

**Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead**  
**UIL OAP 2023 Audition Sides**

- \*Auditions begin Tuesday 11/29 at 1:30pm (Sides #1,#2, #3, #4)
- \*Continued auditions/callbacks on Thursday 12/1 at 1:30pm
- \*Crew/Company interviews on Thursday 12/1 at 2:30pm as needed

*All characters will have a British dialect. All actors should make an attempt at dialect in their audition.*

**Side #1: CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, (R&G)**

(All girls prepare Gertrude; All guys prepare Claudius & Polonius)

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 and halfway up he bows down again, with his head down, he twists to look at GUIL, who is on the way up.)*

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 neither th'exterior nor the inward man  
Resembles what it was. What it should be,  
More than his father's death, I cannot dream of.  
I entreat you both-  
That, being of so young days brought up with him  
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.

GERTRUDE: Good *(Fractional suspense)* gentlemen.

*(They BOTH bow.)*

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 goodwill  
Your visitation shall receive such thanks  
As fits a king's remembrance.

ROS: Your majesties.

GUIL: We both obey.

CLAUDIUS: Thanks, Rosencrantz (*Turning to ROS who is caught unprepared, while GUIL bows*) and gentle Guildenstern (*Turning to GUIL who is bent double*)

GERTRUDE: (*Correcting*) Thanks Guildenstern (*Turning to ROS, who bows as GUIL checks upward movement to bow too- BOTH bent double, squinting at each other*) and gentle Rosencrantz (*Turning to GUIL, BOTH straightening up- GUIL checks again and bows again.*)

And I beseech you instantly to visit  
My too much changèd son. Go, some of you,  
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

*(ROS and GUIL start to follow an ATTENDANT when POLONIUS enters. They stop and bow to him. He nods and hurries to CLAUDIUS. They turn to look at him)*

POLONIUS: My lord.  
I do think, or else this brain of mine  
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure  
As it hath used to do, that I have found  
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

**Side #2: THE PLAYER, (R&G) -**

(ALL Actors (M&F) prepare The Player)

PLAYER: Halt! (*THEY halt. Joyously.*) An audience! (*ROS and GUIL half rise*) Don't move! (*They sink back. He regards them fondly*) Perfect! A lucky thing we came along.

ROS: For us?

PLAYER: Let us hope so. (*They ALL flourish and bow, raggedly*)  
Tragedians, at your command.

ROS: My name is Guildenstern, and this is Rosencrantz. (*GUIL confers briefly with him. Without embarrassment*) I'm sorry- his name's Guildenstern, and I'm Rosencrantz.

PLAYER: A pleasure. We've played to bigger, of course.

ROS: What is your line?

PLAYER: Tragedy, sir. Deaths and disclosures, universal and particular, denouements both unexpected and inexorable, transvestite melodrama on all levels including the suggestive. We transport you into a world of intrigue and illusion. Clowns, if you like, murderers- we can do you ghosts and battles, heroes, villains, tormented lovers, *flagrante delicto* at a price, but that comes under realism for which there are special terms. Getting warm, am I?

ROS: Well, I don't know-

PLAYER: It costs little to watch, a little more if you happen to get caught up in the action, if that's your taste and times being what they are.

ROS: What are they?

PLAYER: Indifferent.

ROS: Bad?

PLAYER: Wicked. Now what precisely is your pleasure? (*He turns to the PLAYERS*) Gentlemen, disport yourselves. (*The PLAYERS shuffle into some sort of line*) There! See anything you like?

### **Side # 3 GUILDENSTERN**

(All guys prepare GUIL)

GUIL: (*Tense, progressively rattled during the whole mime*) You! What do you know about *death*? (*Fear, derision*) Actors! The mechanics of cheap melodrama! That isn't *death*! You scream and choke and sink to your knees, but it doesn't bring death home to anyone- it doesn't catch them unawares and start the whisper in their skulls that says- "One day you are going to die." (*The PLAYERS continue*) No, no, no...you've got it all wrong...you can't act death. The *fact* of it is nothing to do with seeing it happen- it's not gasps and blood and falling about- that isn't what makes death. It's just a man failing to reappear, that's all- now you see him, now you don't.

### **Side #4 ROSENCRANTZ**

(All guys prepare ROS)

ROS: Do you ever think of yourself as actually *dead*, lying in a box with a lid on it?

[GUIL: No.]

ROS: 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 all the 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. 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, it isn't a pleasant thought. *Especially* if 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! (*Pause*) I

wouldn't think about it if I were you. You'd only get depressed.  
(Pause) Eternity is a terrible thought. I mean, where's it going to end?

**Side # 5 ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN**

(All guys prepare ROS & GUIL)

GUIL: Glean what afflicts him.

ROS: Me?

GUIL: Him.

ROS: How?

GUIL: Question and answer. Old ways are the best ways.

ROS: He's afflicted.

GUIL: You question, I'll answer.

ROS: He's not himself, you know.

GUIL: I'm him, you see.

*(Beat)*

ROS: Who am I then?

GUIL: You're yourself.

ROS: Are you afflicted?

GUIL: That's the idea. Are you ready?

ROS: Let's go back a bit.

GUIL: I'm afflicted.

ROS: I see.

GUIL: Glean what afflicts me.

ROS: Right.

GUIL: Question and answer.

ROS: How should I begin?

GUIL: Address me.

ROS: My dear Guildenstern!

GUIL: *(Quietly)* You've forgotten- haven't you?

ROS: My dear Rosencrantz!

GUIL: *(Great control)* I don't think you quite understand. What we are attempting is a hypothesis in which *I* answer for *him*, while *you* ask me questions.

ROS: Ah! Ready?

GUIL: You know what to do?

ROS: What?

GUIL: Are you stupid?

ROS: Pardon?

GUIL: Are you deaf?

ROS: Did you speak?

GUIL: *(Admonishing)* Not now-

ROS: Statement.

GUIL: *(Shouts)* Not now! *(Pause. They separate and sit.)* Perhaps he'll come back this way.

ROS: Should we go?

GUIL: Why?

*(Pause)*

ROS: *(Starts up. Snaps fingers)* Oh! You mean- you pretend to be *him*, and I ask you questions!

GUIL: *(Dry)* Very good.

ROS: You had me confused.

GUIL: I could see I had.

ROS: How should I begin?

GUIL: Address me.

*(They stand facing each other, posing)*

ROS: My honored lord!

GUIL: My dear Rosencrantz!

*(Pause)*

ROS: Am I pretending to be you, then?

GUIL: Certainly not. Shall we continue?

ROS: Question and answer.

GUIL: Right.

ROS: Right. My honored lord!

GUIL: My dear fellow!

ROS: How are you?

GUIL: Afflicted!

ROS: Really? In what way?

GUIL: Transformed.

ROS: I see. *(Pause)* Not much new there.

GUIL: Go into details. *Delve*. Probe the background, establish the situation.

ROS: So- so your uncle is the king of Denmark?!

GUIL: And my father before him.

ROS: His father before him?

GUIL: No, my father before him.

ROS: But surely-

GUIL: You might well ask.

ROS: Let me get it straight. Your father was king. You were his only son. Your father dies. You are of age. Your uncle becomes king.

GUIL: Yes.

ROS: Unorthodox.

GUIL: Undid me.

ROS: Usurpation, then.

GUIL: He slipped in.

ROS: Which reminds me.

GUIL: Well, it would.



ROS: I don't want to be personal.

GUIL: It's common knowledge.

ROS: Your mother's marriage.

GUIL: He slipped in.

*(Beat)*

ROS: *(Lugubriously)* His body was still warm.

GUIL: So was hers.

ROS: Extraordinary.

GUIL: Indecent.

ROS: Hasty.

GUIL: Suspicious.

ROS: It makes you think.

GUIL: Don't think I haven't thought of it.

ROS: And with her husband's brother.

GUIL: They were close.

ROS: She went to him-

GUIL: -Too close-

ROS: -for comfort

GUIL: It looks bad.

ROS: It adds up.

GUIL: Incest to adultery.

ROS: To sum up: your father, whom you love, dies, you are his heir, you come back to find that hardly was the corpse cold before his young brother popped onto his thorne and into his sheets, thereby offending both legal and natural practice. Now why exactly are you behaving in this extraordinary manner?

GUIL: I can't imagine!

**Side #6: ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN & THE PLAYER**

(All guys prepare ROS & GUIL & THE PLAYER)

GUIL: Where are you going?

PLAYER: I can come and go as I please.

GUIL: We're still finding our feet.

PLAYER: I should concentrate on not losing your heads.

*(The PLAYER makes to go again, GUIL cuts him off again)*

GUIL: The truth is, we value your company, for want of any other. We have been left so much to our own devices- after a while one welcomes the uncertainty of being left to other people's.

PLAYER: Uncertainty is the normal state. You're nobody special.

*(He makes to leave again. GUIL loses his cool)*

GUIL: What are we supposed to do?!

PLAYER: Relax. Respond. That's what people do. You can't go through life questioning your situation at every turn.

GUIL: But we don't know what's going on, or what to do with ourselves. We don't know how to act.

PLAYER: Act natural. You know why you're here at least.

GUIL: We only know what we're told, and that's little enough. And for all we know it isn't even true.

PLAYER: For all anyone knows, nothing is. *(Beat)* What do you assume?

ROS: Hamlet is not himself, outside or in. We have to glean what afflicts him.

GUIL: He's- melancholy.

PLAYER: Melancholy?

ROS: Mad.

PLAYER: How is he mad?

ROS: Ah. *(To GUIL)* How is he mad?

GUIL: More morose than mad, perhaps.

PLAYER: Melancholy.

GUIL: Moody.

ROS: He has moods.

PLAYER: Of moroseness?

GUIL: Madness. And yet.

ROS: Quite.

GUIL: For instance.

ROS: He talks to himself, which might be madness.

GUIL: If he didn't talk sense, which he does.

ROS: Which suggests the opposite.

PLAYER: Of what?

*(Small pause)*

GUIL: I think I have it. A man talking sense to himself is no madder than a man talking nonsense not to himself.

ROS: Or just as mad.

GUIL: Or just as mad.

ROS: And he does both.

GUIL: So there you are.

ROS: Stark raving sane.