferent children of the earth.

**GUILDENSTERN**

Happy, in that we are not over-happy;  
On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

**HAMLET**

Nor the soles of her shoe?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Neither, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of  
her favours?

**GUILDENSTERN**

'Faith, her privates we.

**HAMLET**

What's the news?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

**HAMLET**

Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true.  
What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune,  
that she sends you to prison hither?

**GUILDENSTERN**

Prison, my lord!

**HAMLET**

Denmark's a prison.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Then is the world one.

**HAMLET**

A goodly one; in which there are many confines,  
wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

**GUILDENSTERN**

We think not so, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing  
either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me  
it is a prison.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Why then, your ambition makes it one; 'tis too  
narrow for your mind.

**HAMLET**

O God, I could be bounded in a nut shell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

**GUILDENSTERN**

Which dreams indeed are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

**HAMLET**

A dream itself is but a shadow.

**GUILDENSTERN**

Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

**HAMLET**

But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

To visit you, my lord; no other occasion!

**HAMLET**

Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me. Come, come, come; speak.

**GUILDENSTERN**

What should we say, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks...

I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

To what end, my lord?

**HAMLET**

That you must teach me. Be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

**ROSENCRANTZ/GUILDENSTERN**

My lord, we were sent for!

**HAMLET**

I will tell you why; I have of late—but wherefore I know not--lost all my mirth... man delights not me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

My lord, there was no such stuff in our thoughts.

**HAMLET**

Why did you laugh then, when I said 'man delights not me'?

**GUILDENSTERN**

To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from..... you: we coted them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

There are the players.

**HAMLET**

They are welcome: but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

**GUILDENSTERN**

In what, my dear lord?

**HAMLET**

I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.