

"Hamlet" at Brookfield Theatre

Sides: Older Man / Younger Man

HAMLET

There's another. Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer?
I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

GRAVEDIGGER

Mine, sir.

HAMLET

I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in 't.

GRAVEDIGGER

You lie out on 't, sir, and therefore 'tis not yours.
For my part, I do not lie in 't, yet it is mine.

HAMLET

Thou dost lie in 't, to be in 't and say it is thine.
'Tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

GRAVEDIGGER

'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again from me to you.

HAMLET

What man dost thou dig it for?

GRAVEDIGGER

For no man, sir.

HAMLET

Who is to be buried in 't?

GRAVEDIGGER

One that was a woman, sir, but, rest her soul, she's dead.

HAMLET

How absolute the knave is! We must speak by the card,
or equivocation will undo us. How long hast thou been grave-maker?

GRAVEDIGGER

Of all the days i' th' year, I came to 't that day that our last King Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

HAMLET

How long is that since?

GRAVEDIGGER

Cannot you tell that? Every fool can tell that. It was that very day that young Hamlet was born, he that is mad, and sent into England.

HAMLET

Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

GRAVEDIGGER

Why, because he was mad. He shall recover his wits there. Or if he do not, 'tis no great matter there.

HAMLET

Why?

GRAVEDIGGER

There the men are as mad as he.

HAMLET

How came he mad?

GRAVEDIGGER

Very strangely, they say.

HAMLET

How "strangely"?

GRAVEDIGGER

Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

HAMLET

Upon what ground?

GRAVEDIGGER

Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

HAMLET

How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

GRAVEDIGGER

I' faith, if a' be not rotten before a' die—a' will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

HAMLET

Why he more than another?

GRAVEDIGGER

Why, sir, his hide is so tann'd with his trade that a' will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whorson dead body.

Here's a skull now hath lien you i' th' earth three-and-twenty years.

HAMLET

Whose was it?

GRAVEDIGGER

A whorson mad fellow's it was. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue!

He poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once.

This same skull, sir, was, sir, Yorick's skull, the King's jester.