

**Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead Audition Monologues:**

**Rosencrantz**

**Guildenstern**

**The Player**

**Hamlet**

**Claudius**

**Gertrude**

**Ambassador**

**Horatio**

(Nothing for Ophelia or the Tragedians – bring your own classical monologues or use any of the other characters and see the “Audition Sides”)

**ROSENCRANTZ MONOLOGUES: (Guildenstern's lines will be skipped in the audition)**

**Please choose one monologue.**

**ROSENCRANTZ Monologue # 1:** (cutting his fingernails): Another curious scientific phenomenon is the fact that the fingernails grow after death, as does the beard. (GUIL: What?) (loud): Beard! (GUIL: But you're not dead.) I didn't say they started to grow after death! (Pause) The fingernails also grow before birth, though not the beard. (GUIL: What?) Beard! What's the matter with you? (Reflectively.) The toenails, on the other hand, never grow at all. (GUIL (bemused): The toenails never grow at all?) Do they? It's a funny thing - I cut my fingernails all the time, and every time I think to cut them, they need cutting. Now, for instance. And yet, I never, to the best of my knowledge, cut my toenails. They ought to be curled under my feet by now, but it doesn't happen. I never think about them. Perhaps I cut them absent-mindedly, when I'm thinking of something else.

**ROSENCRANTZ Monologue # 2:** (late at night after a really bad day) The position as I see it, then. We, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, from our young days brought up with him, awakened by a man standing in his saddle, are summoned, and arrive, and are instructed to glean what afflicts him and draw him on to pleasures, such as a play, which unfortunately, as it turns out, is abandoned in some confusion owing to certain nuances outside our appreciation - which, among other causes, results in, among other effects, a high, not to say, homicidal, excitement in Hamlet, whom we, in consequence, are escorting, for his own good, to England. Good. We're on top of it now.

**ROSENCRANTZ Monologue # 3:** (watches the morning come, and brighten to high noon.) I'm assuming nothing. The position as I see it, then. That's west unless we're off course, in which case it's night; the king gave me the same as you, the king gave you the same as me: the king never gave me the letter, the king gave you the letter, we don't know what's in the letter; we

take Hamlet to the English king, it depending on when we get there who he is, and we hand over the letter, which may or may not have something in it to keep us going, and if not, we are finished and at a loose end, if they have loose ends. (pause) We could have done worse. I don't think we missed any chance... Not that we're getting much help. (He sits down. He lies down prone.) If we stopped breathing we'd vanish.

**ROSENCRANTZ Monologue # 4:** Do you ever think of yourself as actually dead, lying in a box with a lid on it? (GUIL: No.) Nor do I, really.... It's silly to be depressed by it. I mean one thinks of it like being alive in a box, one keeps forgetting to take into account the fact that one is dead ... which should make a difference ... shouldn't it? I mean, you'd never know you were in a box, would you? It would be just like being asleep in a box. Not that I'd like to sleep in a box, mind you, not without any air - you'd wake up dead, for a start and then where would you be? Apart from inside a box. That's the bit I don't like, frankly. That's why I don't think of it.

Because you'd be helpless, wouldn't you? Stuffed in a box like that, I mean you'd be in there forever. Even taking into account the fact that you're dead, really ... ask yourself, if I asked you straight off - I'm going to stuff you in this box now, would you rather be alive or dead? Naturally, you'd prefer to be alive. Life in a box is better than no life at all. I expect. You'd have a chance at least. You could lie there thinking - well, at least I'm not dead! In a minute someone's going to bang on the lid and tell me to come out. (Banging on the floor with his fists.) "Hey you, whatsyername! Come out of there!" (Pause.) I wouldn't think about it, if I were you. You'd only get depressed.

### **GUILDENSTERN MONOLOGUES: (Please choose your favorite)**

GUIL Monologue # 1: A scientific approach to the examination of phenomena is a defense against the pure emotion of fear. Keep tight hold and continue while there's time. Now - counter to the previous syllogism: tricky one, follow me carefully, it may prove a comfort. If we postulate, and we just have, that within un-, sub- or supernatural forces the probability is that the law of probability will not operate as a factor, then we must accept that the probability of the first part will not operate as a factor, in which case the law of probability will operate as a factor within un-, sub- or supernatural forces. And since it obviously hasn't been doing so, we can take it that we are not held within un-, sub- or supernatural forces after all; in all probability, that is.

Which is a great relief to me personally. (Small pause.)

GUIL Monologue #2. Which is all very well, except that - (He continues with tight hysteria, under control.) We have been spinning coins together since I don't know when, and in all that time (if it is all that time) I don't suppose either of us was more than a couple of gold pieces up or down. I hope that doesn't sound surprising because it's very unsurprisingness is something I am trying to keep hold of. The equanimity of your average pitcher and tosser of coins depends upon a law, or rather a tendency, or let us say a probability, or at any rate a mathematically calculable chance, which ensures that he will not upset himself by losing too much nor upset his opponent by winning too often. This made for a kind of harmony and a kind of confidence. It related the fortuitous and ordained into a reassuring union which we recognised as nature. The sun came up about as often as it went down, in the long run, and a coin showed heads about as often as it showed tails.

Then a messenger arrived. We had been sent for. Nothing else happened. Ninety-two coins consecutively have come down heads ninety-two consecutive times... and for the last three minutes on the wind of a windless day I have heard the sound of drums and flute...

GUIL Monologue # 3: A scientific approach to the examination of phenomena is a defense against the pure emotion of fear. Keep tight hold and continue while there's time. Now - counter to the previous syllogism: tricky one, follow me carefully, it may prove a comfort. If we postulate, and we just have, that within un-, sub- or supernatural forces the probability is that the law of probability will not operate as a factor, then we must accept that the probability of the first part will not operate as a factor, in which case the law of probability will operate as a factor within un-, sub- or supernatural forces. And since it obviously hasn't been doing so, we can take it that we are not held within un-, sub- or supernatural forces after all; in all probability, that is.

Which is a great relief to me personally.

GUIL Monologue #4. Which is all very well, except that - (He continues with tight hysteria, under control.) We have been spinning coins together since I don't know when, and in all that time (if it is all that time) I don't suppose either of us was more than a couple of gold pieces up or down. I hope that doesn't sound surprising because it's very unsurprisingness is something I am trying to keep hold of. The equanimity of your average pitcher and tosser of coins depends upon a law, or rather a tendency, or let us say a probability, or at any rate a mathematically calculable chance, which ensures that he will not upset himself by losing too much nor upset his opponent by winning too often. This made for a kind of harmony and a kind of confidence. It related the fortuitous and ordained into a reassuring union which we recognised as nature. The sun came up about as often as it went down, in the long run, and a coin showed heads about as often as it showed tails.

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consecutively have come down heads ninety-two consecutive times... and for the last three minutes on the wind of a windless day I have heard the sound of drums and flute...

**PLAYER MONOLOGUES: (Please choose your favorite)**

**(Rosencrantz's line will be skipped in the audition)**

**PLAYER Monologue #1:** (progressively more aggrieved, now bursts out) We can't look each other in the face! (Pause) You don't understand the humiliation of it - to be tricked out of a single assumption, which makes our existence viable - that somebody is watching... The plot was two corpses gone before we caught sight of ourselves, stripped naked in the middle of nowhere and pouring ourselves down a bottomless well.

(ROS: Is that thirty eight?)

There we were - demented children mincing about in clothes that no one ever wore, speaking as no man ever spoke, swearing love in wigs and rhymed couplets, killing each other with wooden swords, hollow protestations of faith hurled after empty promises of vengeance - and every gesture, every pose, vanishing into the thin unpopulated air. We ransomed our dignity to the clouds, and the uncomprehending birds listened. Don't you see?! We're actors - we're the opposite of people! Think, in your head, now, think of the most... private... secret... intimate... thing you have ever done secure in the knowledge of its privacy... (a good pause) Are you thinking of it? Well, I saw you do it!

**PLAYER Monologue #2**

PLAYER: We're actors... We pledged our identities, secure in the conventions of our trade; that someone would be watching. And then, gradually, no one was. We were caught, high and dry. It was not until the murder's long soliloquy that we were able to look around; frozen we were in the profile, our eyes searched you out, first confidently, then hesitantly, then desperately as

each patch of turf, each log, each exposed corner in every direction proved uninhabited, and all the while the murderous King addressed the horizon with his dreary interminable guilt... Our heads began to move, wary as lizards, the corpse of unsullied Rosalinda peeped through his fingers, and the King faltered. Even then, habit and a stubborn trust that our audience spied upon us from behind the nearest bush, forced our bodies to blunder on long after they had emptied of meaning, until like runaway carts they dragged to a halt. No one came forward. No one shouted at us. The silence was unbreakable, it imposed itself upon us; it was obscene.

We took off our crowns and swords and cloth of gold and moved silent on the road to Elsinore.

### **PLAYER Monologue #3 (Only half – your choice which part)**

PLAYER (Progressively aggrieved, now burst out.): We can't look each other in the face! (Pause, more in control.) You don't understand the humiliation of it - to be tricked out of a single assumption, which makes our existence viable - that somebody is watching... The plot was two corpses gone before we caught sight of ourselves, stripped naked in the middle of nowhere and pouring ourselves down a bottomless well.

ROS: Is that thirty eight?

PLAYER : There we are - demented children mincing about in clothes that no one ever wore, speaking as no man ever spoke, swearing love in wigs and rhymed couplets, killing each other with wooden swords, hollow protestations of faith hurled after empty promises of vengeance - and every gesture, every pose, vanishing into the thin unpopulated air. We ransomed our dignity to the clouds, and the uncomprehending birds listened. Don't you see?! We're actors - we're the opposite of people! Think, in your head, now, think of the most... private... secret... intimate... thing you have ever done secure in the knowledge of its privacy... (He gives them - and the audience - a good pause. ROS takes a shifty look.) Are you thinking of it? (He strikes with his voice and his head.) Well, I saw you do it!

(ROS leaps up, dissembling madly.) ROS: You never! It's a lie! (He catches himself and sits down again.)

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### **HAMLET MONOLOGUE:**

(Rosencrantz's lines will be skipped in the audition)

**HAMLET:** Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin. Do not believe it. That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge, what replication should be made by the son of a king?

(ROS: Take you me for a sponge, my lord? )

Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the King best service in the end. He keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw, first mouthed, to be last swallowed. When he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

(ROS: I understand you not, my lord.)

I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

(ROS: My lord, you must tell us where the body is and go with us to the King. )

The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body. The King is a thing...Of nothing. Bring me to him.

### CLAUDIUS MONOLOGUE:

**CLAUDIUS:** Welcome, dear Rosencrantz... (he raises a hand at GUIL while ROS bows - GUIL bows late and hurriedly)... and Guildenstern. (He raises a hand at ROS while GUIL bows to him - ROS is still straightening up from his previous bow)

Moreover that we did much 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, sith nor th'exterior nor 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 sith so neighbored to his youth and 'haviour, that you safe your rest here on 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 ought to us unknown afflicts him thus, that opened lies within our remedy.

### **GERTRUDE MONOLOGUE**

GERTRUDE: Good (fractional suspense) gentlemen... He hath much talked of you, and sure I am, two men there is not living to whom he more adheres. If it will please you to show us so much gentry and good will as to expand your time with us awhile for the supply and profit of our hope, your visitation shall receive such thanks as fits the king's remembrance. And I beseech you instantly to visit My too much changed son. Go, some of you, and bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

**Ambassador & Horatio Sides – (Tragedians can be double cast in these roles)**

AMBASSADOR: The signal is dismal; and our affairs from England come too late. The ears are senseless that should give us hearing to tell him his commandment is fulfilled, that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead. Where should we have our thanks?

HORATIO: Not from his mouth, had it the ability of life to thank you: He never gave commandment for their death. But since, so jump upon this bloody question, you from the Polack wars, and you from England, are here arrived, give order that these bodies high on a stage be placed to the view; and let me speak to the yet unknowing world how these things came about: so shall you hear of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts, of accidental judgements, casual slaughters, of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause, and, in this upshot, purposes mistook fallen on the inventors' heads: all this can I truly deliver.