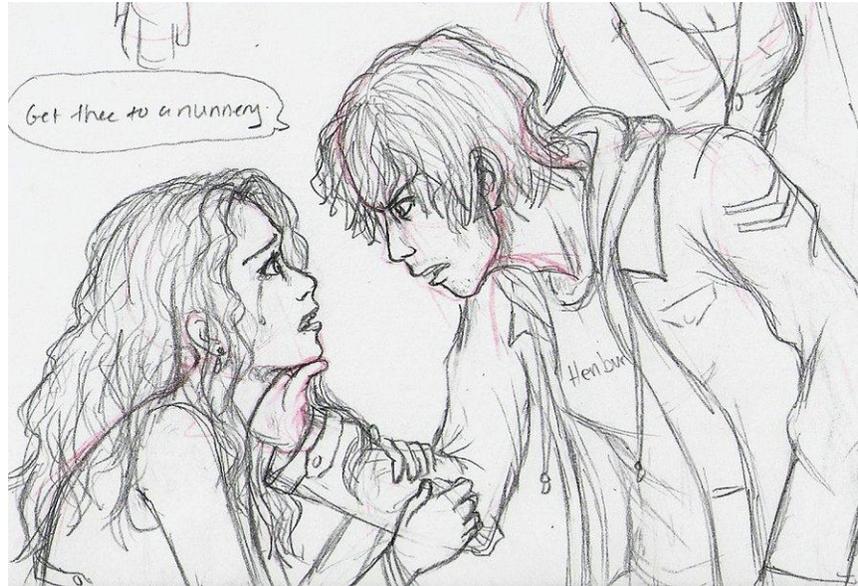


## CONTEXTUAL QUESTION ON *HAMLET*



### OPHELIA

My lord, I have remembrances of yours,  
That I have longed long to re-deliver.  
I pray you now receive them.

### HAMLET

No, not I,

95

I never gave you aught.

### OPHELIA

My honoured lord, you know right well you did,  
And with them words of so sweet breath composed  
As made the things more rich. Their perfume lost,  
Take these again, for to the noble mind  
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.  
There, my lord.

100

*(She takes jewels from her bosom and places them on the table before him)*

### HAMLET

*(Remembers the plot)* Ha, ha! Are you honest?

### OPHELIA

My lord?

### HAMLET

Are you fair?

105

### OPHELIA

What means your lordship?

### HAMLET

That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse

to your beauty.

**OPHELIA**

Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

**HAMLET**

Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a baw, than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness. This was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once. 110

**OPHELIA**

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

**HAMLET**

You should not have believed me, for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock, but we shall relish of it - I loved you not. 115

**OPHELIA**

I was the more deceived

**HAMLET**

*(Points to the faldstool)* Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better my mother had not borne me. 120

I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do, crawling between heaven and earth? We are arrant knaves all, believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery...*(Suddenly)* Where's your father? 125

**OPHELIA**

At home, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

*Hamlet off*

**OPHELIA**

*(Kneels before the crucifix)* O help him, you sweet heavens!

*Enter Hamlet, distraught*

**HAMLET**

If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry. Be though as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go! Farewell! *(He paces to and fro)* Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool, for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too! Farewell! 130

*He rushes out.*

**OPHELIA**

O heavenly powers, restore him! 135

**HAMLET**

I have heard of your paintings too, well enough. God hath given you one face and you make yourself another. You jig, you amble, and you lisp, you nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness

your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't, it hath made me mad. I say  
we will have no more marriage. Those that are married already, all 140  
but one, shall live, the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

*Hamlet off*

**OPHELIA**

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!  
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword,  
Th'expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form, 145  
Th'observed of all observers, quite quite down,  
And I of ladies most deject and wretched,  
That sucked the honey of his music vows,  
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason  
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh, 150  
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth,  
Blasted with ecstasy! O, woe is me!  
T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

*She prays. Enter the King and Polonius from behind the arras.*

- 1.1 Why is Ophelia returning Hamlet's gifts? (2)
- 1.2 Why does Hamlet question Ophelia's honesty? (2)
- 1.3 Explain Hamlet's reference to the 'old stock' in line 116. What point is he making here? (4)
- 1.4 Why is Hamlet's question 'Where is your father?' Critical to his relationship with Ophelia? (3)
- 1.5 Comment on Ophelia's reaction, in lines 129 and 135, to Hamlet's storming out. (3)
- 1.6 What is being shown here by Hamlet's repeated farewells, exits and entrances? (4)
- 1.7.1 Where is Hamlet's general disillusion with women in general evident? Use two quotes for your answer. (2)
- 1.7.2 Why does he feel this way? (4)
- 1.8 What do Ophelia's words at the end of the extract (lines 142-53) reveal about her nature? (2)
- 1.8.1 her nature? (2)
- 1.8.2 Hamlet's character? (3)