

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Hamlet*

Act 2 Scene 2: Focus Passages

From Part 1: The Ambassadors, Claudius, Gertrude, and Polonius

**CLAUDIUS**

Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Moreover that we much did long to see you,  
The need we have to use you did provoke  
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard  
Of Hamlet's "transformation"—so call it  
Since nor th' exterior nor the inward man  
Resembles that it was. What it should be,  
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him  
So much from th' understanding of himself,  
I cannot dream of. I entreat you both  
That, being of so young days brought up with him  
And since so neighbored to his youth and 'havior,  
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court  
Some little time so by your companies  
To draw him on to pleasures and to gather,  
So much as from occasion you may glean,  
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus  
That, opened, lies within our remedy.

- pg 81

Questions:

1. Are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern betraying Hamlet?
2. How does this passage develop the theme of appearance vs. reality?

## Part 2: Hamlet & Polonius

**POLONIUS:** What is the matter, my lord?

**HAMLET:** Between who?

**POLONIUS:** I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

**HAMLET:** Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

**POLONIUS:** [Aside] Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't. Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

**HAMLET:** Into my grave.

**POLONIUS:** Indeed, that is out o' the air.

*(Aside)* How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.--My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

**HAMLET:** You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal: except my life, except my life, except my life.

- pg 95-96

1. How does Hamlet “mess with” Polonius? How does Polonius respond? \*use the notes from the book to help\*
2. How successful is Hamlet’s deception?

Part 3: Hamlet, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern  
Reread episode - begins on page 97

1. How does Hamlet behave initially with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern? Is it different from the way he just acted with Polonius? How does Hamlet change when he realizes that the two were sent for by Claudius and Gertrude?

2. Why does Hamlet describe Denmark as a "prison?" Is he right?

3. What does Hamlet mean by the following quote: "for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so" (page 99).

## Part 4

### The Player's and Hamlet's Soliloquy

Reread Hamlet's soliloquy page 117-119

1. In what ways has Hamlet's life become a performance? Can he differentiate between who he is and his "acting?"
2. Read Hamlet's third soliloquy carefully (2.2.526-82). How does he use the player's response to show how different his own position is? Is the comparison justified by what we have seen happen in the play? He complains that he hasn't acted on his vengeance. Why hasn't he? Why does he need the play? What will he learn from it?