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Dramatic Publishing

SIXTY-MINUTE SHAKESPEARE



HAMLET

by Cass Foster

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SIXTY-MINUTE SHAKESPEARE



HAMLET

by Cass Foster



from HAMLET
by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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HAMLET

by
Cass Foster

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To Ian

*Our son, the baseball player—
Who has been quoting lines from HAMLET
since before the age of two.*

**Welcome to
THE SIXTY-MINUTE SHAKESPEARE**

Thanks to the progressive thinking of so many curriculum developers, Language Arts people and the splendid film work being done by directors such as Kenneth Branagh and Franco Zeffrelli, there has been a phenomenal growth in interest in Shakespeare.

No playwright, past or present, approaches the brilliance and magnitude of William Shakespeare. What other individual has even come close to understanding and then dramatizing the human condition? Just for the fun of it, I am listing (following these introductory remarks) a sample of themes and images so richly developed in the canon of his plays.

Shakespeare's characters are so well-rounded and beautifully constructed that it is common to see them as actual historical figures. When someone mentions Hamlet, Iago, Ophelia, or Puck, we immediately experience images and emotions that come from memories of people we know. We may feel compassion, frustration, sorrow, or pleasure.

As one of the wealthiest people of his times, Shakespeare earned his living as a playwright, theatre manager, actor, and shareholder in the Globe Theatre. He worked tirelessly to entertain. (Theatres presented a new play every day and the average new play had a total of only ten performances over an entire season.) He rebelled against the contemporary theatrical standards (the neo-classical principles that limited dramatic structure throughout France and Italy), he took plots from other published works (making them uniquely his own), and he created a spectacle (without the use of elaborate scenery) to captivate audiences of all social levels.

Imagine the challenge in quieting a crowd of three thousand in a theatre where vendors sell wine, beer, ale, nuts, and cards; where there is no intermission; where birds fly overhead; and where audience members stand near performers. Such was the setting in which Shakespeare's plays were originally staged.

The world's most familiar and successful wordsmith used language to skillfully create images, plot, and a sense of music and rhythm. The purpose behind this series is to reduce (not contemporize) the language. The unabridged Shakespeare simply isn't practical in all situations. Not all educators or directors have the luxury of time to explore the entire text. This is not intended to be a substitute for a thorough study of Shakespeare. It is merely a stepping stone.

I challenge each of you to go beyond the *Sixty-Minute* versions. Use the comfort, appreciation, and self-confidence you will gain to go further. Be proud of the insights and knowledge you acquire, but do not be satisfied. The more you read, the more you gain.

May each of you be blessed with an abundance of good health and happiness. I thank you for your interest in our work and hope you are pleased with what we have done.

May the Verse Be With You!



A COUPLE OF STAGING CONSIDERATIONS

Scenery

There are two excellent reasons theatres rarely use much scenery when staging Shakespeare. The first is related to the number of changes required. If we have to wait every five to ten minutes to watch scenery struck and set up, we end up watching a play about moving lumber. The second reason is that we lose sight of what the play is about. Audiences need a couple minutes to adjust to the new scenic look of a dazzling waterfall and lush forest. By the time they take it all in and start paying attention to what the actors are saying, it is time to set up the next scene and the audience is lost.

Location is normally established through dialogue and the use of a few simple props: a throne-like chair for the king's court, a long table with benches for an inn, or a bed for the queen's bed chamber. The key is to keep it simple.

Pacing

You will want to keep things moving all the time. That doesn't mean actors should talk and move quickly; it simply means one scene should flow smoothly to the next without delay or interruption.

As Scene One ends, the actors pick up their props and walk off. Actors for Scene Two enter from a different direction with their props and begin dialogue as soon as they enter the acting area, putting their props in place as they speak. Yes, we will still have view of the actors in the first scene, but your audience will gladly accept this convention if it means taking fifteen minutes off performance time.

TWO HIGHLY RECOMMENDED WEB SITES

www.ShakeSpirit.com

A revolutionary site offering Shakespeare gifts,
teaching assistance, resources and quotes



www.ShakespeareLRC.com

SHAKESPEARE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER.
Free Library Dedicated to Shakespeare
and the Performing and Visual Arts.



**IMAGES AND THEMES TO LOOK FOR
IN THE VARIOUS PLAYS**

Mistaken identity	Foils or opposites
Wisdom of fools	Spying
Insanity	Paranoia
Greed and corruption	Play-acting
Religious persecution	Justice
The elements	Heavenly retribution
The supernatural	Forgiveness
Darkness and light	Witchcraft
Loneliness or isolation	Mortality
Anti-Semitism	Self-destruction
Conspiracy	Black or white magic
Revenge	Animals
Hypocrisy	Nature
Abandonment	Reality vs. illusion
Pride	Astrological influence
Honor	Characters reforming
Violence	Old age
Bravery	Freedom
Rebellion	Usurping of power
Savagery	Fertility Suppression
Seduction	Sexual misadventure
Disease or physical decay	Melancholy
Loyalty	Corrupt society
War	Love and/or friendship
Marriage	Multiple meanings of words
False accusations	Thought vs. action
Irresponsible power	Impetuous love
Destiny or fate	Role of women
Real or pretended madness	Human frailty
Ambition	Preparing for leadership
Tyranny	Charity/Betrayal

**THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

1589 - 1591	Henry VI, Part 1, 2 and 3
1592 - 1593	Richard III
1593 - 1594	Titus Andronicus
1592 - 1594	Comedy of Errors
1593 - 1594	Taming of the Shrew
1594	The Two Gentlemen of Verona
1594 - 1595	Love's Labour's Lost
1594 - 1596	King John
1595	Richard II
1595 - 1596	A Midsummer Night's Dream
1595 - 1596	Romeo and Juliet
1596 - 1597	The Merchant of Venice
1597	The Merry Wives of Windsor
1597 - 1598	Henry IV, Part 1 and 2
1598 - 1599	Much Ado About Nothing
1599	Henry V
1599	Julius Caesar
1599	As You Like It
1600 - 1601	Hamlet
1601 - 1602	Twelfth Night
1601 - 1602	Troilus and Cressida
1602 - 1603	All's Well That Ends Well
1604	Measure for Measure
1604	Othello
1605	The Tragedy of King Lear
1606	Macbeth
1606 - 1607	Antony and Cleopatra
1607 - 1608	Timon of Athens
1607 - 1608	Pericles, Prince of Tyre
1607 - 1608	Coriolanus
1609- 1610	Cymbeline
1609 - 1610	The Winter's Tale
1611	The Tempest
1612 - 1613	Henry VIII
1613	Two Noble Kinsmen (Authorship in question)



23 April 1564 - 23 April 1616

*“If we wish to know the force of human genius,
we should read Shakespeare. If we wish to see the
insignificance of human learning, we may study
his commentators.”*

William Hazlitt (1778-1830) English Essayist. “On the Ignorance of the Learned,” in *Edinburgh Magazine* (July, 1818).

COMMON QUOTES FROM THE BARD*Romeo and Juliet*

Parting is such sweet sorrow.
A plague o' both your houses.
O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Lord, what fools these mortals be.
The course of true love never did run smooth.
To say the truth, reason and love keep little company
together now-a-days.

As You Like It

All that glisters is not gold.
Love is blind.
All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players.
For ever and a day.

Twelfth Night

Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some
have greatness thrust upon them.
Out of the jaws of death.
O, had I but followed the arts!
Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage.

Henry IV, Part 1

The better part of valour is discretion.
To give the devil his due.
He hath eaten me out of house and home.

Henry VI, Part 2

Let's kill all the lawyers.

The Merry Wives of Windsor

Better three hours too soon than a minute too late.

Casablanca

This could be the start of a beautiful friendship.

Macbeth

Out, damned spot. Out, I say!
Screw your courage to the sticking place.

Hamlet

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.
To be or not to be. That is the question.
The lady doth protest too much, methinks.
Good night, sweet prince, And flights of
angels sing thee to thy rest!

The Merchant of Venice

The devil can cite scriptures for his purpose.

Pericles

Few love to hear the sins they love to act.

Richard III

Now is the winter of our discontent.
Off with his head!
A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse.

Julius Caesar

Beware the ides of March.
Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.
It was Greek to me.

Much Ado About Nothing

The world must be peopled. When I said I would die a
bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.

Measure for Measure

The miserable have no other medicine but only hope.

Troilus and Cressida

To fear the worst oft cures the worse.

The Comedy of Errors

Unquiet meals make ill digestions.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Ghost of Hamlet, the former King of Denmark.

Claudius, King of Denmark, former King's brother.

Gertrude, Queen of Denmark, widow of the former King and now wife of Claudius.

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, son of the late King and of Gertrude.

Horatio, Hamlet's friend and fellow student.

Polonius, councillor to the King.

Laertes, his son.

Ophelia, his daughter.

Rosencrantz

Guiltenstern Members of the Danish Court.

Osrice

Bernardo

Francisco Officers and soldiers on watch.

Marcellus

Three players, player King, player Queen, and Lucianus.

A Gravedigger

Priest

Lords, soldiers, attendants, etc.

Place
Denmark

ACT I, SCENE 1.

THE GUARD-PLATFORM OF THE CASTLE.

Francisco standing guard. Enter Bernardo.

Bernardo. Who's there?

Francisco. Stand and unfold yourself!

Bernardo. Long live the king!

Francisco. Bernardo?

Bernardo. He.

Francisco. You come most carefully upon your hour.
Stand, ho! Who is there? *Enter Horatio and Marcellus.*

Horatio. Friends to this ground.

Marcellus. Holla! Bernardo!

Bernardo. Welcome Marcellus. Welcome, good Horatio.

Horatio. Has this thing appeared again tonight?

Francisco. I have seen nothing.

Marcellus. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy.

Bernardo. Peace, break thee off! Look where it comes again.

Francisco. It is the same figure like the King that's dead.

Marcellus. Thou art a scholar. Speak to it, Horatio.

Bernardo. Looks 'a not like the King? Mark it, Horatio.

Horatio. What art thou that usurp'st^o this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark^o
Did sometime^o march? By heaven, I charge thee speak!

Marcellus. See, it stalks away.

Horatio. Stay! Speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

Ghost exits.

Francisco. 'Tis gone and will not answer.

Bernardo. How now, Horatio? You tremble and look pale. Is
not this something more than fantasy?

Horatio. Before my G-d^o, I might not this believe Without
the sensible and true avouch^o Of mine own eyes.

Marcellus. Is it not like the King?

Usurp's: wrongfully take over. *Buried Denmark:* buried King of Denmark
Sometime: formerly. *G-d:* According to the editor's religious convictions, to write
out the name of the Supreme Being in full turns the text into a sacred scripture.
Out of respect for his beliefs, we will hyphenate all usage. *Avouch:* evidence.

Horatio. As thou art to thyself.

Francisco. It faded on the crowing of the cock.

Horatio. Look, the morn in russet mantle clad
Walks o'er the due of yon high eastward hill.
Break we our watch up, and by my advice
Let us impart what we have seen tonight
Unto young Hamlet; for upon my life
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

They exit.

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ACT I, SCENE 2.

KING ENTERS WITH GERTRUDE, THE LORDS,
POLONIUS, LAERTES AND HAMLET.

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime^o sister, now our queen,
Th' imperial jointress^o to this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy...
With an auspicious and a dropping eye^o,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
Taken to wife.

All but Hamlet applaud.

King. And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

Laertes. My thoughts and wishes bend again toward
France. And bow them to your gracious leave.

King. Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

Sometime: former. *Jointress:* woman possessing property with her husband.
Auspicious and dropping eye: one eye smiling and the other weeping.

Polonius. H'ath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laborsome petition, and at last
Upon his will I sealed my hard consent.
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes. Time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will! °
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son...

Hamlet. A little more than kin, and less than kind. °

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Hamlet. Not so, my lord. I am too much in the sun. °

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color° off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not forever with thy failed lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust.
Thou know'st 'tis common, all that lives must die.

Hamlet. Ay, madam, it is common.

Queen. If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?

And...spend it at thy will: and may your best qualities guide you. *A little...kind:* I am closer than a nephew (since you are my mother's husband) but, as a son, not well disposed to you. *Sun:* Obvious pun on son. *Nighted color:* mourning garments or dark melancholy.

Hamlet. Seems, madam? Nay, it is. I know not “seems.”
‘Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Together with all forms, moods, shades of grief,
That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play.
But I have that within which passes show;
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King. ‘Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet
To give these mourning duties to your father;
But you must know your father lost a father,
That father lost his. But to persevere
In obstinate condolment^o is a course
Of impious stubbornness. ‘Tis unmanly grief.
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven.
For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers,
Hamlet. I pray thee, stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

Hamlet. I shall in all my best, obey you, madam.

King. Why, ‘tis a loving and fair reply.
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come.
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart.

All exit but Hamlet.

Condolements: grief.

Hamlet. O, that this too, too sullied^o flesh would melt,
 Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
 Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
 His cannon^o 'gainst self-slaughter! O G-d, G-d,
 How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
 Seem to me all the uses of this world!
 Fie on 't, ah fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden
 That grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature
 Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
 But two months dead...nay, not so much. Not two.
 So excellent a king, that was to this
 Hyperion^o to a satyr^o, so loving to my mother
 That he might not beteem^o the winds of heaven
 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth,
 Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him
 As if increase of appetite had grown
 By what it fed on, and yet within a month...
 Let me not think on 't; frailty, thy name is woman!

Enter Horatio, Marcellus and Bernardo.

Horatio. Hail to your lordship!

Hamlet. I am glad to see you well.
 Horatio! I am very glad to see you. (*To Bernardo.*)
 Good even, sir...But what in faith make you from
 Wittenberg? What is your affair in Elsinore?

Horatio. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

Sullied: defiled or soiled *Cannon:* law. *Hyperion:* sun-god. *Satyr:* half-human mythical creature with goat's legs and horns. *Beteem:* allow.

Hamlet. I prithee, do not mock me, fellow student;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

Horatio. In deed, my lord, it followed hard upon.

Hamlet. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! The funeral baked meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father! Methinks I see my father.

Horatio. Where, my lord?

Hamlet. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Horatio. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Hamlet. Saw? Who?

Horatio. My lord, the King, your father.
Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead waste and middle of the night,
Been thus encountered. A figure like your father.

Hamlet. But where was that?

Marcellus. My lord, upon the platform where we watch.

Hamlet. Did you not speak to it?

Horatio. My lord, I did,
But answer made it none.

Hamlet. 'Tis very strange.

Horatio. As I do live, my honored lord, 'tis true.

Hamlet. Indeed, indeed. But this troubles me.
Hold you watch tonight?

All. We do, my lord.

Hamlet. Then I too will watch tonight.
Perchance 'twill walk again.

Horatio. I warrant it.

Hamlet. If you have hitherto concealed this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still.

All. Our duty to your honor.

Hamlet. Your loves, as mine to you. Farewell.

All but Hamlet exit.

Hamlet. My father's spirit in arms! All is not well.
I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come!
Till then, sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

Hamlet exits.