

<p>Quotes in sequence from Act 3 sc iii A room in the castle</p>	<p>The Prayer Scene. The Quest for Truth. Two Soliloquies. Irony. Delay. Making Excuses.</p>
<p>1. King Claudius I like him not, nor stands it safe with us To let his madness range... ...he to England shall along with you... For we will fetters put upon this fear Guildestern keep safe...that live and feed upon your majesty</p>	<p>I Claudius expresses his dislike of Hamlet and his fear of letting him remain around the court in his mad state. He is sending Hamlet to England as a means of chaining [controlling] his own insecurity. Guildestern flatters the king by saying he wants to protect his subjects who depend on him.</p>
<p>2. Polonius Behind the arras I'll convey myself, to hear the process; and warrant she'll tax him home</p>	<p>2. Polonius intends to spy on their heart-to-heart behind a clothes screen in the Queen's closet. He expects she'll get the truth.</p>
<p>3. King Claudius [First Soliloquy] O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven; It hath the primal eldest curse upon't, A brother's murder. Pray can I not, my stronger guilt defeats my strong intent; What if this cursed hand were thicker than itself with brother's blood, Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens to wash it white as snow? My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder'? That cannot be; since I am still possess'd Of those effects for which I did the murder, my crown, mine own ambition and my queen. May one be pardon'd and retain the offence? O bosom black as death! <i>Retires and kneels</i></p>	<p>3. We see inside the mind of the antagonist with Claudius' confession. We see that he feels self-disgust, wants to repent and he suffers but that he cannot undo his crime or its effects. Claudius decides for God and can't forgive himself. He views himself as Cain, Adam and Eve's evil son who killed the innocent Abel. He feels cursed by his crime. His striking image of a clean white soul contrasts sharply with the redness of guilt. He lists the three benefits he has gained and cannot let go of, even to save his soul. <i>This is a moving debate of self and soul by the villain of the play. Ultimately the human side prevails and Claudius holds on to his earthly gains, albeit with the torment of guilt.</i></p>
<p>4. Hamlet [Soliloquy 6] Now might I do it pat, now he is praying; And now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven; And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd: A villain kills my father; and for that, I, his sole son, do this same villain send To heaven. O, this is hire and salary, not revenge. He took my father grossly, full of bread; ... and am I then revenged, To take him in the purging of his soul, When he is fit and season'd for his passage? No! Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent: When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage, Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed; At gaming, swearing, or about some act That has no relish of salvation in't; Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven, And that his soul may be as damn'd and black as hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays: this physic but prolongs thy sickly days.</p>	<p>4. Hamlet suddenly has a simple chance of revenge, to 'drink hot blood'. As usual he thinks logically about the action first. He wrongly assumes that the praying king is in a state of grace. It would not be revenge but reward to send Claudius to heaven <i>[Hamlet is probably thinking of the 'sulphurous and tormenting flames' his father's ghost must endure].</i> He uses a dull image of bread to represent his father's impure state when he was killed. 'Bread' represents pleasures. By contrast, Claudius seems a seasoned dish fully prepared for the afterlife. <i>[Has Hamlet forgotten 'I know not seems' and 'actions that a man might play?'].</i> He justifies his delay, saying he will commit revenge when Claudius is drunk, at a party or in bed with Gertrude. He resorts to angry words again, imagining Claudius' legs on the way to hell with his black soul. He goes to his mother, convinced he has only delayed his revenge.</p>
<p>5. King Claudius [Rising] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below: Words without thoughts never to heaven go.</p>	<p>5. Supreme Irony: Hamlet missed revenge, with hell included. The king asserts mere words will never replace spiritual action</p>

Themes: fear, madness, spying, forgiveness, revenge, delay, guilt, sinfulness & truth.
Imagery: colours [red, black & white], fetters, Cain & Abel, blood, food, bed, heels & illness