Rosencrantz and Guildenstern
Quotes on Death

ROS: Whatever became of the moment when one first knew about death? There must have been one, a moment, in childhood when it first occurred to you that you don’t go on for ever. It must have been shattering – stamped into one’s memory. ...We must be born with an intuition of mortality. (71)

PLAYER: There’s nothing more unconvincing than an unconvincing death. (77)

GUIL: (fear, derision) Actors! The mechanics of cheap melodrama! That isn’t death! ...You die so many times; how can you expect them to believe in your death? (83)

PLAYER: On the contrary, it’s the only kind they do believe. They’re conditioned to it. (84)

GUIL: ...It’s just a man flailing to reappear, that’s all – now you see him, now you don’t, that’s the only thing that’s real: here one minute and gone the next and never coming back – an exit, unobtrusive and unannounced, a disappearance gathering weight as it goes on, until, finally, it is heavy with death. (84)

Questions to consider:
Do you agree more with Guildenstern or The Player?
How can these ideas on death relate back to Hamlet?
Think of the deaths in Hamlet (Polonius, Ophelia, Claudius, Gertrude, Hamlet, etc) and how they relate to The Player’s view and also Guildenstern’s view.

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