The Tragedy of
HAMLET
Prince of Denmark
By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Edited by BARBARA A. MOWAT
and PAUL WERSTINE

Folger Shakespeare Library

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It is hard to imagine a world without Shakespeare. Since their composition four hundred years ago, Shakespeare’s plays and poems have traveled the globe, inviting those who see and read his works to make them their own.

Readers of the New Folger Editions are part of this ongoing process of “taking up Shakespeare,” finding our own thoughts and feelings in language that strikes us as old or unusual and, for that very reason, new. We still struggle to keep up with a writer who could think a mile a minute, whose words paint pictures that shift like clouds. These expertly edited texts are presented to the public as a resource for study, artistic adaptation, and enjoyment. By making the classic texts of the New Folger Editions available in electronic form as Folger Digital Texts, we place a trusted resource in the hands of anyone who wants them.

The New Folger Editions of Shakespeare’s plays, which are the basis for the texts realized here in digital form, are special because of their origin. The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC, is the single greatest documentary source of Shakespeare’s works. An unparalleled collection of early modern books, manuscripts, and artwork connected to Shakespeare, the Folger’s holdings have been consulted extensively in the preparation of these texts. The Editions also reflect the expertise gained through the regular performance of Shakespeare’s works in the Folger’s Elizabethan Theater.

I want to express my deep thanks to editors Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine for creating these indispensable editions of Shakespeare’s works, which incorporate the best of textual scholarship with a richness of commentary that is both inspired and engaging. Readers who want to know more about Shakespeare and his plays can follow the paths these distinguished scholars have tread by visiting the Folger either in-person or online, where a range of physical and digital resources exists to supplement the material in these texts. I commend to you these words, and hope that they inspire.

Michael Witmore
Director, Folger Shakespeare Library
Until now, with the release of the Folger Digital Texts, readers in search of a free online text of Shakespeare’s plays had to be content primarily with using the Moby™ Text, which reproduces a late-nineteenth century version of the plays. What is the difference? Many ordinary readers assume that there is a single text for the plays: what Shakespeare wrote. But Shakespeare’s plays were not published the way modern novels or plays are published today: as a single, authoritative text. In some cases, the plays have come down to us in multiple published versions, represented by various Quartos (Qq) and by the great collection put together by his colleagues in 1623, called the First Folio (F). There are, for example, three very different versions of Hamlet, two of King Lear, Henry V, Romeo and Juliet, and others. Editors choose which version to use as their base text, and then amend that text with words, lines or speech prefixes from the other versions that, in their judgment, make for a better or more accurate text.

Other editorial decisions involve choices about whether an unfamiliar word could be understood in light of other writings of the period or whether it should be changed; decisions about words that made it into Shakespeare’s text by accident through four hundred years of printings and misprinting; and even decisions based on cultural preference and taste. When the Moby™ Text was created, for example, it was deemed “improper” and “indecent” for Miranda to chastise Caliban for having attempted to rape her. (See The Tempest, 1.2: “Abhorred slave,/Which any print of goodness wilt not take,/Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee…”). All Shakespeare editors at the time took the speech away from her and gave it to her father, Prospero.

The editors of the Moby™ Shakespeare produced their text long before scholars fully understood the proper grounds on which to make the thousands of decisions that Shakespeare editors face. The Folger Library Shakespeare Editions, on which the Folger Digital Texts depend, make this editorial process as nearly transparent as is possible, in contrast to older texts, like the Moby™, which hide editorial interventions. The reader of the Folger Shakespeare knows where the text has been altered because editorial interventions are signaled by square brackets (for example, from Othello: “[If she in
chains of magic were not bound,"), half-square brackets (for example, from *Henry V*: “With \[blood\] and sword and fire to win your right,"), or angle brackets (for example, from *Hamlet*: “O farewell, honest \(<\text{soldier.}\) Who hath relieved\(>/you?\)”). At any point in the text, you can hover your cursor over a bracket for more information.

Because the Folger Digital Texts are edited in accord with twenty-first century knowledge about Shakespeare’s texts, the Folger here provides them to readers, scholars, teachers, actors, directors, and students, free of charge, confident of their quality as texts of the plays and pleased to be able to make this contribution to the study and enjoyment of Shakespeare.
Events before the start of *Hamlet* set the stage for tragedy. When the king of Denmark, Prince Hamlet’s father, suddenly dies, Hamlet’s mother, Gertrude, marries his uncle Claudius, who becomes the new king.

A spirit who claims to be the ghost of Hamlet’s father describes his murder at the hands of Claudius and demands that Hamlet avenge the killing. When the councilor Polonius learns from his daughter, Ophelia, that Hamlet has visited her in an apparently distracted state, Polonius attributes the prince’s condition to lovesickness, and he sets a trap for Hamlet using Ophelia as bait.

To confirm Claudius’s guilt, Hamlet arranges for a play that mimics the murder; Claudius’s reaction is that of a guilty man. Hamlet, now free to act, mistakenly kills Polonius, thinking he is Claudius. Claudius sends Hamlet away as part of a deadly plot.

After Polonius’s death, Ophelia goes mad and later drowns. Hamlet, who has returned safely to confront the king, agrees to a fencing match with Ophelia’s brother, Laertes, who secretly poisons his own rapier. At the match, Claudius prepares poisoned wine for Hamlet, which Gertrude unknowingly drinks; as she dies, she accuses Claudius, whom Hamlet kills. Then first Laertes and then Hamlet die, both victims of Laertes’ rapier.
THE GHOST
HAMLET, Prince of Denmark, son of the late King Hamlet and Queen Gertrude
QUEEN GERTRUDE, widow of King Hamlet, now married to Claudius
KING CLAUDIUS, brother to the late King Hamlet

OPHELIA
LAERTES, her brother
POLONIUS, father of Ophelia and Laertes, councillor to King Claudius
REYNALDO, servant to Polonius

HORATIO, Hamlet’s friend and confidant

VOLTEMAND
CORNELIUS
ROSENCRANTZ
GUILDENSTERN
OSRIC
Gentlemen
A Lord

FRANCISCO
BARNARDO
MARCELLUS

courtiers at the Danish court

FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway
A Captain in Fortinbrás’s army

Ambassadors to Denmark from England

Players who take the roles of Prologue, Player King, Player Queen, and Lucianus in The Murder of Gonzago

Two Messengers
Sailors
Gravedigger
Gravedigger’s companion
Doctor of Divinity

Attendants, Lords, Guards, Musicians, Laertes’s Followers, Soldiers, Officers
Enter Barnardo and Francisco, two sentinels.

Who's there?

Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

Long live the King!

Barnardo.

He.

You come most carefully upon your hour.

'Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco.

For this relief much thanks. 'Tis bitter cold, And I am sick at heart.

Have you had quiet guard?

Not a mouse stirring.

Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

I think I hear them.—Stand ho! Who is there?

Friends to this ground.
FRANCISCO
  Give you good night.

FRANCISCO
  O farewell, honest (soldier.) Who hath relieved you?

MARCELLUS
  Barnardo hath my place. Give you good night.

Francisco exits.

BARNARDO
  Holla, Barnardo.

MARCELLUS
  What, has this thing appeared again tonight?

BARNARDO
  I have seen nothing.

HORATIO
  Welcome, Horatio.—Welcome, good Marcellus.

HORATIO
  What, has this thing appeared again tonight?

HORATIO
  Tush, tush, ’twill not appear.

BARNARDO
  Sit down awhile,

BARNARDO
  And let us once again assail your ears,

BARNARDO
  That are so fortified against our story,

BARNARDO
  What we have two nights seen.

HORATIO
  Well, sit we down, And let us hear Barnardo speak of this.

BARNARDO
  Last night of all,

BARNARDO
  When yond same star that’s westward from the pole

BARNARDO
  Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

BARNARDO
  The bell then beating one—
Enter Ghost.

MARCELLUS
  Peace, break thee off! Look where it comes again.

BARNARDO
  In the same figure like the King that's dead.

MARCELLUS, ['to Horatio']
  Thou art a scholar. Speak to it, Horatio.

BARNARDO
  Looks he not like the King? Mark it, Horatio.

HORATIO
  Most like. It [harrow]s me with fear and wonder.

BARNARDO
  It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS
  Speak to it, Horatio.

HORATIO
  What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,
  Together with that fair and warlike form
  In which the majesty of buried Denmark
  Did sometimes march? By heaven, I charge thee,
  speak.

MARCELLUS
  It is offended.

BARNARDO
  See, it stalks away.

HORATIO
  Stay! speak! speak! I charge thee, speak!

Ghost exits.

MARCELLUS
  'Tis gone and will not answer.

BARNARDO
  How now, Horatio, you tremble and look pale.
  Is not this something more than fantasy?
  What think you on 't?

HORATIO
  Before my God, I might not this believe
  Without the sensible and true avouch
  Of mine own eyes.
HAMLET

ACT 1. SC. 1

MARCELLUS Is it not like the King?

HORATIO As thou art to thyself.

MARCELLUS Such was the very armor he had on
When he the ambitious Norway combated.
So frowned he once when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledged 'Polacks' on the ice.
'Tis strange.

MARCELLUS Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

HORATIO In what particular thought to work I know not,
But in the gross and scope of mine opinion
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

MARCELLUS Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And (why) such daily (cast) of brazen cannon
And foreign mart for implements of war,
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week.
What might be toward that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint laborer with the day?
Who is 't that can inform me?

HORATIO That can I.

MARCELLUS At least the whisper goes so: our last king,
Whose image even but now appeared to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto pricked on by a most emulate pride,
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet
(For so this side of our known world esteemed him)
Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a sealed compact,
Well ratified by law and heraldry,

HORATIO Did forfeit, with his life, all (those) his lands
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror.
Hamlet

ACT 1. SC. 1

BARNARDO

Against the which a moiety competent
Was gagèd by our king, which had ⟨returned⟩
To the inheritance of Fortinbras
Had he been vanquisher, as, by the same comart
And carriage of the article ⟨designed,⟩
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
Of unimprovèd mettle hot and full,
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Sharked up a list of lawless resolutes
For food and diet to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in ’t; which is no other
(As it doth well appear unto our state)
But to recover of us, by strong hand
And terms compulsatory, those foresaid lands
So by his father lost. And this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations,
The source of this our watch, and the chief head
Of this posthaste and rummage in the land.

HORATIO

A mote it is to trouble the mind’s eye.
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star,
Upon whose influence Neptune’s empire stands,
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
And even the like precurse of ⟨feared⟩ events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates
And prologue to the omen coming on,
Have heaven and Earth together demonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen.]

Enter Ghost.

But soft, behold! Lo, where it comes again!
I’ll cross it though it blast me.—Stay, illusion!

*It spreads his arms.*

If thou hast any sound or use of voice,
Speak to me.

If there be any good thing to be done
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
Speak to me.

If thou art privy to thy country’s fate,
Which happily foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak!

Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, (you) spirits oft walk in death,
Speak of it.

Stay and speak!—Stop it, Marcellus.

Shall I strike it with my partisan?

Do, if it will not stand.

’Tis here.

’Tis here.

’Tis gone.

We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence,
For it is as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

It was about to speak when the cock crew.

And then it started like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day, and at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
Th’ extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine, and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever ’gainst that season comes
Wherein our Savior’s birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad,
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallowed and so gracious is that time.

So have I heard and do in part believe it.
But look, the morn in russet mantle clad
Walks o’er the dew of yon high eastward hill.
Break we our watch up, and by my advice
Let us impart what we have seen tonight
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

Let’s do ’t, I pray, and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most convenient.

They exit.
<Scene 2>

Flourish. Enter Claudius, King of Denmark, Gertrude the Queen, 'the\ Council, as Polonius, and his son Laertes, Hamlet, with others, 'among them Voltemand and Cornelius.'

KING

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
Th' imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we (as 'twere with a defeated joy,
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole)
Taken to wife. Nor have we herein barred
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.

Now follows that you know. Young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleaguéd with this dream of his advantage,
He hath not failed to pester us with message
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
To our most valiant brother—so much for him.
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting.
Thus much the business is: we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,
Who, impotent and bedrid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew’s purpose, to suppress
His further gait herein, in that the levies,
The lists, and full proportions are all made
Out of his subject; and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltemand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the King more than the scope
Of these dilated articles allow.

‘Giving them a paper.’

Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

CORNELIUS/VOLTEMAND
In that and all things will we show our duty.

KING
We doubt it nothing. Heartily farewell.

〈Voltemand and Cornelius exit.〉

And now, Laertes, what’s the news with you?
You told us of some suit. What is ’t, Laertes?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane
And lose your voice. What wouldst thou beg,

Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

LAERTES
My dread lord,

Your leave and favor to return to France,
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark
To show my duty in your coronation,
Yet now I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

KING
Have you your father’s leave? What says Polonius?
POLONIUS

Hath, my lord, [wrung from me my slow leave
By laborsome petition, and at last
Upon his will I sealed my hard consent.]
I do beseech you give him leave to go.

KING

Take thy fair hour, Laertes. Time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will.—
But now, my cousin Hamlet and my son—

HAMLET, \[aside\]

A little more than kin and less than kind.

KING

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET

Not so, my lord; I am too much in the sun.

QUEEN

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not forever with thy vailèd lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust.
Thou know’st ’tis common; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET

Ay, madam, it is common.

QUEEN

If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET

“Seems,” madam? Nay, it is. I know not “seems.”
’Tis not alone my inky cloak, (good) mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected havior of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, \[shapes\] of grief,
That can \(denote\) me truly. These indeed “seem,”
For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passes show,
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,

Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father.
But you must know your father lost a father,
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term
To do obsequious sorrow. But to persever
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness. 'Tis unmanly grief.
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,

A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,

An understanding simple and unschooled.
For what we know must be and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,

Why should we in our peevish opposition

Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven,

A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,

To reason most absurd, whose common theme

Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died today,

"This must be so." We pray you, throw to earth

This unprevailing woe and think of us

As of a father; for let the world take note,

You are the most immediate to our throne,

And with no less nobility of love

Than that which dearest father bears his son

Do I impart toward you. For your intent

In going back to school in Wittenberg,

It is most retrograde to our desire,

And we beseech you, bend you to remain

Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,

Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.
QUEEN
    Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet.
    I pray thee, stay with us. Go not to Wittenberg.

HAMLET
    I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

KING
    Why, ’tis a loving and a fair reply.
    Be as ourself in Denmark.—Madam, come.
    This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
    Sits smiling to my heart, in grace whereof
    No jocund health that Denmark drinks today
    But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
    And the King’s rouse the heaven shall bruit again,
    Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away.

    Flourish. All but Hamlet exit.

HAMLET
    O, that this too, too sullied flesh would melt,
    Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,
    Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
    His canon ’gainst (self-slaughter!) O God, God,
    How (weary,) stale, flat, and unprofitable
    Seem to me all the uses of this world!
    Fie on ’t, ah fie! ’Tis an unweeded garden
    That grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature
    Possess it merely. That it should come (to this:)
    But two months dead—nay, not so much, not two.
    So excellent a king, that was to this
    Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
    That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
    Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and Earth,
    Must I remember? Why, she (would) hang on him
    As if increase of appetite had grown
    By what it fed on. And yet, within a month
    (Let me not think on ’t; frailty, thy name is woman!)
    A little month, or ere those shoes were old
    With which she followed my poor father’s body,
Like Niobe, all tears—why she, (even she)
(O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourned longer!), married with my
uncle,
My father’s brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules. Within a month,
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her gallèd eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo.

HORATIO   Hail to your Lordship.
HAMLET    I am glad to see you well.
Horatio—or I do forget myself!
HORATIO
The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.
HAMLET
Sir, my good friend. I’ll change that name with you.
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?—
Marcellus?

MARCELLUS   My good lord.

HAMLET
I am very glad to see you. [To Barnardo.]1 Good
even, sir.—
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

HORATIO
A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAMLET
I would not hear your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do my ear that violence
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself. I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We’ll teach you to drink (deep) ere you depart.
HORATIO
My lord, I came to see your father’s funeral.

HAMLET
I prithee, do not mock me, fellow student.

HORATIO
I think it was to my mother’s wedding.

HORATIO
Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.

HAMLET
Thrift, thrift, Horatio. The funeral baked meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

HORATIO
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!

HAMLET
My father—methinks I see my father.

HORATIO
Where, my lord?

HAMLET
In my mind’s eye, Horatio.

HORATIO
I saw him once. He was a goodly king.

HAMLET
He was a man. Take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

HORATIO
My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HORATIO
Saw who?

HORATIO
My lord, the King your father.

HAMLET
The King my father?

HORATIO
Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver
Upon the witness of these gentlemen
This marvel to you.

HORATIO
For God’s love, let me hear!

HORATIO
Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch,
In the dead waste and middle of the night, 
Been thus encountered: a figure like your father, 
Armed at point exactly, cap-à-pie, 
Appears before them and with solemn march 
Goes slow and stately by them. Thrice he walked 
By their oppressed and fear-surprisèd eyes 
Within his truncheon’s length, whilst they, distilled 
Almost to jelly with the act of fear, 
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me 
In dreadful secrecy impart they did, 
And I with them the third night kept the watch, 
Where, as they had delivered, both in time, 
Form of the thing (each word made true and good), 
The apparition comes. I knew your father; 
These hands are not more like. But where was this?

HAMLET 

MARCELLUS 
My lord, upon the platform where we watch.

HAMLET 

Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO 
My lord, I did, 
But answer made it none. Yet once methought 
It lifted up its head and did address 
Itself to motion, like as it would speak; 
But even then the morning cock crew loud, 
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away 
And vanished from our sight. ’Tis very strange.

HORARIO 
As I do live, my honored lord, ’tis true. 
And we did think it writ down in our duty 
To let you know of it. 

HAMLET 
Indeed, sirs, but this troubles me. 

Hold you the watch tonight?

ALL 
We do, my lord.

HAMLET 

Armed, say you?
Hamlet

ACT 1. SC. 2

ALL Armed, my lord.

HAMLET From top to toe?

ALL My lord, from head to foot.

HAMLET Then saw you not his face?

HORATIO O, yes, my lord, he wore his beaver up.

HAMLET What, looked he frowningly?

HORATIO A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

HAMLET Pale or red?

HORATIO Nay, very pale.

HAMLET And fixed his eyes upon you?

HORATIO Most constantly.

HAMLET I would I had been there.

HORATIO It would have much amazed you.

HAMLET Very like. Stayed it long?

HORATIO While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

BARNARDO/MARCELLUS Longer, longer.

HORATIO Not when I saw ’t.

HAMLET His beard was grizzled, no?

HORATIO It was as I have seen it in his life, A sable silvered.

HAMLET I will watch [tonight.]

HORATIO Perchance ’twill walk again.

HAMLET I warrant it will.

HAMLET If it assume my noble father’s person,

I’ll speak to it, though hell itself should gape

And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,

If you have hitherto concealed this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsomever else shall hap tonight,
Give it an understanding but no tongue.
I will requite your loves. So fare you well.
Upon the platform, ’twixt eleven and twelve,
I’ll visit you.

All but Hamlet exit.

Hamlet

Your loves, as mine to you. Farewell.

[All but Hamlet] exit.

My father’s spirit—in arms! All is not well.
I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come!
Till then, sit still, my soul. {Foul} deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o’erwhelm them, to men’s eyes.

He exits.

(Scene 3)

Enter Laertes and Ophelia, his sister.

Laertes

My necessaries are embarked. Farewell.
And, sister, as the winds give benefit
And convey {is} assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Ophelia

Do you doubt that?

Laertes

For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favor,
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute,
No more.

Ophelia

No more but so?

Laertes

Think it no more.
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews and (bulk.) but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch
The virtue of his will; but you must fear,
His greatness weighed, his will is not his own,
(For he himself is subject to his birth.)
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends
The safety and the health of this whole state.
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Then, if he says he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed, which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honor may sustain
If with too credent ear you list his songs
Or lose your heart or your chaste treasure open
To his unmastered importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia; fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough
If she unmask her beauty to the moon.
Virtue itself ’scapes not calumnious strokes.
The canker galls the infants of the spring
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,
And, in the morn and liquid dew of youth,
Contagious blastments are most imminent.
Be wary, then; best safety lies in fear.
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPHELIA
I shall the effect of this good lesson keep
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
While, 〈like〉 a puffed and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
And recks not his own rede.

O, fear me not.

Enter Polonius.

I stay too long. But here my father comes.
A double blessing is a double grace.
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stayed for. There, my blessing with thee.

And these few precepts in thy memory
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel,
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatched, unfledged courage. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,
Bear ’t that th’ opposèd may beware of thee.
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice.
Take each man’s censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not expressed in fancy (rich, not gaudy),
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
〈Are〉 of a most select and generous chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender 〈be,〉
For 〈loan〉 oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing (dulls the) edge of husbandry.

This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Farewell. My blessing season this in thee.

LAERTES

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POLONIUS

The time invests you. Go, your servants tend.

LAERTES

Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well
What I have said to you.

OPHELIA

’Tis in my memory locked,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Farewell.

What is ’t, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

OPHELIA

So please you, something touching the Lord
Hamlet.

POLONIUS

Marry, well bethought.

’Tis told me he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you, and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and
bounteous.

If it be so (as so ’tis put on me,
And that in way of caution), I must tell you
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behooves my daughter and your honor.

What is between you? Give me up the truth.

He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.

POLONIUS

Affection, puh! You speak like a green girl
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his “tenders,” as you call them?
OPHELIA
    I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

POLONIUS
    Marry, I will teach you. Think yourself a baby
    That you have ta’en these tenders for true pay,
    Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly,
    Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
    「Running」 it thus) you’ll tender me a fool.

OPHELIA
    My lord, he hath importuned me with love
    In honorable fashion—

POLONIUS
    Ay, “fashion” you may call it. Go to, go to!

OPHELIA
    And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
    With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

POLONIUS
    Ay, (springes) to catch woodcocks. I do know,
    When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
    Lends the tongue vows. These blazes, daughter,
    Giving more light than heat, extinct in both
    Even in their promise as it is a-making,
    You must not take for fire. From this time
    Be something scantier of your maiden presence.
    Set your entreatments at a higher rate
    Than a command to parle. For Lord Hamlet,
    Believe so much in him that he is young,
    And with a larger (tether) may he walk
    Than may be given you. In few, Ophelia,
    Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers,
    Not of that dye which their investments show,
    But mere (implorators) of unholy suits,
    Breathing like sanctified and pious (bawds)
    The better to (beguile.) This is for all:
    I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth
    Have you so slander any moment leisure
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to ’t, I charge you. Come your ways.

OPHELIA    I shall obey, my lord.

They exit.

Scene 4

Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.

HAMLET

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HORATIO

It is (a) nipping and an eager air.

HAMLET

What hour now?

HORATIO

I think it lacks of twelve.

MARCELLUS

No, it is struck.

HORATIO

Indeed, I heard it not. It then draws near the season
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

A flourish of trumpets and two pieces goes off.

What does this mean, my lord?

HAMLET

The King doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassail, and the swagg’ring upspring reels;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettledrum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

HORATIO

Is it a custom?

HAMLET

Ay, marry, is ’t,
But, to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honored in the breach than the observance.

[This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations.

They clepe us drunkards and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition. And, indeed, it takes
From our achievements, though performed at height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So oft it chances in particular men
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As in their birth (wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin),
By the o’ergrowth of some complexion
(Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason),
Or by some habit that too much o’erleavens
The form of plausible manners—that these men,
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature’s livery or fortune’s star,
His virtues else, be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo,
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault. The dram of evil
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
To his own scandal.]

Enter Ghost.

HAMLET

From our achievements, though performed at height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So oft it chances in particular men
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As in their birth (wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin),
By the o’ergrowth of some complexion
(Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason),
Or by some habit that too much o’erleavens
The form of plausible manners—that these men,
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature’s livery or fortune’s star,
His virtues else, be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo,
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault. The dram of evil
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
To his own scandal.]
To cast thee up again. What may this mean
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel,
Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous, and we fools of nature
So horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?

\textit{(Ghost) beckons.}

\textbf{HORATIO}

It beckons you to go away with it
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

\textbf{MARCELLUS}

Look with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removèd ground.
But do not go with it.

\textbf{HORATIO}

No, by no means.

\textbf{HAMLET}

It will not speak. Then I will follow it.

\textbf{HORATIO}

Do not, my lord.

\textbf{HAMLET}

Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin’s fee.
And for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again. I’ll follow it.

\textbf{HORATIO}

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord?
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o’er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other horrible form
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness? Think of it.
[The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to the sea
And hears it roar beneath.]
HAMLET

It waves me still.—Go on, I’ll follow thee.

MARCELLUS

You shall not go, my lord.  

HAMLET

Hold off your hands.

HORATIO

Be ruled. You shall not go.

HAMLET

My fate cries out

And makes each petty arture in this body

As hardy as the Nemean lion’s nerve.

Still am I called. Unhand me, gentlemen.

By heaven, I’ll make a ghost of him that lets me!

I say, away!—Go on. I’ll follow thee.

Ghost and Hamlet exit.

HORATIO

He waxes desperate with imagination.

MARCELLUS

Let’s follow. ’Tis not fit thus to obey him.

HORATIO

Have after. To what issue will this come?

MARCELLUS

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HORATIO

Heaven will direct it.

MARCELLUS

Nay, let’s follow him.

They exit.

Enter Ghost and Hamlet.

HAMLET

Whither wilt thou lead me? Speak. I’ll go no further.

GHOST

Mark me.
HAMLET  I will.

GHOST  My hour is almost come
       When I to sulf’rous and tormenting flames
       Must render up myself.

HAMLET  Alas, poor ghost!

GHOST  Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
       To what I shall unfold.

HAMLET  Speak. I am bound to hear.

GHOST  So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAMLET  What?

GHOST  I am thy father’s spirit,

Doomed for a certain term to walk the night
And for the day confined to fast in fires
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their
spheres,
Thy knotted and combinèd locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand an end,
Like quills upon the fearful porpentine.
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

HAMLET  O God!

GHOST  Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET  Murder?

GHOST  Murder most foul, as in the best it is,
       But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

HAMLET  Haste me to know ’t, that I, with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

GHOST

I find thee apt;
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear.

'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me. So the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abused. But know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father’s life
Now wears his crown.

HAMLET  O, my prophetic soul! My uncle!

GHOST

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wits, with traitorous gifts—
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.

O Hamlet, what a falling off was there!
From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage, and to decline
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine.

But virtue, as it never will be moved,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So, (lust,) though to a radiant angel linked,
Will (sate) itself in a celestial bed
And prey on garbage.

But soft, methinks I scent the morning air.
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebona in a vial
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leprous distilment, whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
And with a sudden vigor it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine,
And a most instant tetter barked about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust
All my smooth body.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother’s hand
Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched,
Cut off, even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled,
No reck’ning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.
O horrible, O horrible, most horrible!
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damnèd incest.
But, howsoever thou pursues this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once.
The glowworm shows the matin to be near
And ’gins to pale his uneffectual fire.
Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me.  

(He exits.)

HAMLET

O all you host of heaven! O Earth! What else?
And shall I couple hell? O fie! Hold, hold, my heart,
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me (stiffly) up. Remember thee?
Ay, thou poor ghost, whiles memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory
I’ll wipe away all trivial, fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there,
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmixed with baser matter. Yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain!
My tables—meet it is I set it down
That one may smile and smile and be a villain.
At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark.

[He writes.]

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word.
It is “adieu, adieu, remember me.”
I have sworn ’t.

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

HORATIO    My lord, my lord!
MARCELLUS  Lord Hamlet.
HORATIO    Heavens secure him!
HAMLET     So be it.
MARCELLUS  Illo, ho, ho, my lord!
HAMLET     Hillo, ho, ho, boy! Come, (bird,) come!
MARCELLUS  How is ’t, my noble lord?
HORATIO    What news, my lord?
HAMLET     O, wonderful!
HORATIO    Good my lord, tell it.
HAMLET     No, you will reveal it.
HORATIO    Not I, my lord, by heaven.
MARCELLUS  Nor I, my lord.
HAMLET     How say you, then? Would heart of man once think it?
           But you’ll be secret?
HAMLET

HORATIO/MARCELLUS Ay, by heaven, (my lord.)

HAMLET There’s never a villain dwelling in all Denmark But he’s an arrant knave.

HORATIO There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave To tell us this.

HAMLET Why, right, you are in the right. And so, without more circumstance at all, I hold it fit that we shake hands and part, You, as your business and desire shall point you (For every man hath business and desire, Such as it is), and for my own poor part, I will go pray.

HORATIO These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

HAMLET I am sorry they offend you, heartily; Yes, faith, heartily.

HORATIO There’s no offense, my lord.

HAMLET Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio, And much offense, too. Touching this vision here, It is an honest ghost—that let me tell you. For your desire to know what is between us, O’ermaster ’t as you may. And now, good friends, As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers, Give me one poor request.

HORATIO What is ’t, my lord? We will.

HAMLET Never make known what you have seen tonight.

HORATIO/MARCELLUS My lord, we will not.

HAMLET Nay, but swear ’t.

HORATIO In faith, my lord, not I.

MARCELLUS Nor I, my lord, in faith.

HAMLET Upon my sword.
MARCELLUS  We have sworn, my lord, already.
HAMLET    Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.
GHOST     *cries under the stage*  Swear.
HAMLET
    Ha, ha, boy, sayst thou so? Art thou there,
truepenny?
    Come on, you hear this fellow in the cellarage.
    Consent to swear.
HORATIO   Propose the oath, my lord.
HAMLET
    Never to speak of this that you have seen,
Swear by my sword.
    Hic et ubique? Then we’ll shift our ground.
    Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword.
Swear by my sword
    Never to speak of this that you have heard.
GHOST, *beneath*  Swear by his sword.
HAMLET
    Well said, old mole. Canst work i’ th’ earth so fast?—
A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends.
HORATIO
    O day and night, but this is wondrous strange.
HAMLET
    And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
And there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come.
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
How strange or odd some’er I bear myself
(As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic disposition on)
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
With arms encumbered thus, or this headshake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As “Well, well, we know,” or “We could an if we would,”
Or “If we list to speak,” or “There be an if they might,”
Or such ambiguous giving-out, to note
That you know aught of me—this do swear,
So grace and mercy at your most need help you.

GHOST, [beneath] Swear.

HAMLET

Rest, rest, perturbèd spirit.—So, gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you,
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
May do t’ express his love and friending to you,
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together,
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint. O cursèd spite
That ever I was born to set it right!
Nay, come, let’s go together.

They exit.
Enter old Polonius with his man (Reynaldo.)

POLONIUS

Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

REYNALDO I will, my lord.

POLONIUS

You shall do marvelous wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquire
Of his behavior.

REYNALDO My lord, I did intend it.

POLONIUS

Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir,
Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris;
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
What company, at what expense; and finding
By this encompassment and drift of question
That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it.
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him,
As thus: “I know his father and his friends
And, in part, him.” Do you mark this, Reynaldo?

REYNALDO Ay, very well, my lord.

POLONIUS

“And, in part, him, but,” you may say, “not well.

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But if ’t be he I mean, he’s very wild,
Admitted so and so.” And there put on him
What forgeries you please—merry, none so rank
As may dishonor him, take heed of that,
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.

As gaming, my lord.

Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing,
Quarreling, drabbing—you may go so far.

My lord, that would dishonor him.

Faith, (no,) as you may season it in the charge.
You must not put another scandal on him
That he is open to incontinency;
That’s not my meaning. But breathe his faults so
quaintly
That they may seem the taints of liberty,
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unclaimed blood,
Of general assault.

But, my good lord—

Wherefore should you do this?

Ay, my lord, I would know that.

Marry, sir, here’s my drift,
And I believe it is a fetch of wit.
You, laying these slight sullies on my son,
As ’twere a thing a little soiled (’th’) working,
Mark you, your party in converse, him you would
sound,
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured
He closes with you in this consequence:
“Good sir,” or so, or “friend,” or “gentleman,”
According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country—
REYNALDO Very good, my lord.

POLONIUS And then, sir, does he this, he does—what was I about to say? By the Mass, I was about to say something. Where did I leave?

REYNALDO At “closes in the consequence,” (at “friend, or so,” and “gentleman.”)

POLONIUS At “closes in the consequence”—ay, marry—He closes thus: “I know the gentleman. I saw him yesterday,” or “th’ other day” (Or then, or then, with such or such), “and as you say,

There was he gaming, there (o’ertook) in ’s rouse, There falling out at tennis”; or perchance “I saw him enter such a house of sale”—Videlicet, a brothel—or so forth. See you now

Your bait of falsehood take this carp of truth; And thus do we of wisdom and of reach, With windlasses and with assays of bias, By indirections find directions out. So by my former lecture and advice Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

REYNALDO My lord, I have.

POLONIUS God be wi’ you. Fare you well.

REYNALDO Good my lord.

POLONIUS Observe his inclination in yourself.

REYNALDO I shall, my lord.

POLONIUS And let him ply his music.

REYNALDO Well, my lord.

POLONIUS Farewell. 

Reynaldo exits.

Enter Ophelia.

How now, Ophelia, what’s the matter?
OPHELIA

O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

POLONIUS

With what, i’ th’ name of God?

OPHELIA

My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,

Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,

No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,

Ungartered, and down-gyvèd to his ankle,

Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,

And with a look so piteous in purport

As if he had been loosèd out of hell

To speak of horrors—he comes before me.

POLONIUS

Mad for thy love?

OPHELIA

My lord, I do not know,

But truly I do fear it.

POLONIUS

What said he?

OPHELIA

He took me by the wrist and held me hard.

Then goes he to the length of all his arm,

And, with his other hand thus o’er his brow,

He falls to such perusal of my face

As he would draw it. Long stayed he so.

At last, a little shaking of mine arm,

And thrice his head thus waving up and down,

He raised a sigh so piteous and profound

As it did seem to shatter all his bulk

And end his being. That done, he lets me go,

And, with his head over his shoulder turned,

He seemed to find his way without his eyes,

For out o’ doors he went without their helps

And to the last bended their light on me.

POLONIUS

Come, go with me. I will go seek the King.

This is the very ecstasy of love,

Whose violent property fordoes itself
And leads the will to desperate undertakings
As oft as any passions under heaven
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

OPHELIA
No, my good lord, but as you did command
I did repel his letters and denied
His access to me.

POLONIUS
That hath made him mad.

I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not coted him. I feared he did but trifle
And meant to wrack thee. But beshrew my jealousy!
By heaven, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the King.

This must be known, which, being kept close, might
move
More grief to hide than hate to utter love.

Come.

*They exit.*

(Scene 2)

Flourish. Enter King and Queen, Rosencrantz and
Guildenstern [and Attendants.]

KING
Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.
Moreover that we much did 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 the 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 havior,
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]
That, opened, lies within our remedy.

QUEEN

Good 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 goodwill
As to expend your time with us awhile
For the supply and profit of our hope,
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king’s remembrance.

ROSENCRANTZ

Both your Majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

GUILDENSTERN

But we both obey,
And here give up ourselves in the full bent
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

KING

Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

QUEEN

Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz.
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changèd son.—Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

GUILDENSTERN

Heavens make our presence and our practices
Pleasant and helpful to him!
QUEEN

Ay, amen!

*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit with some Attendants.*

*Enter Polonius.*

**POLONIUS**

Th’ ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully returned.

**KING**

Thou still hast been the father of good news.

**POLONIUS**

Have I, my lord? I assures my good liege
I hold my duty as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious king,
And 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.

**KING**

O, speak of that! That do I long to hear.

**POLONIUS**

Give first admittance to th’ ambassadors.
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

**KING**

Thyself do grace to them and bring them in.

*Polonius exits.*

**QUEEN**

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son’s distemper.

**KING**

I doubt it is no other but the main—
His father’s death and our (o’erhasty) marriage.

**KING**

Well, we shall sift him.

*Enter Ambassadors (Voltemand and Cornelius with)*

*Polonius.*)
Welcome, my good friends.

Say, Voltemand, what from our brother Norway?

VOLTEMAND

Most fair return of greetings and desires.

Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew’s levies, which to him appeared
To be a preparation ’gainst the Polack,
But, better looked into, he truly found
It was against your Highness. Whereat, grieved
That so his sickness, age, and impotence
Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests
On Fortinbras, which he, in brief, obeys,
Receives rebuke from Norway, and, in fine,
Makes vow before his uncle never more
To give th’ assay of arms against your Majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three-score thousand crowns in annual
fee
And his commission to employ those soldiers,
So levied as before, against the Polack,
With an entreaty, herein further shown,

[He gives a paper.]

That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprise,
On such regards of safety and allowance
As therein are set down.

KING

It likes us well,

And, at our more considered time, we’ll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.
Meantime, we thank you for your well-took labor.
Go to your rest. At night we’ll feast together.
Most welcome home!

[Voltemand and Cornelius] exit.

POLONIUS

This business is well ended.

My liege, and madam, to expostulate
What majesty should be, what duty is,
Why day is day, night night, and time is time
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
Therefore, (since) brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad.
“Mad” call I it, for, to define true madness,
What is ’t but to be nothing else but mad?
But let that go.

QUEEN

More matter with less art.

POLONIUS

Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he’s mad, ’tis true; ’tis true ’tis pity,
And pity ’tis ’tis true—a foolish figure,
But farewell it, for I will use no art.

Mad let us grant him then, and now remains
That we find out the cause of this effect,
Or, rather say, the cause of this defect,
For this effect defective comes by cause.
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.

Perpend.

I have a daughter (have while she is mine)
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this. Now gather and surmise.

"He reads." To the celestial, and my soul’s idol, the
most beautified Ophelia—
That’s an ill phrase, a vile phrase; “beautified” is a
vile phrase. But you shall hear. Thus: "He reads."

In her excellent white bosom, these, etc.—

QUEEN

Came this from Hamlet to her?

POLONIUS

Good madam, stay awhile. I will be faithful.

"He reads the" letter.

Doubt thou the stars are fire,
Doubt that the sun doth move,
Doubt truth to be a liar,
But never doubt I love.
O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers. I have not art to reckon my groans, but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him, Hamlet.

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me, And more (above,) hath his solicitings, As they fell out by time, by means, and place, All given to mine ear.

KING  But how hath she received his love?

POلونIUS  What do you think of me?

KING  As of a man faithful and honorable.

POлонIUS  I would fain prove so. But what might you think, When I had seen this hot love on the wing (As I perceived it, I must tell you that, Before my daughter told me), what might you, Or my dear Majesty your queen here, think, If I had played the desk or table-book Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb, Or looked upon this love with idle sight? What might you think? No, I went round to work, And my young mistress thus I did bespeak: “Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star. This must not be.” And then I prescripts gave her, That she should lock herself from (his) resort, Admit no messengers, receive no tokens; Which done, she took the fruits of my advice, And he, repelled (a short tale to make), Fell into a sadness, then into a fast, Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness, Thence to (a) lightness, and, by this declension, Into the madness wherein now he raves And all we mourn for.

KING, to Queen Do you think (’tis) this?
QUEEN \hspace{1em} It may be, very like.

POLONIUS

Hath there been such a time (I would fain know that)
That I have positively said "‘Tis so,"
When it proved otherwise?

KING \hspace{1em} Not that I know.

POLONIUS

Take this from this, if this be otherwise.
If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid, indeed,
Within the center.

KING \hspace{1em} How may we try it further?

POLONIUS

You know sometimes he walks four hours together
Here in the lobby.

QUEEN \hspace{1em} So he does indeed.

POLONIUS

At such a time I’ll loose my daughter to him.

‘To the King.’\hspace{1em} Be you and I behind an arras then.
Mark the encounter. If he love her not,
And be not from his reason fall’n thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.

KING \hspace{1em} We will try it.

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Enter Hamlet (reading on a book.)

QUEEN

But look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

POLONIUS

Away, I do beseech you both, away.
I’ll board him presently. O, give me leave.

King and Queen exit ‘with Attendants.’

HAMLET \hspace{1em} Well, God-a-mercy.
POLONIUS  Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET  Excellent well. You are a fishmonger. 190

POLONIUS  Not I, my lord.

HAMLET  Then I would you were so honest a man.

POLONIUS  Honest, my lord?

HAMLET  Ay, sir. To be honest, as this world goes, is to
     be one man picked out of ten thousand.  195

POLONIUS  That’s very true, my lord.

HAMLET  For if the sun breed maggots in a dead
     dog, being a good kissing carrion—Have you a
     daughter?

POLONIUS  I have, my lord.  200

HAMLET  Let her not walk i’ th’ sun. Conception is a
     blessing, but, as your daughter may conceive,
     friend, look to ’t.

POLONIUS,  [aside]  How say you by that? Still harping on
     my daughter. Yet he knew me not at first; he said I
     was a fishmonger. He is far gone. And truly, in my
     youth, I suffered much extremity for love, very near
     this. I’ll speak to him again.—What do you read, my
     lord?

HAMLET  Words, words, words.  210

POLONIUS  What is the matter, my lord?

HAMLET  Between who?

POLONIUS  I mean the matter that you read, my lord.

HAMLET  Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here
     that old men have gray beards, that their faces are
     wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and
     plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of
     wit, together with most weak hams; all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I
     hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for
     yourself, sir, shall grow old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

POLONIUS,  [aside]  Though this be madness, yet there is
     method in ’t.—Will you walk out of the air, my lord?
HAMLET Into my grave?

POLONIUS Indeed, that’s out of the air. [Aside.] How pregnant sometimes his replies are! A happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and <sanity> could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him (and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him) and my daughter.—My lord, I will take my leave of you.

HAMLET You cannot, <sir,> take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal—except my life, except my life, except my life. Fare you well, my lord.

POLONIUS Fare you well, my lord.

HAMLET, [aside] These tedious old fools.

Enter Guildenstern and Rosencrantz.

POLONIUS You go to seek the Lord Hamlet. There he is.
ROSENCRANTZ, [to Polonius] God save you, sir. [Polonius exits.]

GUILDENSTERN My honored lord.
ROSENCRANTZ My most dear lord.

HAMLET My <excellent> good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do you both?

ROSENCRANTZ As the indifferent children of the earth.

GUILDENSTERN Happy in that we are not <overhappy.>
On Fortune’s <cap,> we are not the very button.

HAMLET Nor the soles of her shoe?
ROSENCRANTZ Neither, my lord.

HAMLET Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favors?

GUILDENSTERN Faith, her privates we.

HAMLET In the secret parts of Fortune? O, most true! She is a strumpet. What news?

ROSENCRANTZ None, my lord, but <that> the world’s grown honest.
Hamlet

ACT 2. SC. 2

HAMLET Then is doomsday near. But your news is not true. (Let me question more in particular. What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune that she sends you to prison hither?  

GUARDIAN Prison, my lord?  

HAMLET Denmark’s a prison.  

ROSECRANZ Then is the world one.  

HAMLET A goodly one, in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o’ th’ worst.  

ROSECRANZ We think not so, my lord.  

HAMLET Why, then, ’tis none to you, for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. To me, it is a prison.  

ROSECRANZ Why, then, your ambition makes it one. ’Tis too narrow for your mind.  

HAMLET O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.  

GUARDIAN Which dreams, indeed, are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.  

HAMLET A dream itself is but a shadow.  

ROSECRANZ Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow’s shadow.  

HAMLET Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars’ shadows. Shall we to th’ court? For, by my fay, I cannot reason.  

ROSECRANZ/GUARDIAN We’ll wait upon you.  

HAMLET No such matter. I will not sort you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended.) But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?  

ROSECRANZ To visit you, my lord, no other occasion.
HAMLET   Beggar that I am, I am (even) poor in thanks; but I thank you, and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come, deal justly with me. Come, come; nay, speak.

GUILDENSTERN   What should we say, my lord?

HAMLET   Anything but to th’ purpose. You were sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to color. I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ   To what end, my lord?

HAMLET   That you must teach me. But let me conjure you by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer can charge you withal: be even and direct with me whether you were sent for or no.

ROSENCRANTZ, [to Guildenstern]   What say you?

HAMLET, [aside]   Nay, then, I have an eye of you.—If you love me, hold not off.

GUILDENSTERN   My lord, we were sent for.

HAMLET   I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen molt no feather. I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises, and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the Earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this most majestic roof, fretted with golden fire—why, it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What (a) piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving
how express and admirable; in action how like
an angel, in apprehension how like a god: the
beauty of the world, the paragon of animals—and
yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man
delights not me, (no,) nor women neither, though by
your smiling you seem to say so.

ROSENCRANTZ  My lord, there was no such stuff in my
thoughts.

HAMLET  Why did you laugh, then, when I said “man
delights not me”?

ROSENCRANTZ  To think, my lord, if you delight not in
man, what Lenten entertainment the players shall
receive from you. We coted them on the way, and
hither are they coming to offer you service.

HAMLET  He that plays the king shall be welcome—his
Majesty shall have tribute on me. The adventurous
knight shall use his foil and target, the lover shall
not sigh gratis, the humorous man shall end his
part in peace, (the clown shall make those laugh
whose lungs are ’tickle’ o’ th’ sear,) and the lady
shall say her mind freely, or the (blank) verse shall
halt for ’t. What players are they?

ROSENCRANTZ  Even those you were wont to take such
delight in, the tragedians of the city.

HAMLET  How chances it they travel? Their residence,
both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

ROSENCRANTZ  I think their inhibition comes by the
means of the late innovation.

HAMLET  Do they hold the same estimation they did
when I was in the city? Are they so followed?

ROSENCRANTZ  No, indeed are they not.

HAMLET  How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

ROSENCRANTZ  Nay, their endeavor keeps in the wonted
pace. But there is, sir, an aerie of children, little
eyases, that cry out on the top of question and are
most tyrannically clapped for ’t. These are now the
fashion and so 'berattle' the common stages (so they call them) that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose quills and dare scarce come thither.

HAMLET What, are they children? Who maintains 'em?

How are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players (as it is 'most like,' if their means are no better), their writers do them wrong to make them exclaim against their own succession?

ROSENCRANTZ Faith, there has been much 'to-do' on both sides, and the nation holds it no sin to tar them to controversy. There was for a while no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

HAMLET Is 't possible?

GUILDENSTERN O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

HAMLET Do the boys carry it away?

ROSENCRANTZ Ay, that they do, my lord—Hercules and his load too.)

HAMLET It is not very strange; for my uncle is King of Denmark, and those that would make mouths at him while my father lived give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats apiece for his picture in little.

'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

*Flourish* (for the Players.)

GUILDENSTERN There are the players.

HAMLET Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore.

Your hands, come then. Th' appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony. Let me comply with you in this garb, (lest my) extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outwards, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome. But my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.
Act 2. Scene 2

Polonius

Enter Polonius.

Hamlet

I am but mad north-north-west. When the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Polonius

Well be with you, gentlemen.

Hamlet

Hark you, Guildenstern, and you too—at each ear a hearer! That great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling clouts.

Rosenkranz

Haply he is the second time come to them, for they say an old man is twice a child.

Hamlet

I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it.—You say right, sir, a Monday morning, ’twas then indeed.

Polonius

My lord, I have news to tell you.

Hamlet

My lord, I have news to tell you: when Roscius was an actor in Rome—

Polonius

The actors are come hither, my lord.

Hamlet

Buzz, buzz.

Polonius

Upon my honor—

Hamlet

Then came each actor on his ass.

Polonius

The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, (tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral,) scene indivisible, or poem unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

Hamlet

O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

Polonius

What a treasure had he, my lord?

Hamlet

Why,

One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he lovéd passing well.

Polonius

Still on my daughter.

Hamlet

Am I not i’ th’ right, old Jephthah?
POLONIUS   If you call me “Jephthah,” my lord: I have a
daughter that I love passing well.

HAMLET    Nay, that follows not.

POLONIUS   What follows then, my lord?

HAMLET    Why,

As by lot, God wot

and then, you know,

It came to pass, as most like it was—

the first row of the pious chanson will show you
more, for look where my abridgment comes.

Enter the Players.

You are welcome, masters; welcome all.—I am glad
to see thee well.—Welcome, good friends.—O (my)
old friend! Why, thy face is valanced since I saw thee
last. Com’st thou to beard me in Denmark?—What,
my young lady and mistress! (By ’r) Lady, your Ladyship
is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by
the altitude of a chopine. Pray God your voice, like a
piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the
ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We’ll e’en to ’t
like (French) falconers, fly at anything we see. We’ll
have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your
quality. Come, a passionate speech.

(FIRST) PLAYER What speech, my good lord?

HAMLET    I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it
was never acted, or, if it was, not above once; for
the play, I remember, pleased not the million:
’twas caviary to the general. But it was (as I
received it, and others whose judgments in such
matters cried in the top of mine) an excellent play,
well digested in the scenes, set down with as much
modesty as cunning. I remember one said there
were no sallets in the lines to make the matter
savory, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict
the author of affection, but called it an honest
method, [as wholesome as sweet and, by very much, more handsome than fine.] One speech in 't I chiefly loved. 'Twas Aeneas' tale to Dido, and thereabout of it especially when he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line—let me see, let me see:

The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian beast—
'tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus:
The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couchèd in th' ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smeared
With heraldry more dismal. Head to foot,
Now is he total gules, horridly tricked
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and a damnèd light
To their lord's murder. Roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o'ersizèd with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks.

So, proceed you.

'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good
accent and good discretion.

Anon he finds him

Striking too short at Greeks. His antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command. Unequal matched,
Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide;
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
Th' unnervèd father falls. (Then senseless Ilium,)
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear. For lo, his sword,
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seemed i 'th' air to stick.
So as a painted tyrant Pyrrhus stood
And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing.

But as we often see against some storm
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region; so, after Pyrrhus’ pause,
Arousèd vengeance sets him new a-work,
And never did the Cyclops’ hammers fall
On Mars’s armor, forged for proof eterne,
With less remorse than Pyrrhus’ bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.

Out, out, thou strumpet Fortune! All you gods
In general synod take away her power,
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven
As low as to the fiends!

POLONIUS This is too long.

HAMLET It shall to the barber’s with your beard.—

Prithee say on. He’s for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or
he sleeps. Say on; come to Hecuba.

〈FIRST〉 PLAYER

But who, ah woe, had seen the moblèd queen—

HAMLET “The moblèd queen”?

POLONIUS That’s good. (“‘Moblèd’ queen” is good.)

〈FIRST〉 PLAYER

Run barefoot up and down, threat’ning the flames
With bisson rheum, a clout upon that head
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,
About her lank and all o’er teemèd loins
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up—

Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steepered,
‘Gainst Fortune’s state would treason have pronounced.

But if the gods themselves did see her then
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her (husband's) limbs,
The instant burst of clamor that she made
(Unless things mortal move them not at all)
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven
And passion in the gods.

POLONIUS  Look whe'er he has not turned his color and
has tears in 's eyes. Prithee, no more.

HAMLET  ’Tis well. I’ll have thee speak out the rest of
this soon.—Good my lord, will you see the players
well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used,
for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the
time. After your death you were better have a bad
epitaph than their ill report while you live.

POLONIUS  My lord, I will use them according to their
desert.

HAMLET  God’s (bodykins,) man, much better! Use every
man after his desert and who shall 'scape
whipping? Use them after your own honor and
dignity. The less they deserve, the more merit is in
your bounty. Take them in.

POLONIUS  Come, sirs.

HAMLET  Follow him, friends. We’ll hear a play
tomorrow. As Polonius and Players exit, Hamlet speaks to
the First Player. Dost thou hear me, old friend? Can
you play “The Murder of Gonzago”?

FIRST PLAYER  Ay, my lord.

HAMLET  We’ll ha ’t tomorrow night. You could, for (a)
need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen
lines, which I would set down and insert in ’t,
could you not?

FIRST PLAYER  Ay, my lord.

HAMLET  Very well. Follow that lord—and look you
mock him not. First Player exits. My good friends,
I’ll leave you till night. You are welcome to Elsinore.

ROSENCRANTZ  Good my lord.
HAMLET

Ay, so, good-by to you.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit.

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all (his) visage wanned,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit—and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!

What’s Hecuba to him, or he to (Hecuba,)
That he should weep for her? What would he do
Had he the motive and (the cue) for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appall the free,
Confound the ignorant and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing—no, not for a king
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damned defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me “villain”? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i’ th’ throat
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha! ’Swounds, I should take it! For it cannot be
But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should (have) fatted all the region kites
With this slave’s offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless
villain!
(O vengeance!)

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear ‟father” murdered,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words
And fall a-cursing like a very drab,
A stallion! Fie upon ’t! Foh!
About, my brains!—Hum, I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have, by the very cunning of the scene,
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaimed their malefactions;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I’ll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle. I’ll observe his looks;
I’ll tent him to the quick. If he do blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be a ‟devil,” and the ‟devil” hath power
T’ assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps,
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me. I’ll have grounds
More relative than this. The play’s the thing
Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King.

He exits.

He exits.
Scene 1

Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and Lords.

KING

And can you by no drift of conference
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

ROSENCRANTZ

He does confess he feels himself distracted,
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

GUILDENSTERN

Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,
But with a crafty madness keeps aloof
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

QUEEN

Did he receive you well?

ROSENCRANTZ

Most like a gentleman.

GUILDENSTERN

But with much forcing of his disposition.

ROSENCRANTZ

Niggard of question, but of our demands
Most free in his reply.

QUEEN

Did you assay him to any pastime?

ROSENCRANTZ

Madam, it so fell out that certain players
We o’errought on the way. Of these we told him,
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it. They are here about the court,
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

POLONIUS    ’Tis most true,
And he beseeched me to entreat your Majesties
To hear and see the matter.

KING    With all my heart, and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclined.
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge
And drive his purpose into these delights.

ROSENCRANTZ    We shall, my lord.  
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and Lords exit.

KING    Sweet Gertrude, leave us (too,)
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
That he, as ’twere by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia.
Her father and myself, (lawful espials,)
〈Will〉 so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge
And gather by him, as he is behaved,
If ’t be th’ affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

QUEEN    I shall obey you.
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet’s wildness. So shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honors.

OPHELIA    Madam, I wish it may.

POLONIUS    Ophelia, walk you here.—Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves. [To Ophelia.] Read on this book,
That show of such an exercise may color
Your (loneliness.)—We are oft to blame in this
('Tis too much proved), that with devotion’s visage
And pious action we do sugar o’er
The devil himself.

KING, [aside] O, 'tis too true!
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience.
The harlot’s cheek beautied with plast’ring art
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word.
O heavy burden!

POLONIUS
I hear him coming. (Let’s) withdraw, my lord.
[They withdraw.]

Enter Hamlet.

HAMLET
To be or not to be—that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And, by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep—
No more—and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to—'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep—
To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there’s the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause. There’s the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th’ oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law’s delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th’ unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards
of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.—Soft you now,
The fair Ophelia.—Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remembered.

OPHELIA

Good my lord,
How does your Honor for this many a day?

HAMLET

I humbly thank you, well.

OPHELIA

My lord, I have remembrances of yours
That I have longèd long to redeliver.
I pray you now receive them.

HAMLET

No, not I. I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA

My honored lord, you know right well you did,
And with them words of so sweet breath composed
As made (the) things more rich. Their perfume
lost,
Take these again, for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.
HAMLET  Ha, ha, are you honest?
OPHELIA  My lord?
HAMLET  Are you fair?
OPHELIA  What means your Lordship?
HAMLET  That if you be honest and fair, (your honesty) should admit no discourse to your beauty.
OPHELIA  Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?
HAMLET  Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness. This was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.
OPHELIA  Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.
HAMLET  You should not have believed me, for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it. I loved you not.
OPHELIA  I was the more deceived.
HAMLET  Get thee (to) a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offenses at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves (all;) believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery.
OPHELIA  Where’s your father?
OPHELIA  At home, my lord.
HAMLET  Let the doors be shut upon him that he may play the fool nowhere but in ’s own house. Farewell.
OPHELIA  O, help him, you sweet heavens!
HAMLET  If thou dost marry, I’ll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a
nunnery, farewell. Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool, for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell.

**OPHELIA** Heavenly powers, restore him!

**HAMLET** I have heard of your paintings (too,) well enough. God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another. You jig and amble, and you (lisp;) you nickname God’s creatures and make your wantonness (your) ignorance. Go to, I’ll no more on ’t. It hath made me mad. I say we will have no more marriage. Those that are married already, all but one, shall live. The rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. *He exits.*

**OPHELIA**

O, what a noble mind is here o’erthrown!
The courtier’s, soldier’s, scholar’s, eye, tongue, sword,

(Th’ expectancy) and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mold of form,
Th’ observed of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his musicked vows,

Now see (that) noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of time and harsh;
That unmatched form and stature of blown youth Blasted with ecstasy. O, woe is me
T’ have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

**KING, advancing with** Polonius

Love? His affections do not that way tend;
Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little,
Was not like madness. There’s something in his soul
O’er which his melancholy sits on brood,

And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger; which for to prevent,

I have in quick determination
Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England
For the demand of our neglected tribute.
Haply the seas, and countries different,
With variable objects, shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart,
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on ’t?

POLONIUS

It shall do well. But yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love.—How now, Ophelia?
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;
We heard it all.—My lord, do as you please,
But, if you hold it fit, after the play
Let his queen-mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief. Let her be round with him;
And I’ll be placed, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference. If she find him not,
To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

KING

It shall be so.

Madness in great ones must not (unwatched) go.

They exit.

Enter Hamlet and three of the Players.

HAMLET

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O,
it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious, periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o’erdoing Termagant. It out-Herods Herod. Pray you, avoid it.

PLAYER  I warrant your Honor.

HAMLET  Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o’erstep not the modesty of nature. For anything so o’erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold, as ’twere, the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her (own) feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone or come tardy off, though it makes the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of (the) which one must in your allowance o’erweigh a whole theater of others. O, there be players that I have seen play and heard others (praise) (and that highly), not to speak it profanely, that, neither having th’ accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature’s journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

PLAYER  I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, (sir.)

HAMLET  O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them, for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the meantime some necessary
question of the play be then to be considered. That’s villainous and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go make you ready.

(Players exit.)

Enter Polonius, Guildenstern, and Rosencrantz.

How now, my lord, will the King hear this piece of work?

POLONIUS And the Queen too, and that presently.

HAMLET Bid the players make haste. (Polonius exits.)

Will you two help to hasten them?

ROSENCRANTZ Ay, my lord. They exit.

Enter Horatio.

HORATIO Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAMLET Horatio, thou art e’en as just a man As e’er my conversation coped withal.

HORATIO O, my dear lord—

〈HAMLET〉 Nay, do not think I flatter, For what advancement may I hope from thee That no revenue hast but thy good spirits To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flattered?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear? Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice And could of men distinguish, her election Hath sealed thee for herself. For thou hast been As one in suffering all that suffers nothing, A man that Fortune’s buffets and rewards Hast ta’en with equal thanks; and blessed are those Whose blood and judgment are so well commedled
Hamlet

ACT 3. SC. 2

That they are not a pipe for Fortune’s finger To sound what stop she please. Give me that man That is not passion’s slave, and I will wear him In my heart’s core, ay, in my heart of heart, As I do thee.—Something too much of this.— There is a play tonight before the King. One scene of it comes near the circumstance Which I have told thee of my father’s death. I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot, Even with the very comment of thy soul Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt Do not itself unkennel in one speech, It is a damnèd ghost that we have seen, And my imaginations are as foul As Vulcan’s stithy. Give him heedful note, For I mine eyes will rivet to his face, And, after, we will both our judgments join In censure of his seeming.

HORATIO Well, my lord.

If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing And ’scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

(Sound a flourish.)

HAMLET They are coming to the play. I must be idle. Get you a place.

Enter Trumpets and Kettle Drums. (Enter) King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, (Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and other Lords attendant with the King’s guard carrying torches.)

KING How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAMLET Excellent, i’ faith, of the chameleon’s dish. I eat the air, promise-crammed. You cannot feed capons so.

KING I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet. These words are not mine.

HAMLET No, nor mine now. ‘To Polonius.’ My lord, you played once i’ th’ university, you say?
HAMLET takes a place near Ophelia.

POLONIUS    That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.

HAMLET    What did you enact?

POLONIUS    I did enact Julius Caesar. I was killed i’ th’ Capitol. Brutus killed me.

HAMLET    It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there.—Be the players ready?

ROSENCRANTZ    Ay, my lord. They stay upon your patience.

QUEEN    Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAMLET    No, good mother. Here’s metal more attractive.

POLONIUS, [to the King]    Oh, ho! Do you mark that?

HAMLET    Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

OPHELIA    No, my lord.

HAMLET    I mean, my head upon your lap?

OPHELIA    Ay, my lord.

HAMLET    Do you think I meant country matters?

OPHELIA    I think nothing, my lord.

HAMLET    That’s a fair thought to lie between maids’ legs.

OPHELIA    What is, my lord?

HAMLET    Nothing.

OPHELIA    You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET    Who, I?

OPHELIA    Ay, my lord.

HAMLET    O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? For look you how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within ’s two hours.

OPHELIA    Nay, ’tis twice two months, my lord.

HAMLET    So long? Nay, then, let the devil wear black, for I’ll have a suit of sables. O heavens, die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there’s hope a great man’s memory may outlive his life half a year. But, by ’r Lady, he must build churches, then,
or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the
hobby-horse, whose epitaph is "For oh, for oh, the
hobby-horse is forgot."

The trumpets sounds. Dumb show follows.

Enter a King and a Queen, (very lovingly,) the Queen
embracing him and he her. (She kneels and makes show of
protestation unto him.) He takes her up and declines his
head upon her neck. He lies him down upon a bank of
flowers. She, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon
comes) in another man, takes off his crown, kisses it, pours
poison in the sleeper’s ears, and leaves him. The Queen
returns, finds the King dead, makes passionate action. The
poisoner with some three or four come in again, seem to
condole with her. The dead body is carried away. The
poisoner woos the Queen with gifts. She seems harsh
awhile but in the end accepts (his) love.

[Players exit.]

OPHELIA What means this, my lord?

HAMLET Marry, this (is miching) mallecho. It means
mischief.

OPHELIA Belike this show imports the argument of the
play.

Enter Prologue.

HAMLET We shall know by this fellow. The players
cannot keep (counsel;) they’ll tell all.

OPHELIA Will he tell us what this show meant?

HAMLET Ay, or any show that you will show him. Be
not you ashamed to show, he’ll not shame to tell you
what it means.

OPHELIA You are naught, you are naught. I’ll mark the
play.

PROLOGUE

For us and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.  

[He exits.]
Enter the Player King and Queen.

**PLAYER KING**

Full thirty times hath Phoebus’ cart gone round
Neptune’s salt wash and Tellus’ orbèd ground,
And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

**PLAYER QUEEN**

So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o’er ere love be done!
But woe is me! You are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must.

[For women fear too much, even as they love,]
And women’s fear and love hold quantity,
In neither aught, or in extremity.
Now what my love is, proof hath made you know,
And, as my love is sized, my fear is so:

[Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.]

**PLAYER KING**

Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too.
My operant powers their functions leave to do.
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honored, beloved; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou—

**PLAYER QUEEN**

O, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast.
In second husband let me be accurst.
None wed the second but who killed the first.
HAMLET   That’s wormwood!

PLAYER QUEEN

The instances that second marriage move
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love.

A second time I kill my husband dead
When second husband kisses me in bed.

PLAYER KING

I do believe you think what now you speak,
But what we do determine oft we break.

Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth, but poor validity,
Which now, the fruit unripe, sticks on the tree
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.

Most necessary ’tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt.

What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.

The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy.

Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.

This world is not for aye, nor ’tis not strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change;

For ’tis a question left us yet to prove
Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love.

The great man down, you mark his favorite flies;
The poor, advanced, makes friends of enemies.

And hitherto doth love on fortune tend,
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,
And who in want a hollow friend doth try
Directly seasons him his enemy.

But, orderly to end where I begun:
Our wills and fates do so contrary run
That our devices still are overthrown;
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own.

So think thou wilt no second husband wed,
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.
Player Queen

Nor Earth to me give food, nor heaven light,
Sport and repose lock from me day and night,
[To desperation turn my trust and hope,
An anchor’s cheer in prison be my scope.]
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy
Meet what I would have well and it destroy.
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife.

Hamlet

If she should break it now!

Player King

’Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile.
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep.

(Sleeps.)

Player Queen

Sleep rock thy brain,
And never come mischance between us twain.

(Player Queen exits.)

Hamlet

Madam, how like you this play?

Queen

The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Hamlet

O, but she’ll keep her word.

King

Have you heard the argument? Is there no offense in ’t?

Hamlet

No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest. No offense i’ th’ world.

King

What do you call the play?

Hamlet

This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna.
Gonzago is the duke’s name, his wife Baptista. You shall see anon. ’Tis a knavish piece of work, but what of that? Your Majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not. Let the galled jade wince; our withers are unwrung.

Enter Lucianus.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

Ophelia

You are as good as a chorus, my lord.
HAMLET  I could interpret between you and your love,  
    if I could see the puppets dallying.

OPHELIA  You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

HAMLET  It would cost you a groaning to take off mine  
    edge.

OPHELIA  Still better and worse.

HAMLET  So you mis-take your husbands.—Begin,  
    murderer.〈Pox,〉 leave thy damnable faces and  
    begin. Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for  
    revenge.

LUCIANUS

\textit{Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing,}

\textit{〈Confederate〉 season, else no creature seeing,}

Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,

\textit{With Hecate’s ban thrice blasted, thrice〈infected,〉}

\textit{Thy natural magic and dire property}

\textit{On wholesome life〈usurp〉 immediately.}

〈Pours the poison in his ears.〉

HAMLET  He poisons him i’ th’ garden for his estate. His  
    name’s Gonzago. The story is extant and written in  
    very choice Italian. You shall see anon how the  
    murderer gets the love of Gonzago’s wife.

[Claudius rises.]

OPHELIA  The King rises.

〈HAMLET  What, frightened with false fire?〉

QUEEN  How fares my lord?

POLONIUS  Give o’er the play.

KING  Give me some light. Away!

POLONIUS  Lights, lights, lights!

\textit{All but Hamlet and Horatio exit.}

HAMLET

\textit{Why, let the stricken deer go weep,  
    The hart ungalled play.}

\textit{For some must watch, while some must sleep:  
    Thus runs the world away.}
Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers (if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me) with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players?

HORATIO Half a share.

HAMLET A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself, and now reigns here
A very very—pajock.

HORATIO You might have rhymed.

HAMLET O good Horatio, I’ll take the ghost’s word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

HORATIO Very well, my lord.

HAMLET Upon the talk of the poisoning?

HORATIO I did very well note him.

HAMLET Ah ha! Come, some music! Come, the recorders!

For if the King like not the comedy,
Why, then, belike he likes it not, perdy.

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

GUILDENSTERN Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

HAMLET Sir, a whole history.

GUILDENSTERN The King, sir—

HAMLET Ay, sir, what of him?

GUILDENSTERN Is in his retirement marvelous distempered.

HAMLET With drink, sir?

GUILDENSTERN No, my lord, with choler.

HAMLET Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to the doctor, for for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into more choler.
GUILDENSTERN  Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame and (start) not so wildly from my affair.

HAMLET  I am tame, sir. Pronounce.

GUILDENSTERN  The Queen your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

HAMLET  You are welcome.

GUILDENSTERN  Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother’s commandment. If not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of (my) business.

HAMLET  Sir, I cannot.

ROSENCRantz  What, my lord?

HAMLET  Make you a wholesome answer. My wit’s diseased. But, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command—or, rather, as you say, my mother. Therefore no more but to the matter. My mother, you say—

ROSENCRantz  Then thus she says: your behavior hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

HAMLET  O wonderful son that can so ’stonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother’s admiration? Impart.

ROSENCRantz  She desires to speak with you in her closet ere you go to bed.

HAMLET  We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

ROSENCRantz  My lord, you once did love me.

HAMLET  And do still, by these pickers and stealers.

ROSENCRantz  Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? You do surely bar the door upon your own liberty if you deny your griefs to your friend.

HAMLET  Sir, I lack advancement.

ROSENCRantz  How can that be, when you have the voice of the King himself for your succession in Denmark?
HAMLET  Ay, sir, but “While the grass grows”—the proverb is something musty.

Enter the 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  It is 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 utt’rance 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, you cannot play upon me.

Enter Polonius.

God bless you, sir.
POLONIUS  My lord, the Queen would speak with you, and presently.  
HAMLET  Do you see yonder cloud that’s almost in shape of a camel?  
POLONIUS  By th’ Mass, and ’tis like a camel indeed.  
HAMLET  Methinks it is like a weasel.  
POLONIUS  It is backed like a weasel.  
HAMLET  Or like a whale.  
POLONIUS  Very like a whale.  

〈HAMLET〉  Then I will come to my mother by and by.  

‘Aside.’  They fool me to the top of my bent.—I will come by and by.  

〈POLONIUS〉  I will say so.  

〈HAMLET〉  “By and by” is easily said. Leave me, friends.  

‘All but Hamlet exit.’  

’Tis now the very witching time of night,  
When churchyards yawn and hell itself (breathes) out  
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood  
And do such (bitter) business as the day  
Would quake to look on. Soft, now to my mother.  
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever  
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom.  
Let me be cruel, not unnatural.  
I will speak (daggers) to her, but use none.  
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites:  
How in my words somever she be shent,  
To give them seals never, my soul, consent.  

He exits.
[Scene 3]

*Enter King, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.*

**KING**

I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you.
I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
And he to England shall along with you.
The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so near ’s as doth hourly grow
Out of his brows.

**GUILDENSTERN**

We will ourselves provide.
Most holy and religious fear it is
To keep those many many bodies safe
That live and feed upon your Majesty.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

The single and peculiar life is bound
With all the strength and armor of the mind
To keep itself from noyance, but much more
That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests
The lives of many. The cess of majesty
Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw
What’s near it with it; or it is a massy wheel
Fixed on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose (huge) spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortised and adjoined, which, when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boist’rous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but (with) a general groan.

**KING**

Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage,
For we will fetters put about this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

We will haste us.

*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* exit.

*Enter Polonius.*
POLONIUS

My lord, he’s going to his mother’s closet.  
Behind the arras I’ll convey myself to hear the process. I’ll warrant she’ll tax him home;  
And, as you said (and wisely was it said),
’tis meet that some more audience than a mother,  
Since nature makes them partial, should o’erhear the speech of vantage. Fare you well, my liege.  
I’ll call upon you ere you go to bed And tell you what I know.

KING

Thanks, dear my lord.  

"Polonius" exits.

O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven;  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon ’t,  
A brother’s murder. Pray can I not,  
Though inclination be as sharp as will.  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,  
And, like a man to double business bound,  
I stand in pause where I shall first begin And both neglect. What if this cursed hand  
Were thicker than itself with brother’s blood?  
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy  
But to confront the visage of offense?  
And what’s in prayer but this twofold force,  
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
Or (pardoned) being down? Then I’ll look up.  
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer  
Can serve my turn? “Forgive me my foul murder”?  
That cannot be, since I am still possessed  
Of those effects for which I did the murder:  
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.  
May one be pardoned and retain th’ offense?  
In the corrupted currents of this world,  
Offense’s gilded hand may (shove) by justice,
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law. But 'tis not so above:
There is no shuffling; there the action lies
In his true nature, and we ourselves compelled,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? What rests?
Try what repentance can. What can it not?
Yet what can it, when one cannot repent?
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
O limèd soul, that, struggling to be free,
Art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay.
Bow, stubborn knees, and heart with strings of steel
Be soft as sinews of the newborn babe.
All may be well.  

[He kneels.]

Enter Hamlet.

HAMLET

Now might I do it (pat,) now he is a-praying,
And now I'll do 't.  

[He draws his sword.]

And so he goes to heaven,

And so am I (revenge.) That would be scanned:
A villain kills my father, and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.

Why, this is (hire) and (salary,) not revenge.

He took my father grossly, full of bread,
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven.

But in our circumstance and course of thought
'Tis heavy with him. And am I then revenged
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?
No.

Up sword, and know thou a more horrid hent.

[He sheathes his sword.]

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in th’ incestuous pleasure of his bed,
At game, a-swearin’, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in ’t—
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damned and black
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays.
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

\[Hamlet\] exits.

**KING**, \[rising\]
My words fly up, my thoughts remain below;
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

\[He exits.\]

\[Scene 4\]

*Enter* (Queen) *and Polonius.*

**POLONIUS**
He will come straight. Look you lay home to him.
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear
with
And that your Grace hath screened and stood
between
Much heat and him. I’ll silence me even here.
Pray you, be round \{with him.\}

**HAMLET, within**  Mother, mother, mother!\}
**QUEEN**  I’ll \{warrant\} you. Fear me not. Withdraw,
I hear him coming.

\[Polonius hides behind the arras.\]

*Enter Hamlet.*

**HAMLET**  Now, mother, what’s the matter?
**QUEEN**  Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.
**HAMLET**  Mother, you have my father much offended.
QUEEN
  Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET
  Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

QUEEN
  Why, how now, Hamlet?

HAMLET
  What’s the matter now?

QUEEN
  Have you forgot me?

HAMLET
  No, by the rood, not so.

HAMLET
  You are the Queen, your husband’s brother’s wife,
  And (would it were not so) you are my mother.

QUEEN
  Nay, then I’ll set those to you that can speak.

HAMLET
  Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge.
  You go not till I set you up a glass
  Where you may see the (inmost) part of you.

QUEEN
  What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?

Help, ho!

POLONIUS, [behind the arras]
  What ho! Help!

HAMLET
  How now, a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead.

  [He [kills Polonius] by thrusting a rapier
   through the arras.]

POLONIUS, [behind the arras]
  O, I am slain!

QUEEN
  O me, what hast thou done?

HAMLET
  Nay, I know not. Is it the King?

QUEEN
  O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAMLET
  A bloody deed—almost as bad, good mother,
  As kill a king and marry with his brother.

QUEEN
  As kill a king?
HAMLET Ay, lady, it was my word.

He pulls Polonius' body from behind the arras.]

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell.
I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune.

Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.

[To Queen.] Leave wringing of your hands. Peace, sit you down,

And let me wring your heart; for so I shall

If it be made of penetrable stuff,

If damnèd custom have not brazed it so

That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

QUEEN

What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue

In noise so rude against me?

HAMLET Such an act

That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,

Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose

From the fair forehead of an innocent love

And sets a blister there, makes marriage vows

As false as dicers' oaths—O, such a deed

As from the body of contraction plucks

The very soul, and sweet religion makes

A rhapsody of words! Heaven's face does glow

O'er this solidity and compound mass

With heated visage, as against the doom,

Is thought-sick at the act.

QUEEN Ay me, what act

That roars so loud and thunders in the index?

HAMLET

Look here upon this picture and on this,

The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.

See what a grace was seated on this brow,

Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,

An eye like Mars' to threaten and command,

A station like the herald Mercury

New-lighted on a (heaven)-kissing hill,
A combination and a form indeed
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man.
This was your husband. Look you now what follows.
Here is your husband, like a mildewed ear
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed
And batten on this moor? Ha! Have you eyes?
You cannot call it love, for at your age
The heyday in the blood is tame, it’s humble
And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
Would step from this to this? [Sense sure you have,
Else could you not have motion; but sure that sense
Is apoplexed; for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne’er so thrall’d,
But it reserved some quantity of choice
To serve in such a difference.] What devil was ’t
That thus hath cozen’d you at hoodman-blind?
[Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.] O shame, where is thy blush?
Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine in a matron’s bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax
And melt in her own fire. Proclaim no shame
When the compulsive ardor gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason ⟨panders⟩ will.

QUEEN O Hamlet, speak no more!
Thou turn’st my eyes into my ⟨very⟩ soul,
And there I see such black and ⟨grainèd⟩ spots
As will ⟨not⟩ leave their tinct.

HAMLET Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamèd bed,
Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty!
QUEEN O, speak to me no more!
These words like daggers enter in my ears.
No more, sweet Hamlet!

HAMLET A murderer and a villain,
A slave that is not twentieth part the (tithe)
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings,
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole
And put it in his pocket—

QUEEN No more!

HAMLET A king of shreds and patches—

Enter Ghost.

Save me and hover o’er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards!—What would your gracious
figure?

QUEEN Alas, he’s mad.

HAMLET Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
Th’ important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

GHOST Do not forget. This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But look, amazement on thy mother sits.
O, step between her and her fighting soul.
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.
Speak to her, Hamlet.

HAMLET How is it with you, lady?
QUEEN Alas, how is ’t with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy
And with th’ incorporeal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep,
And, as the sleeping soldiers in th’ alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
Start up and stand an end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience! Whereon do you look?

HAMLET

On him, on him! Look you how pale he glares.
His form and cause conjoined, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable. 「To the Ghost.」 Do not
look upon me,
Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects. Then what I have to do
Will want true color—tears perchance for blood.

QUEEN To whom do you speak this?
HAMLET Do you see nothing there?

QUEEN

Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.
HAMLET Nor did you nothing hear?
QUEEN No, nothing but ourselves.

HAMLET

Why, look you there, look how it steals away!
My father, in his habit as he lived!
Look where he goes even now out at the portal!

Ghost exits.

QUEEN

This is the very coinage of your brain.
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.

HAMLET (Ecstasy?)

My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time
And makes as healthful music. It is not madness
That I have uttered. Bring me to the test,
And (I) the matter will reword, which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul
That not your trespass but my madness speaks.
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
Infests unseen. Confess yourself to heaven,
Repent what’s past, avoid what is to come,
And do not spread the compost on the weeds
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue,
For, in the fatness of these pursy times,
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

QUEEN
O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain!

HAMLET
O, throw away the worser part of it,
And [live] the purer with the other half!
Good night. But go not to my uncle’s bed.
Assume a virtue if you have it not.
[That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery
That aptly is put on.] Refrain [tonight,]
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence, [the next more easy;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature
And either […] the devil or throw him out
With wondrous potency.] Once more, good night,
And, when you are desirous to be blest,
I’ll blessing beg of you. For this same lord

[Pointing to Polonius.]

I do repent; but heaven hath pleased it so
To punish me with this and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him and will answer well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.
I must be cruel only to be kind.
This bad begins, and worse remains behind.

[One word more, good lady.]

QUEEN
What shall I do?
HAMLET

Not this by no means that I bid you do:
Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed,
Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse,
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses
Or paddling in your neck with his damned fingers,
Make you to ravel all this matter out
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. ’Twere good you let him know,
For who that’s but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,
Such dear concernings hide? Who would do so?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house’s top,
Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep
And break your own neck down.

QUEEN

Be thou assured, if words be made of breath
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

HAMLET

I must to England, you know that.

QUEEN

Alack,

HAMLET

[There’s letters sealed; and my two schoolfellows,
Whom I will trust as I will adders fanged,
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work,
For ’tis the sport to have the enginer
Hoist with his own petard; and ’t shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below their mines
And blow them at the moon. O, ’tis most sweet
When in one line two crafts directly meet.]
This man shall set me packing.
They exit, Hamlet tugging in Polonius.

I’ll lug the guts into the neighbor room.
Mother, good night indeed. This counselor
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.—
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.—
Good night, mother.

They exit, Hamlet tugging in Polonius.
Scene 1

Enter King and Queen, with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

KING

There’s matter in these sighs; these profound heaves
You must translate; ’tis fit we understand them.
Where is your son?

QUEEN

[Bestow this place on us a little while.]

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit.

Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen tonight!

KING

What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

QUEEN

Mad as the sea and wind when both contend
Which is the mightier. In his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries “A rat, a rat,”
And in this brainish apprehension kills
The unseen good old man.

KING

O heavy deed!

It had been so with us, had we been there.
His liberty is full of threats to all—
To you yourself, to us, to everyone.
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answered?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrained, and out of haunt
This mad young man. But so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit,
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

QUEEN
To draw apart the body he hath killed,
O’er whom his very madness, like some ore
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure: he weeps for what is done.

KING
O Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch
But we will ship him hence; and this vile deed
We must with all our majesty and skill
Both countenance and excuse.—Ho, Guildenstern!

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid.
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother’s closet hath he dragged him.
Go seek him out, speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

(Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit.)

Come, Gertrude, we’ll call up our wisest friends
And let them know both what we mean to do
And what’s untimely done. ’Tis now day.
[Whose whisper o’er the world’s diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank
Transports his poisoned shot, may miss our name
And hit the woundless air.] O, come away!
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

They exit.
Enter Rosencrantz, (Guildenstern,) and others.

ROSENCRANTZ
What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

HAMLET

〈Compounded〉 it with dust, whereto ’tis kin.

ROSENCRANTZ
Tell us where ’tis, that we may take it thence
And bear it to the chapel.

HAMLET
Do not believe it.

ROSENCRANTZ
Believe what?

HAMLET
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?

ROSENCRANTZ
Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

HAMLET
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) an apple 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.

ROSENCRANTZ
I understand you not, my lord.

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

ROSENCRANTZ
My lord, you must tell us where the
body is and go with us to the King.

HAMLET
The body is with the King, but the King is not
with the body. The King is a thing—
Act 4, Scene 3

Enter King and two or three.

KING

I have sent to seek him and to find the body.
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!
Yet must not we put the strong law on him.
He’s loved of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;
And, where ’tis so, th’ offender’s scourge is weighed,
But never the offense. To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause. Diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are relieved
Or not at all.

Enter Rosencrantz.

ROSENCRANTZ

How now, what hath befallen?

Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

KING

But where is he?

Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

KING

Bring him before us.

ROSENCRANTZ

Ho! Bring in the lord.

They enter (with Hamlet.)

KING

Now, Hamlet, where’s Polonius?

HAMLET

At supper.
KING  At supper where?

HAMLET  Not where he eats, but where he is eaten. A certain convocation of politic worms are e’en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet. We fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service—two dishes but to one table. That’s the end.

[KING  Alas, alas!

HAMLET  A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.]

KING  What dost thou mean by this?

HAMLET  Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

KING  Where is Polonius?

HAMLET  In heaven. Send thither to see. If your messenger find him not there, seek him i’ th’ other place yourself. But if, indeed, you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

KING, [to Attendants.]  Go, seek him there.

HAMLET  He will stay till you come.  [Attendants exit.]

KING

Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety
(Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done) must send thee
hence

(With fiery quickness.) Therefore prepare thyself.
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,
Th’ associates tend, and everything is bent

For England.

HAMLET  For England?

KING  Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET  Good.

KING  So is it, if thou knew’st our purposes.
HAMLET

I see a cherub that sees them. But come, for England.
Farewell, dear mother.

KING

Thy loving father, Hamlet.

HAMLET

My mother. Father and mother is man and wife,
Man and wife is one flesh, and, so, my mother.—
Come, for England. He exits.

KING

Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard.
Delay it not. I’ll have him hence tonight.
Away, for everything is sealed and done
That else leans on th’ affair. Pray you, make haste.

ük All but the King exit. ü

And England, if my love thou hold’st at aught
(As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us), thou mayst not coldly set
Our sovereign process, which imports at full,
By letters congruing to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England,
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me. Till I know ‘tis done,
Howe’er my haps, my joys will ne’er begin.

He exits.

ük Scene ü

Enter Fortinbras with his army over the stage.

FORTINBRAS

Go, Captain, from me greet the Danish king.
Tell him that by his license Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promised march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
If that his Majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye;
And let him know so.

CAPTAIN    I will do ’t, my lord.

FORTINBRAS  Go softly on.  

[Enter Hamlet, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and others.

HAMLET    Good sir, whose powers are these?

CAPTAIN    They are of Norway, sir.

HAMLET    How purposed, sir, I pray you?

CAPTAIN    Against some part of Poland.

HAMLET    Who commands them, sir?

CAPTAIN    The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

HAMLET    Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?

CAPTAIN    Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

HAMLET    Why, then, the Polack never will defend it.

CAPTAIN    Yes, it is already garrisoned.

HAMLET    Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw.
This is th’ impostume of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks and shows no cause without
Why the man dies.—I humbly thank you, sir.

CAPTAIN    God be wi’ you, sir.  

ROSENCRANTZ  Will ’t please you go, my lord?
HAMLET

I’ll be with you straight. Go a little before.

[All but Hamlet exit.]  

How all occasions do inform against me
And spur my dull revenge. What is a man
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure He that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unused. Now whether it be
Bestial oblivion or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th’ event
(A thought which, quartered, hath but one part

  wisdom

And ever three parts coward), I do not know
Why yet I live to say “This thing’s to do,”
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do ’t. Examples gross as Earth exhort me:
Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puffed
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honor’s at the stake. How stand I, then,
That have a father killed, a mother stained,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men
That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth
My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!

*He exits.*

Scene 5

*Enter Horatio, (Queen,) and a Gentleman.*

QUEEN    I will not speak with her.
GENTLEMAN  She is importunate,
            Indeed distract; her mood will needs be pitied.
QUEEN    What would she have?
GENTLEMAN  She speaks much of her father, says she hears
          There’s tricks i’ th’ world, and hems, and beats her
          heart,
          Spurns enviously at straws, speaks things in doubt
          That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,
          Yet the unshapèd use of it doth move
          The hearers to collection. They {aim} at it
          And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;
          Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield
          them,
          Indeed would make one think there might be
          thought,
          Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

HORATIO
          ’Twere good she were spoken with, for she may
          strew
          Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.
          Let her come in.                      [Gentleman exits.]

QUEEN  
          ’Aside.’ To my sick soul (as sin’s true nature is),
          Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss.
          So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
          It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.
Enter Ophelia distracted.

OPHELIA

Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN

How now, Ophelia?

OPHELIA

How should I your true love know

From another one?

By his cockle hat and staff

And his sandal shoon.

QUEEN

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPHELIA

Say you? Nay, pray you, mark.

He is dead and gone, lady,

He is dead and gone;

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.

Oh, ho!

QUEEN

Nay, but Ophelia—

OPHELIA

Pray you, mark.

White his shroud as the mountain snow—

Enter King.

QUEEN

Alas, look here, my lord.

OPHELIA

Larded all with sweet flowers;

Which bewept to the ground did not go

With true-love showers.

KING

How do you, pretty lady?

OPHELIA

Well, God dild you. They say the owl was a

baker’s daughter. Lord, we know what we are but

know not what we may be. God be at your table.

KING

Conceit upon her father.

OPHELIA

Pray let’s have no words of this, but when

they ask you what it means, say you this:
Tomorrow is Saint Valentine’s day,
    All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
    To be your Valentine.
Then up he rose and donned his clothes
    And dupped the chamber door;
Let in the maid, that out a maid
    Never departed more.

Pretty Ophelia—

Indeed, without an oath, I’ll make an end on ’t:

By Gis and by Saint Charity,
    Alack and fie for shame,
Young men will do ’t, if they come to ’t;
    By Cock, they are to blame.
Quoth she “Before you tumbled me,
    You promised me to wed.”

He answers:

“So would I ’a done, by yonder sun,
    An thou hadst not come to my bed.”

I hope all will be well. We must be patient,
    but I cannot choose but weep to think they would
lay him i’ th’ cold ground. My brother shall know of
it. And so I thank you for your good counsel. Come,
my coach! Good night, ladies, good night, sweet
ladies, good night, good night.  

Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you.

O, this is the poison of deep grief. It springs
All from her father’s death, and now behold!
O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions: first, her father slain;
Next, your son gone, and he most violent author
Of his own just remove; the people muddied,
Thick, and unwholesome in (their) thoughts and whispers
For good Polonius’ death, and we have done but greenly
In hugger-mugger to inter him; poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,
Without the which we are pictures or mere beasts;
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France,
Feeds on (his) wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father’s death,
Wherein necessity, of matter beggared,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O, my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murd’ring piece, in many places
Gives me superfluous death.

_A noise within._

〈QUEEN   Alack, what noise is this?〉
KING   Attend!
Where is my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

_Enter a Messenger._

What is the matter?
MESSENGER    Save yourself, my lord.
The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impiteous haste
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O’erbears your officers. The rabble call him “lord,”
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
〈They〉 cry “Choose we, Laertes shall be king!”
Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,
“Laertes shall be king! Laertes king!”

_A noise within._
QUEEN
   How cheerfully on the false trail they cry.
   O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!
KING
   The doors are broke.

Enter Laertes with others.

LAERTES
   Where is this king?—Sirs, stand you all without.
ALL
   No, let’s come in!
LAERTES
   I pray you, give me leave.
ALL
   We will, we will.
LAERTES
   I thank you. Keep the door. 'Followers exit.' O, thou
   vile king,
   Give me my father!
QUEEN
   Calmly, good Laertes.
LAERTES
   That drop of blood that’s calm proclaims me
   bastard,
   Cries “cuckold” to my father, brands the harlot
   Even here between the chaste unsmirched brow
   Of my true mother.
KING
   What is the cause, Laertes,
   That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?—
   Let him go, Gertrude. Do not fear our person.
   There’s such divinity doth hedge a king
   That treason can but peep to what it would,
   Acts little of his will.—Tell me, Laertes,
   Why thou art thus incensed.—Let him go,
   Gertrude.—
   Speak, man.
LAERTES
   Where is my father?
KING
   Dead.
QUEEN
   But not by him.
KING
   Let him demand his fill.
LAERTES

How came he dead? I’ll not be juggled with.
To hell, allegiance! Vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience and grace, to the profoudest pit!
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes, only I’ll be revenged
Most throughly for my father.

KING

Who shall stay you?

LAERTES

My will, not all the world.

And for my means, I’ll husband them so well
They shall go far with little.

KING

Good Laertes,

If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father, is ’t writ in your revenge
That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?

LAERTES

None but his enemies.

KING

Will you know them, then?

LAERTES

To his good friends thus wide I’ll ope my arms
And, like the kind life-rend’ring pelican,
Repast them with my blood.

KING

Why, now you speak

Like a good child and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father’s death
And am most sensibly in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment ’pear
As day does to your eye.

Enter Ophelia.

O heat, dry up my brains! Tears seven times salt
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight
Till our scale turn the beam! O rose of May,
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens, is 't possible a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
(Nature is fine in love, and, where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.)

OPHELIA  \(sings\)

\[They bore him barefaced on the bier;\]
\[Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;\]
\[And in his grave rained many a tear.\]

Fare you well, my dove.

LAERTES

Hadst thou thy wits and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus.

OPHELIA  You must sing "A-down a-down"—and you
“Call him a-down-a.”—O, how the wheel becomes
it! It is the false steward that stole his master’s
daughter.

LAERTES  This nothing's more than matter.

OPHELIA  There's rosemary, that's for remembrance.
Pray you, love, remember. And there is pansies,
that's for thoughts.

LAERTES  A document in madness: thoughts and remembrance
fitted.

OPHELIA  There's fennel for you, and columbines.
There's rue for you, and here's some for me; we
may call it herb of grace o' Sundays. You (must) wear
your rue with a difference. There's a daisy. I would
give you some violets, but they withered all when
my father died. They say he made a good end.

\[Sings.\] For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

LAERTES

Thought and afflictions, passion, hell itself
She turns to favor and to prettiness.
OPHELIA \((sings)\)

*And will he not come again?*

*And will he not come again?*

*No, no, he is dead.*

*Go to thy deathbed.*

*He never will come again.*

*His beard was as white as snow,*

*(All) flaxen was his poll.*

*He is gone, he is gone,*

*And we cast away moan.*

*God 'a mercy on his soul.*

And of all Christians' souls, *(I pray God.)* God be wi’ you. *(She exits.)*

LAERTES Do you *(see)* this, O God?

KING

Laertes, I must commune with your grief,

Or you deny me right. Go but apart,

Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,

And they shall hear and judge ’twixt you and me.

If by direct or by collateral hand

They find us touched, we will our kingdom give,

Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,

To you in satisfaction; but if not,

Be you content to lend your patience to us,

And we shall jointly labor with your soul

To give it due content.

LAERTES Let this be so.

His means of death, his obscure funeral

*(No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o’er his bones,*

*No noble rite nor formal ostentation)*

Cry to be heard, as ’twere from heaven to earth,

That I must call ’t in question.

KING So you shall,

And where th’ offense is, let the great ax fall.

I pray you, go with me.

*They exit.*
Scene 6

Enter Horatio and others.

Horatio: What are they that would speak with me?

Gentleman: Seafaring men, sir. They say they have letters for you.

Horatio: Let them come in. [Gentleman exits.] I do not know from what part of the world I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.

Sailor: God bless you, sir.

Horatio: Let Him bless thee too.

Sailor: He shall, sir, [an 't] please Him. There's a letter for you, sir. It came from th' ambassador that was bound for England—if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is. [He hands Horatio a letter.]

Horatio: [reads the letter] Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the King. They have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valor, and in the grapple I boarded them. On the instant, they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy, but they knew what they did: I am to do a [good] turn for them. Let the King have the letters I have sent, and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the [bore] of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England; of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

[He] that thou knowest thine,

Hamlet.
Come, I will (give) you way for these your letters
And do ´t the speedier that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them.

They exit.

[Scene 7]

Enter King and Laertes.

KING
Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend,
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he which hath your noble father slain
Pursued my life.

LAERTES
It well appears. But tell me
Why you (proceeded) not against these feats,
So criminal and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirred up.

KING
O, for two special reasons,
Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinewed,
But yet to me they´re strong. The Queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks, and for myself
(My virtue or my plague, be it either which),
She is so (conjunctive) to my life and soul
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive
Why to a public count I might not go
Is the great love the general gender bear him,
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Work like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces, so that my arrows,
Too slightly timbered for so (loud a wind,)
Would have reverted to my bow again,
But not where I have aimed them.

LAERTES
And so have I a noble father lost,
A sister driven into desp’rate terms,  
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,  
Stood challenger on mount of all the age  
For her perfections. But my revenge will come.

KING

Break not your sleeps for that. You must not think  
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull  
That we can let our beard be shook with danger  
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more.  
I loved your father, and we love ourself,  
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine—

Enter a Messenger with letters.

〈How now? What news?〉

MESSENGER Letters, my lord, from  
Hamlet.〉

These to your Majesty, this to the Queen.

KING From Hamlet? Who brought them?

MESSENGER  
Sailors, my lord, they say. I saw them not.  
They were given me by Claudio. He received them

[Of him that brought them.]  

KING Laertes, you shall hear  
them.—

Leave us.  

〈Messenger exits.〉

‘Reads.’ High and mighty, you shall know I am set  
naked on your kingdom. Tomorrow shall I beg leave to  
see your kingly eyes, when I shall (first asking your  
pardon) thereunto recount the occasion of my sudden  
(and more strange) return. 〈Hamlet.〉  

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?  
Or is it some abuse and no such thing?

LAERTES Know you the hand?

KING ’Tis Hamlet’s character. “Naked”—  
And in a postscript here, he says “alone.”  
Can you (advise) me?
LAERTES

I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come. It warms the very sickness in my heart
That I (shall) live and tell him to his teeth
“Thus didst thou.”

KING

If it be so, Laertes (As how should it be so? how otherwise?),
Will you be ruled by me?

LAERTES

Ay, my lord,
So you will not o’errule me to a peace.

KING

To thine own peace. If he be now returned,
As (checking) at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall;
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice
And call it accident.

[LAERTES My lord, I will be ruled,
The rather if you could devise it so
That I might be the organ.

KING

It falls right.

You have been talked of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet’s hearing, for a quality
Wherein they say you shine. Your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him
As did that one, and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.

LAERTES What part is that, my lord?

KING

A very ribbon in the cap of youth—
Yet needful too, for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness.] Two months since
Here was a gentleman of Normandy.
I have seen myself, and served against, the French,
And they can well on horseback, but this gallant
Had witchcraft in ’t. He grew unto his seat,
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse
As had he been encorpsed and demi-natured
With the brave beast. So far he topped my thought
That I in forgery of shapes and tricks
Come short of what he did.

LAERTES A Norman was ’t?

KING A Norman.

LAERTES Upon my life, Lamord.

KING The very same.

LAERTES I know him well. He is the brooch indeed
And gem of all the nation.

KING He made confession of you
And gave you such a masterly report
For art and exercise in your defense,
And for your rapier most especial,
That he cried out ’twould be a sight indeed
If one could match you. [The ’scrimers of their nation
He swore had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you opposed them.] Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming-o’er, to play with you.
Now out of this—

LAERTES What out of this, my lord?

KING Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

LAERTES Why ask you this?
KING

Not that I think you did not love your father,
But that I know love is begun by time
And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.

[There lives within the very flame of love  
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it,
And nothing is at a like goodness still;
For goodness, growing to a pleurisy,
Dies in his own too-much. That we would do
We should do when we would; for this “would”
changes
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
And then this “should” is like a [spendthrift] sigh,
That hurts by easing. But to the quick of th’ ulcer:]  
Hamlet comes back; what would you undertake
To show yourself indeed your father’s son
More than in words?

LAERTES   To cut his throat i’ th’ church.

KING

No place indeed should murder sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this? Keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet, returned, shall know you are come home.
We’ll put on those shall praise your excellence
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you; bring you, in fine,
together
And wager (on) your heads. He, being remiss,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils, so that with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a (pass) of practice
Requite him for your father.
LAERTES  I will do 't,
   And for (that) purpose I'll anoint my sword.  
   I bought an unction of a mountebank
   So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
   Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
   Collected from all simples that have virtue
   Under the moon, can save the thing from death  
   That is but scratched withal. I'll touch my point
   With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
   It may be death.

KING    Let's further think of this,
   Weigh what convenience both of time and means
   May fit us to our shape. If this should fail,
   And that our drift look through our bad
   performance,
   'Twere better not assayed. Therefore this project
   Should have a back or second that might hold
   If this did blast in proof. Soft, let me see.
   We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings—
   I ha 't!
   When in your motion you are hot and dry
   (As make your bouts more violent to that end)
   And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared
   him
   A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
   If he by chance escape your venomed stuck,
   Our purpose may hold there.—But stay, what
   noise?

Enter Queen.

QUEEN
   One woe doth tread upon another’s heel,
   So fast they follow. Your sister’s drowned, Laertes.
LAERTES   Drowned? O, where?
QUEEN
   There is a willow grows askant the brook
That shows his (hoar) leaves in the glassy stream.
Therewith fantastic garlands did she make
Of crowflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do “dead men’s fingers” call them.

There on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds
Clamb’ring to hang, an envious sliver broke,
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up,
Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds,
As one incapable of her own distress
Or like a creature native and endued
Unto that element. But long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

ALERTES
Alas, then she is drowned.

QUEEN Drowned, drowned.

ALERTES Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears. But yet
It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will. When these are gone,
The woman will be out.—Adieu, my lord.
I have a speech o’ fire that fain would blaze,
But that this folly drowns it. He exits.

KING Let’s follow, Gertrude.
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I this will give it start again.
Therefore, let’s follow.

They exit.
Enter "Gravedigger and Another."

Gravedigger: Is she to be buried in Christian burial, when she willfully seeks her own salvation?

Other: I tell thee she is. Therefore make her grave straight. The crowner hath sat on her and finds it Christian burial.

Gravedigger: How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defense?

Other: Why, 'tis found so. It must be offendendo; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act hath three branches—it is to act, to do, to perform. Argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

Other: Nay, but hear you, goodman delver—

Gravedigger: Give me leave. Here lies the water; good. Here stands the man; good. If the man go to this water and drown himself, it is (will he, nill he) he goes; mark you that. But if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself. Argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

Other: But is this law?

Gravedigger: Ay, marry, is 't—crowner's 'quest law.

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OTHER Will you ha' the truth on ’t? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o’ Christian burial.

GRAVEDIGGER Why, there thou sayst. And the more pity that great folk should have count’nance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even-Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gard’ners, ditches, and grave-makers. They hold up Adam’s profession.

OTHER Was he a gentleman?

GRAVEDIGGER He was the first that ever bore arms.

OTHER Why, he had none.

GRAVEDIGGER What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the scripture? The scripture says Adam digged. Could he dig without arms? I’ll put another question to thee. If thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

OTHER Go to!

GRAVEDIGGER What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

OTHER The gallows-maker; for that (frame) outlives a thousand tenants.

GRAVEDIGGER I like thy wit well, in good faith. The gallows does well. But how does it well? It does well to those that do ill. Now, thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church. Argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To ’t again, come.

OTHER “Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?”

GRAVEDIGGER Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

OTHER Marry, now I can tell.

GRAVEDIGGER To ’t.

OTHER Mass, I cannot tell.

〈Enter Hamlet and Horatio afar off.〉

GRAVEDIGGER Cudgel thy brains no more about it,
for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating. And, when you are asked this question next, say “a grave-maker.” The houses he makes lasts till doomsday. Go, get thee in, and fetch me a stoup of liquor.

«The Other Man exits and the Gravedigger digs and sings.»

*In youth when I did love, did love,*  
*Methought it was very sweet*  
*To contract—O—the time for—a—my behave,*  
*O, methought there—a—was nothing—a—meet.*

HAMLET Has this fellow no feeling of his business? He sings in grave-making.

HORATIO Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

HAMLET ’Tis e’en so. The hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

GRAVEDIGGER  
<sings>  
*But age with his stealing steps*  
*Hath clawed me in his clutch,*  
*And hath shipped me into the land,*  
*As if I had never been such.*

«He digs up a skull.»

HAMLET That skull had a tongue in it and could sing once. How the knave jowls it to the ground as if ’twere Cain’s jawbone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician which this ass now o’erreaches, one that would circumvent God, might it not?

HORATIO It might, my lord.

HAMLET Or of a courtier, which could say “Good morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, sweet lord?” This might be my Lord Such-a-one that praised my Lord Such-a-one’s horse when he went to beg it, might it not?

HORATIO Ay, my lord.
HAMLET    Why, e’en so. And now my Lady Worm’s,  
    chapless and knocked about the mazard with a  
    sexton’s spade. Here’s fine revolution, an we had  
    the trick to see ’t. Did these bones cost no more the  
    breeding but to play at loggets with them? Mine  
    ache to think on ’t.  
GRAVEDIGGER〈sings〉

    A pickax and a spade, a spade,  
    For and a shrouding sheet,  
    O, a pit of clay for to be made  
    For such a guest is meet.  

    He digs up more skulls.〉

HAMLET    There’s another. Why may not that be the  
    skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his  
    quillities, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why  
    does he suffer this mad knave now to knock him  
    about the sconce with a dirty shovel and will not tell  
    him of his action of battery? Hum, this fellow might  
    be in ’s time a great buyer of land, with his statutes,  
    his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers,  
    his recoveries. 〈Is this the fine of his fines and the  
    recovery of his recoveries,〉 to have his fine pate full  
    of fine dirt? Will 〈his〉 vouchers vouch him no more  
    of his purchases, and 〈double ones too,〉 than the  
    length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very  
    conveyances of his lands will scarcely lie in this box,  
    and must th’ inheritor himself have no more, ha?  
HORATIO    Not a jot more, my lord.  
HAMLET    Is not parchment made of sheepskins?  
HORATIO    Ay, my lord, and of calves’ skins too.  
HAMLET    They are sheep and calves which seek out  
    assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow.—  
    Whose grave’s this, sirrah?  
GRAVEDIGGER〈sings〉

    O, a pit of clay for to be made  
    〈For such a guest is meet.〉
HAMLET  I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in ’t.

GRAVEDIGGER  You lie out on ’t, sir, and therefore ’tis not yours. For my part, I do not lie in ’t, yet it is mine.

HAMLET  Thou dost lie in ’t, to be in ’t and say it is thine. ’Tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

GRAVEDIGGER  ’Tis a quick lie, sir; ’twill away again from me to you.

HAMLET  What man dost thou dig it for?

GRAVEDIGGER  For no man, sir.

HAMLET  What woman then?

GRAVEDIGGER  For none, neither.

HAMLET  Who is to be buried in ’t?

GRAVEDIGGER  One that was a woman, sir, but, rest her soul, she’s dead.

HAMLET  How absolute the knave is! We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, this three years I have took note of it: the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe.—How long hast thou been grave-maker?

GRAVEDIGGER  Of (all) the days i’ th’ year, I came to ’t that day that our last King Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

HAMLET  How long is that since?

GRAVEDIGGER  Cannot you tell that? Every fool can tell that. It was that very day that young Hamlet was born—he that is mad, and sent into England.

HAMLET  Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

GRAVEDIGGER  Why, because he was mad. He shall recover his wits there. Or if he do not, ’tis no great matter there.

HAMLET  Why?

GRAVEDIGGER  ’Twill not be seen in him there. There the men are as mad as he.
HAMLET  How came he mad?

GRAVEDIGGER  Very strangely, they say.

HAMLET  How “strangely”?

GRAVEDIGGER  Faith, e’en with losing his wits.

HAMLET  Upon what ground?

GRAVEDIGGER  Why, here in Denmark. I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

HAMLET  How long will a man lie i’ th’ earth ere he rot?

GRAVEDIGGER  Faith, if he be not rotten before he die (as we have many pocky corses nowadays) that will scarce hold the laying in), he will last you some eight year or nine year. A tanner will last you nine year.

HAMLET  Why he more than another?

GRAVEDIGGER  Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here’s a skull now hath lien you i’ th’ earth three-and-twenty years.

HAMLET  Whose was it?

GRAVEDIGGER  A whoreson mad fellow’s it was.

HAMLET  Whose do you think it was?

GRAVEDIGGER  Nay, I know not.

GRAVEDIGGER  A pestilence on him for a mad rogue!

GRAVEDIGGER  He poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once.

GRAVEDIGGER  This same skull, sir, was, sir, Yorick’s skull, the King’s jester.

HAMLET  This?

GRAVEDIGGER  E’en that.

HAMLET, 〈taking the skull〉 〈Let me see.〉 Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio—a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath bore me on his back a thousand times, and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft.

Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your
songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning? Quite chapfallen? Now get you to my lady’s (chamber,) and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come. Make her laugh at that.—Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HORATIO  What’s that, my lord?

HAMLET  Dost thou think Alexander looked o’ this fashion i’ th’ earth?

HORATIO  E’en so.

HAMLET  And smelt so? Pah!  \(\text{He puts the skull down.}\)

HORATIO  E’en so, my lord.

HAMLET  To what base uses we may return, Horatio!

Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bunghole?

HORATIO  ’Twere to consider too curiously to consider so.

HAMLET  No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither, with modesty enough and likelihood to lead it, (as thus:) Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer barrel?

Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay,

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.

O, that that earth which kept the world in awe

Should patch a wall t’ expel the (winter’s) flaw!

Enter King, Queen, Laertes, (Lords attendant,) and the corpse \(\text{of Ophelia, with a Doctor of Divinity.}\)

But soft, but soft awhile! Here comes the King,
The Queen, the courtiers. Who is this they follow?

And with such maimèd rites? This doth betoken The corse they follow did with desp’rate hand Fordo its own life. ’Twas of some estate.
Couch we awhile and mark.  \(\text{They step aside.}\)
HAMLET

Laertes

What ceremony else?

That is Laertes, a very noble youth. Mark.

What ceremony else?

Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
As we have warranty. Her death was doubtful,
And, but that great command o’ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified been lodged
Till the last trumpet. For charitable prayers
(Shards,) flints, and pebbles should be thrown on
her.

Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewnents, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

Must there no more be done?

We should profane the service of the dead
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

Lay her i’ th’ earth,

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A minist’ring angel shall my sister be
When thou liest howling.

What, the fair Ophelia?

Sweets to the sweet, farewell!

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet’s wife;
I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,
And not have strewed thy grave.

O, treble woe

Fall ten times (treble) on that cursèd head
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Deprived thee of!—Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.

(Leaps in the grave.)

FTLN 3629
FTLN 3630
FTLN 3631
FTLN 3632
FTLN 3633
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FTLN 3635
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FTLN 3651
FTLN 3652
FTLN 3653
FTLN 3654
FTLN 3655
FTLN 3656
FTLN 3657
FTLN 3658
FTLN 3659
FTLN 3660
FTLN 3661
Hamlet

ACT 5. SC. 1

HAMLET

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made
T’ o’ertop old Pelion or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

HAMLET, 「advancing」

What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis, whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wand’ring stars and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane.

LAERTES, 「coming out of the grave」

The devil take thy soul!

HAMLET  Thou pray’st not well.  「They grapple」.

I prithee take thy fingers from my throat,
For though I am not splenitive
and rash,
Yet have I in me something dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand.

KING  Pluck them asunder.

QUEEN  Hamlet! Hamlet!

ALL  Gentlemen!

HORATIO  Good my lord, be quiet.

「Hamlet and Laertes are separated」.

HAMLET

Why, I will fight with him upon this theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag!

QUEEN  O my son, what theme?

HAMLET

I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers
Could not with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

KING  O, he is mad, Laertes!

QUEEN  For love of God, forbear him.

HAMLET  ’Swounds, show me what thou ’t do.

Woo’t weep, woo’t fight, woo’t fast, woo’t tear thyself,
Woo’t drink up eisel, eat a crocodile?
I’ll do ’t. Dost (thou) come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I.
And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart. Nay, an thou ’lt mouth,
I’ll rant as well as thou.

This is mere madness;
And (thus) awhile the fit will work on him.
Anon, as patient as the female dove
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,
His silence will sit drooping.

Hear you, sir,
What is the reason that you use me thus?
I loved you ever. But it is no matter.
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.

Hamlet exits.

I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.

Horatio exits.

[To Laertes.] Strengthen your patience in our last
night’s speech.
We’ll put the matter to the present push.—
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.—
This grave shall have a living monument.
An hour of quiet thereby shall we see.
Till then in patience our proceeding be.

They exit.
Hamlet

ACT 5. SC. 2

Scene 2
Enter Hamlet and Horatio.

HAMLET
So much for this, sir. Now shall you see the other.
You do remember all the circumstance?

HORATIO Remember it, my lord!

HAMLET
Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep. (Methought) I lay
Worse than the mutines in the (bilboes.) Rashly—
And praised be rashness for it: let us know,
Our indiscretion sometime serves us well
When our deep plots do pall; and that should learn
us
There’s a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will—

HORATIO That is most
certain.

HAMLET Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarfed about me, in the dark
Groped I to find out them; had my desire,
Fingered their packet, and in fine withdrew
To mine own room again, making so bold
(My fears forgetting manners) to unfold
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,
A royal knavery—an exact command,
Larded with many several sorts of reasons
Importing Denmark’s health and England’s too,
With—ho!—such bugs and goblins in my life,
That on the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the ax,
My head should be struck off.

HORATIO Is ’t possible?

HAMLET
Here’s the commission. Read it at more leisure.

[Handing him a paper.]
But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

HORATIO   I beseech you.

HAMLET

Being thus benetted round with ‘villainies,’
Or I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play. I sat me down,
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair—
I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair, and labored much
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman’s service. Wilt thou know
Th’ effect of what I wrote?

HORATIO   Ay, good my lord.

HAMLET

An earnest conjuration from the King,
As England was his faithful tributary,
As love between them like the palm might flourish,
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear
And stand a comma ’tween their amities,
And many suchlike ‘ases’ of great charge,
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement further, more or less,
He should those bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving time allowed.

HORATIO   How was this sealed?

HAMLET

Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.
I had my father’s signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal;
Folded the writ up in the form of th’ other,
(Subscriber) it, gave ’t th’ impression, placed it
safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou knowest already.

HORATIO

So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to ’t.
HAMLET

〈Why, man, they did make love to this employment.〉
They are not near my conscience. Their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow.
’Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensèd points
Of mighty opposites.

HORATIO  Why, what a king is this!

HAMLET

Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon—
He that hath killed my king and whored my mother,
Popped in between th’ election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage—is ’t not perfect
conscience
〈To quit him with this arm? And is ’t not to be
damned
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?〉

HORATIO

It must be shortly known to him from England
What is the issue of the business there.

HAMLET

It will be short. The interim’s mine,
And a man’s life’s no more than to say “one.”
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself,
For by the image of my cause I see
The portraiture of his. I’ll court his favors.
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a tow’ring passion.

HORATIO  Peace, who comes here?〉

Enter 〈Osric,〉 a courtier.

OSRIC     Your Lordship is right welcome back to
          Denmark.
HAMLET  I (humbly) thank you, sir. \([\text{Aside to Horatio.}]\)

Dost know this waterfly?

HORATIO, \([\text{aside to Hamlet}]\)  No, my good lord.

HAMLET, \([\text{aside to Horatio}]\)  Thy state is the more gracious, for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile. Let a beast be lord of beasts and his crib shall stand at the king's mess. 'Tis a chough, but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

OSRIC  Sweet lord, if your Lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his Majesty.

HAMLET  I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. \(\text{Put} \) your bonnet to his right use: 'tis for the head.

OSRIC  I thank your Lordship; it is very hot.

HAMLET  No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

OSRIC  It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

HAMLET  But yet methinks it is very \(\text{sultry} \) and hot \(\text{for} \) my complexion.

OSRIC  Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry, as 'twere—I cannot tell how. My lord, his Majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, this is the matter—

HAMLET  I beseech you, remember. \([\text{He motions to Osric to put on his hat.}]\)

OSRIC  Nay, good my lord, for my ease, in good faith. \([\text{Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes—believe me, an absolute } \text{gentleman,} \) full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing. Indeed, to speak \(\text{feelingly} \) of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

HAMLET  Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you, though I know to divide him inventorially would dozy th' arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the
OSRIC  Your Lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

HAMLET  The concernancy, sir? Why do we wrap the
gentleman in our more rawer breath?

OSRIC  Sir?

HORATIO  Is 't not possible to understand in another
tongue? You will to 't, sir, really.

HAMLET, ἟ to Osric[1]  What imports the nomination of
this gentleman?

OSRIC  Of Laertes?

HORATIO  His purse is empty already; all 's golden words
are spent.

HAMLET  Of him, sir.

OSRIC  I know you are not ignorant—

HORATIO  I would you did, sir. Yet, in faith, if you did, it
would not much approve me. Well, sir?]

OSRIC  You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes
is—

[HAMLET  I dare not confess that, lest I should compare
with him in excellence. But to know a man well
were to know himself.

OSRIC  I mean, sir, for ἃ́ his weapon. But in the imputation
laid on him by them, in his meed he's
unfellowed.]

HAMLET  What's his weapon?

OSRIC  Rapier and dagger.

HAMLET  That's two of his weapons. But, well—

OSRIC  The King, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary
horses, against the which he has impawned, as I
take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their
assigns, as girdle, (hangers,) and so. Three of the
carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very
responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

HAMLET What call you the “carriages”?

[HORATIO I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.]

OSRIC The (carriages,) sir, are the hangers.

HAMLET The phrase would be more germane to the matter if we could carry a cannon by our sides. I would it (might) be “hangers” till then. But on. Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages— that’s the French bet against the Danish. Why is this all [“impawned,”] (as) you call it?

OSRIC The King, sir, hath laid, sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits. He hath laid on twelve for nine, and it would come to immediate trial if your Lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

HAMLET How if I answer no?

OSRIC I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

HAMLET Sir, I will walk here in the hall. If it please his Majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me. Let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the King hold his purpose, I will win for him, an I can. If not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

OSRIC Shall I deliver you (e’en) so?

HAMLET To this effect, sir, after what flourish your nature will.

OSRIC I commend my duty to your Lordship.

HAMLET Yours. ‘Osric exits.’ (He) does well to commend it himself. There are no tongues else for ’s turn.

HORATIO This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.
HAMLET He did ⟨comply,⟩ sir, with his dug before he sucked it. Thus has he (and many more of the same breed that I know the drossy age dotes on) only got the tune of the time, and, out of an habit of encounter, a kind of ⟨yeasty⟩ collection, which carries them through and through the most ⟨fanned⟩ and ⟨winnowed⟩ opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

[Enter a Lord.]

LORD My lord, his Majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him that you attend him in the hall. He sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

HAMLET I am constant to my purposes. They follow the King’s pleasure. If his fitness speaks, mine is ready now or whenever, provided I be so able as now.

LORD The King and Queen and all are coming down.

HAMLET In happy time.

LORD The Queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

HAMLET She well instructs me. [Lord exits.]

HORATIO You will lose, my lord.

HAMLET I do not think so. Since he went into France, I have been in continual practice. I shall win at the odds; ⟨but⟩ thou wouldst not think how ill all’s here about my heart. But it is no matter.

HORATIO Nay, good my lord—

HAMLET It is but foolery, but it is such a kind of ⟨gaingiving⟩ as would perhaps trouble a woman.

HORATIO If your mind dislike anything, obey it. I will forestall their repair hither and say you are not fit.

HAMLET Not a whit. We defy augury. There is ⟨a⟩ special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be ⟨now,⟩ ’tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be
now; if it be not now, yet it \(\langle\text{will}\rangle\) come. The readiness is all. Since no man of aught he leaves knows, what is \(\text{’t}\) to leave betimes? Let be.

\[\text{A table prepared.} \langle \text{Enter Trumpets, Drums, and Officers with cushions, King, Queen, Osric, and all the state, foils, daggers, flagons of wine,} \rangle \text{and Laertes.}\]

\textbf{KING}

Come, Hamlet, come and take this hand from me.

\[\langle \text{He puts Laertes’ hand into Hamlet’s.}\rangle\]

\textbf{HAMLET, to Laertes}\n
Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong;
But pardon \(\text{’t}\) as you are a gentleman. This presence knows,
And you must needs have heard, how I am punished
With a sore distraction. What I have done
That might your nature, honor, and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was \(\text{’t}\) Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet.
If Hamlet from himself be ta’en away,
And when he’s not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then? His madness. If \(\text{’t}\) be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged;
His madness is poor Hamlet’s enemy.

\langle Sir, in this audience\rangle

Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts
That I have shot my arrow o’er the house
And hurt my brother.

\textbf{LAERTES} I am satisfied in nature,

Whose motive in this case should stir me most
To my revenge; but in my terms of honor
I stand aloof and will no reconcilement
Till by some elder masters of known honor
I have a voice and precedent of peace
To \langle keep\rangle my name ungored. But \langle till\rangle that time
I do receive your offered love like love
And will not wrong it.

Hamlet

I embrace it freely
And will this brothers’ wager frankly play.—
Give us the foils. (Come on.)

Laertes

Come, one for me.

Hamlet

I’ll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i’ th’ darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

Laertes

You mock me, sir.

Hamlet

No, by this hand.

King

Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager?

Hamlet

Very well, my lord.

Your Grace has laid the odds o’ th’ weaker side.

King

I do not fear it; I have seen you both.
But, since he is better, we have therefore odds.

Laertes

This is too heavy. Let me see another.

Hamlet

This likes me well. These foils have all a length?

Osric

Ay, my good lord.

(Prepare to play.)

King

Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.—
If Hamlet give the first or second hit
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire.
The King shall drink to Hamlet’s better breath,
And in the cup an (union) shall he throw,
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark’s crown have worn. Give me the cups,
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
“Now the King drinks to Hamlet.” Come, begin.
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

_Trumpets the while._

**HAMLET** Come on, sir.
**LAERTES** Come, my lord.  
(They play.)

**HAMLET** One.
**LAERTES** No.
**HAMLET** Judgment!

**OSRIC** A hit, a very palpable hit.

**LAERTES** Well, again.

**KING** Stay, give me drink.—Hamlet, this pearl is thine.
Here’s to thy health.

_He drinks and then drops the pearl in the cup._

_Drum, trumpets, and shot._

Give him the cup.

**HAMLET** I’ll play this bout first. Set it by awhile.

_Come. (They play.) Another hit. What say you?_

**LAERTES** (A touch, a touch.) I do confess ’t.

**KING** Our son shall win.

**QUEEN** He’s fat and scant of breath.—
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin; rub thy brows.

_The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet._

_She lifts the cup._

**HAMLET** Good madam.

**KING** Gertrude, do not drink.

**QUEEN** I will, my lord; I pray you pardon me.

_King, aside_

_It is the poisoned cup. It is too late._
HAMLET

I dare not drink yet, madam—by and by.

QUEEN Come, let me wipe thy face.

LAERTES, \textit{to Claudius}^1

My lord, I’ll hit him now.

KING I do not think ’t.

LAERTES, \textit{aside}^1

And yet it is almost against my conscience.

HAMLET

Come, for the third, Laertes. You do but dally.

I pray you pass with your best violence.

I am (afeard) you make a wanton of me.

LAERTES Say you so? Come on. \textit{(Play.)}

OSRIC Nothing neither way.

LAERTES Have at you now! \textit{(Laertes wounds Hamlet. Then \textit{in scuffling they change rapiers,} and Hamlet wounds Laertes.)}^1

KING Part them. They are incensed.

HAMLET Nay, come again. \textit{(The Queen falls.)}^1

OSRIC Look to the Queen there, ho!

HORATIO They bleed on both sides.—How is it, my lord?

OSRIC How is ’t, Laertes? \textit{(He falls.)}^1

LAERTES Why as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric.

I am justly killed with mine own treachery.

HAMLET

How does the Queen?

KING She swoons to see them bleed.

QUEEN No, no, the drink, the drink! O, my dear Hamlet!

The drink, the drink! I am poisoned. \textit{(She dies.)}^1

HAMLET

O villainy! Ho! Let the door be locked. \textit{(Osric exits.)}^1

Treachery! Seek it out.
LAERTES
   It is here, Hamlet. {Hamlet,} thou art slain.
   No med’cine in the world can do thee good.
   In thee there is not half an hour’s life.
   The treacherous instrument is in {thy} hand,
   Unbated and envenomed. The foul practice
   Hath turned itself on me. Lo, here I lie,
   Never to rise again. Thy mother’s poisoned.
   I can no more. The King, the King’s to blame.

HAMLET
   The point envenomed too! Then, venom, to thy
   work.  \{Hurts the King.\}

ALL    Treason, treason!

KING
   O, yet defend me, friends! I am but hurt.

HAMLET
   Here, thou incestuous, {murd’rous,} damnèd Dane,
   Drink off this potion. Is {thy union} here?
   \{Forcing him to drink the poison.\}
   Follow my mother.  \{King dies.\}

LAERTES    He is justly served.
   It is a poison tempered by himself.
   Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.
   Mine and my father’s death come not upon thee,
   Nor thine on me.  \{Dies.\}

HAMLET
   Heaven make thee free of it. I follow thee.—
   I am dead, Horatio.—Wretched queen, adieu.—
   You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
   That are but mutes or audience to this act,
   Had I but time (as this fell sergeant, Death,
   Is strict in his arrest), O, I could tell you—
   But let it be.—Horatio, I am dead.
   Thou livest; report me and my cause aright
   To the unsatisfied.

HORATIO    Never believe it.
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane.  
Here’s yet some liquor left.  

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He picks up the cup.
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HAMLET

As thou ’rt a man,
Give me the cup. Let go! By heaven, I’ll ha ’t.
O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind me!
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story.

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A march afar off (and shot within.)
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What warlike noise is this?

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Enter Osric.
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OSRIC

Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To th’ ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

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O, I die, Horatio!
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HAMLET

The potent poison quite o’ercrows my spirit.
I cannot live to hear the news from England.
But I do prophesy th’ election lights
On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice.
So tell him, with th’ occurrents, more and less,
Which have solicited—the rest is silence.

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(O, O, O, O!)
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(Dies.)

HORATIO

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

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March within.
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Why does the drum come hither?

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Enter Fortinbras with the English Ambassadors (with Drum, Colors, and Attendants.)
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FORTINBRAS Where is this sight?
HORATIO  What is it you would see?
     If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

FORTINBRAS
     This quarry cries on havoc. O proud Death,
    What feast is toward in thine eternal cell
    That thou so many princes at a shot
    So bloodily hast struck?

AMBASSADOR
    The sight 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 th’ 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 (th’) yet unknowing world
    How these things came about. So shall you hear
    Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
    Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
    Of deaths put on by cunning and (forced) cause,
    And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
    Fall’n on th’ inventors’ heads. All this can I
    Truly deliver.

FORTINBRAS
    Let us haste to hear it
    And call the noblest to the audience.
    For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune.
    I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
    Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

HORATIO
    Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw (on) more.

But let this same be presently performed
Even while men’s minds are wild, lest more mischance
On plots and errors happen.

FORTINBRAS Let four captains

Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royal; and for his passage,
The soldier’s music and the rite of war
Speak loudly for him.

Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this
Becomes the field but here shows much amiss.
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

They exit, (marching, after the which, a peal of ordnance are shot off.)