

Der Bestrafte Brudermord

A Sample Scene

The following sample scene reflects work-in-progress towards our edition and may well be revised before publication.

2.8

Enter KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, HORATIO, CORAMBUS, OPHELIA
and attendants.

KING My dearest spouse, I hope that now you will banish your sadness and make room for joy. There is to be a comedy put on for you by the Germans before supper and after the meal a ballet by our own people.

QUEEN I shall be glad to see such mirth. I can hardly believe that my heart will be contented, for I do not know what imminent misfortune disturbs our spirits.

KING Nevertheless, be content. – Prince Hamlet, we have learned that comedians have arrived who will present a comedy this evening. Tell us, is it so?

HAMLET Yes, father; they asked me, and I gave them permission. I hope your Majesty also will approve of this.

KING What kind of piece is it? There is nothing, I suppose, offensive or rude in it?

HAMLET It is a good piece; we who have a good conscience are not concerned by it.

KING Where are they? Just let them begin soon, for we would like to see what the Germans can do.

HAMLET [*To Corambus*] Marshall, see whether the comedians are ready; tell them to begin.

CORAMBUS You comedians, where are you? Quick, you are to begin at once. Oho! – Here they come!

Enter CARL and two COMEDIANS.

Here begins the play: the King is with his spouse.

He wishes to lie down to sleep. The Queen entreats him not to do so; he nevertheless lies down. The Queen takes her leave with a kiss and exits. The King's brother comes in with a small glass, pours something into his ear and exits.

HAMLET That is King Pyrrus who goes to sleep in the garden. The Queen entreats him not to do so; but he lies down all the same. The poor wife goes away. See, there comes the King's brother, who has juice of ebena and pours it into his ear. As soon as it is introduced into the human bloodstream, it immediately kills that body.

KING Torches, lanterns, here! The comedy does not please us!

CORAMBUS Pages, lackeys, light the torches! The King wishes to leave. Quick, light up the torches. The comedians have made a hash of it.

Exeunt King, Queen, Corambus, [Ophelia] and attendants.

HAMLET [To Horatio] 'Torches, here! The comedy does not please us!' – Now you see that the ghost has not betrayed me! – Comedians, you can go hence with this conclusion; though you have not finished the play, and it does not please the King, it has pleased us all the same. Horatio shall pay you on my behalf.

CARL We thank you and ask for a passport.

HAMLET That you shall have.

Exeunt [Carl and] comedians.

Now can I boldly proceed with my revenge. Did you see how the King turned pale when he saw the play?

HORATIO Yes, your Highness, he certainly did the deed.

HAMLET My father was killed in just the same way as you have seen in this play. But I will pay him for his wicked deed.