

Hamlet Passage Analysis Act 3, scenes 3 & 4

Directions: Read the following passages and answer the questions that follow.

pp. 167-169

Hamlet: Now might I do it pat. Now he is a-praying.

And now I'll do 't. And so he goes to heaven.
And so am I revenged.—That would be scanned.

A villain kills my father, and, for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.

Oh, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread,
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May.
And how his audit stands who knows save
heaven?

But in our circumstance and course of thought
'Tis heavy with him. And am I then revenged

To take him in the purging of his soul
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?
No.

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent.

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed,
At game a-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 damned and black
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

1. What is Hamlet conflicted with doing?
2. What is his decision, and why? Use a piece of textual evidence to prove your claim, and explain how it proves your answer to be correct.
3. Why is the underlined passage so significant in Hamlet's decision?

pp. 181-183

Oh, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night—but go not to mine uncle's bed.
Assume a virtue if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this:
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery
That aptly is put on. Refrain tonight,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence, the next more easy.
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either rein the devil or throw him out
With wondrous potency....
Not this, by no means, that I bid you do—
Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed,
Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse,
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses
Or paddling in your neck with his damned fingers,
Make you to ravel all this matter out:
That I essentially am not in madness
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know,
For who that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,
Such dear concernings hide? Who would do so?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top.
Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep
And break your own neck down.

4. What two things does Hamlet demand his mother do? Highlight and underline what lines made you conclude this.
5. What does Hamlet confess about his madness? What textual evidence supports this?