

## HAMLET 3.1

**OPHELIA**

Good my lord,  
How does your honor for this many a day?

**HAMLET**

I humbly thank you. Well, well, well.

**OPHELIA**

My lord, I have remembrances of yours  
That I have longèd long to redeliver.  
I pray you now receive them.

**HAMLET**

No, not I. I never gave you aught.

**OPHELIA**

My honored 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.

**HAMLET**

Ha, ha, are you honest?

**OPHELIA**

My lord?

**HAMLET**

Are you fair?

**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?

**OPHELIA**

Hello, my lord, how have you been doing lately?

**HAMLET**

Very well, thank you. Well, well, well.

**OPHELIA**

My lord, I have some mementos of yours that I've been  
meaning to give back to you for a long time now. Please  
take them.

**HAMLET**

No, it wasn't me. I never gave you anything.

**OPHELIA**

My lord, you know very well that you did, and wrote  
letters to go along with them, letters so sweetly written  
that they made your gifts even more valuable. Their  
perfume is gone now, so take them back. Nice gifts lose

their value when the givers turn out not to be so nice.  
There, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Ha ha, are you good?

**OPHELIA**

Excuse me?

**HAMLET**

Are you beautiful?

**OPHELIA**

My lord, what are you talking about?

**HAMLET**

I'm just saying that if you're good and beautiful, your  
goodness should have nothing to do with your beauty.

**OPHELIA**

But could beauty be related to anything better than  
goodness?

**HAMLET**

Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd 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.

**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.

**OPHELIA**

I was the more deceived.

**HAMLET**

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.

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 earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all. Believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

**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.

**OPHELIA**

O, help him, you sweet heavens!

**HAMLET**

If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry. Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go. Farewell. 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.

**HAMLET**

Sure, since beauty's power can more easily change a good girl into a whore than the power of goodness can change a beautiful girl into a virgin. This used to be a great puzzle, but now I've solved it. I used to love you.

**OPHELIA**

You certainly made me believe you did, my lord.

**HAMLET**

You shouldn't have believed me, since we're all rotten at the core, no matter how hard we try to be virtuous. I didn't love you.

**OPHELIA**

Then I guess I was misled.

**HAMLET**

Get yourself to a [convent](#) at once. Why would you want to give birth to more sinners? I'm fairly good myself, but even so I could accuse myself of such horrible crimes that it would've been better if my mother had never given birth to me. and

I am arrogant, vengeful, ambitious, with more ill will in me than I can fit into my thoughts, and more than I have time to carry it out in. Why should people like me be crawling around between earth and heaven? Every one of us is a criminal. Don't believe any of us. Hurry to a convent. Where's your father?

**OPHELIA**

He's at home, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Lock him in, so he can play the fool in his own home only. Good-bye.

**OPHELIA**

Oh, dear God, please help him!

**HAMLET**

If you marry, I'll give you this curse as your wedding present—be as clean as ice, as pure as the driven snow, and you'll still get a bad reputation. Get yourself to a convent, at once. Good-bye. Or if you have to get married, marry a fool, since wise men know far too well that you'll cheat on them. Good-bye.