

**The Recorders scene**

**Hamlet Act 3, scene 2**

**HAMLET**

Ay, but sir, 'While the grass grows,'--the proverb  
is something musty.

*Re-enter Players with recorders*

O, the recorders! let me see one. To withdraw with  
you:--why do you go about to recover the wind of me,  
as if you would drive me into a toil?

**GUILDENSTERN**

O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too  
unmannerly.

**HAMLET**

I do not well understand that. Will you play upon  
this pipe?

**GUILDENSTERN**

My lord, I cannot.

**HAMLET**

I pray you.

**GUILDENSTERN**

Believe me, I cannot.

**HAMLET**

I do beseech you.

**GUILDENSTERN**

I know no touch of it, my lord.

**HAMLET**

'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with  
your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your  
mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music.

Look you, these are the stops.

**GUILDENSTERN**

But these cannot I command to any utterance of  
harmony; I have not the skill.

**HAMLET**

Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of  
me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know  
my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my  
mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to  
the top of my compass: and there is much music,  
excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot  
you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am  
easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what  
instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you  
cannot play upon me.