| ACT IV SCENE 2 |
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| *HAMLET enters.* |
| **HAMLET**  The body is safely hidden. |
| **GENTLEMEN**  *(from offstage)* Hamlet, Lord Hamlet! |
| **HAMLET**  What’s that noise? Who’s calling for Hamlet? Oh, here they come. |
| *ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN enter with others.* |
| **ROSENCRANTZ**  What have you done with the corpse, my lord? |
| **HAMLET**  I’ve gotten it dirty—ashes to ashes, and dust to dust. |
| **ROSENCRANTZ**  But tell us where it is, so we can take it to the chapel. |
| **HAMLET**  Don’t believe it. |
| **ROSENCRANTZ**  Believe what? |
| **HAMLET**  That I’d take your advice rather than keep my own secret. Besides, you’re a sponge! What is the son of a king supposed to say to a sponge? |
| **ROSENCRANTZ**  You think I’m a sponge, my lord? |
| **HAMLET**  Yes, sir, a sponge that soaks up the king’s approval, his rewards, and his decisions. Officers like that give the king the best service in the end. He keeps them in his mouth like an ape. First he moves them around, then he swallows them. When he needs what you have found out, he can just squeeze you like a sponge and you’ll be dry again. |
| **ROSENCRANTZ**  I don’t follow, my lord. |
| **HAMLET**  I’m glad about that. Sly words are never understood by fools. |
| **ROSENCRANTZ**  My lord, you have to tell us where the body is, and then go with us to see the king. |
| **HAMLET**  The body’s with the king, but the king’s not with the body. The king’s a thing … |
| **GUILDENSTERN**  A “thing,” my lord? |
| **HAMLET**  A thing of no importance. Take me to him. Ready or not, here I come! |
| *They exit.* |