

SECTION B: SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMA

Answer one question from this Section on either *Hamlet* or *Othello*.

QUESTION 6 *HAMLET* (CONTEXTUAL) William Shakespeare

ACT 3, SCENE 4. The Queen's closet.

Enter the QUEEN and POLONIUS

POLONIUS

He will come straight. Look you lay home to him,
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll sponce me even here.
Pray you, be round with him.

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HAMLET

[Without] Mother, mother, mother!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

I'll warrant you
Fear me not. Withdraw, I hear him coming.

POLONIUS hides behind the arras

Enter HAMLET

HAMLET

Now, mother, what's the matter?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET

Mother, you have my father much offended.

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QUEEN GERTRUDE

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Why, how now, Hamlet!

HAMLET

What's the matter now?



QUEEN GERTRUDE

Have you forgot me?

HAMLET

No, by the rood, not so:

You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
 And – would it were not so! – you are my mother.

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QUEEN GERTRUDE

Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.

HAMLET

Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;
 You go not till I set you up a glass
 Where you may see the inmost part of you.

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QUEEN GERTRUDE

What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me? Help, help, ho!

POLONIUS

[Behind the arras] What, ho! help, help, help!

HAMLET

[Draws] How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!

He makes a pass through the arras

POLONIUS

[Falls] O, I am slain!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

O me, what hast thou done?

HAMLET

Nay, I know not,

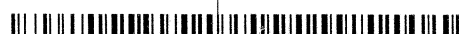
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Is it the king?

He lifts up the arras and discovers Polonius, dead

QUEEN GERTRUDE

O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!



HAMLET

A bloody deed – almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

As kill a king!

HAMLET

Ay, lady it was my word.
(*To Polonius*) Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune!

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- 6.1 “Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with” (line 2).
What does Polonius hope to gain from Gertrude and Hamlet’s conversation?
Provide two possibilities. [2+2=4]
- 6.2 In lines 9 and 10, Gertrude and Hamlet address each other differently.
She uses “thou” and he uses “you”. Provide a suitable reason for each
one’s choice. [2+2=4]
- 6.3 “Have you forgot me?” (line 14).
What is ironic in Gertrude’s asking Hamlet this? [2]
- 6.4 “Where you may see the inmost part of you” (line 20).
What is it that Hamlet wants Gertrude to “see”? [2]
- 6.5 “Thou wilt not murder me?” (line 21)
Do you think she actually believes he will murder her? Substantiate
your answer. [2]
- 6.6 Why is it appropriate that Hamlet inadvertently refers to Polonius as a “rat”
(line 23)? [3]
- 6.7 At first, Hamlet believes he has killed Claudius.
Why had he not killed Claudius at an earlier opportunity? [4]
- 6.8 It is often suggested that Hamlet fakes his actions and emotions.
Would his reaction on discovering he has mistakenly killed Polonius
support this suggestion? Substantiate your opinion. [4]
- 6.9 In what tone do you think Hamlet says “good mother” (line 27)?
Substantiate your answer. [2]
- 6.10 What does Gertrude’s reaction, “As kill a king!”, suggest about her
knowledge of her late husband’s death? [2]
- 6.11 “I took thee for thy better.” (line 32)
Explain Hamlet’s error. [1]

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