The Tragedy of

HAMLET

Prince of Denmark

by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Edited by BARBARA A. MOWAT
and PAUL WERSTINE

Folger Shakespeare Library

http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org
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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 exist 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 ⟨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.
Characters in the Play

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

courtiers at the Danish court

Danish soldiers

FRANCISCO
BARNARDO
MARCELLUS

FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway
A Captain in Fortinbras’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!

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.
Hamlet

ACT 1. SC. 1

FTLN 0017 MARCELLUS And liegien to the Dane.

FTLN 0018 FRANCISCO Give you good night.

FRANCISCO

FTLN 0019 O farewell, honest (soldier.) Who hath relieved you?

FTLN 0020 MARCELLUS

FTLN 0021 Barnardo hath my place. Give you good night.

Francisco exits.

FTLN 0022 MARCELLUS Holla, Barnardo.

FTLN 0023 BARNARDO Say, what, is Horatio there?

FTLN 0024 HORATIO A piece of him.

BARNARDO

FTLN 0025 Welcome, Horatio.—Welcome, good Marcellus.

HORATIO

FTLN 0026 What, has this thing appeared again tonight?

FTLN 0027 BARNARDO I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS

FTLN 0028 Horatio says ’tis but our fantasy

FTLN 0029 And will not let belief take hold of him

FTLN 0030 Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us.

FTLN 0031 Therefore I have entreated him along

FTLN 0032 With us to watch the minutes of this night,

FTLN 0033 That, if again this apparition come,

FTLN 0034 He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

HORATIO

FTLN 0035 Tush, tush, ’twill not appear.

FTLN 0036 BARNARDO Sit down awhile,

FTLN 0037 And let us once again assail your ears,

FTLN 0038 That are so fortified against our story,

FTLN 0039 What we have two nights seen.

FTLN 0040 HORATIO Well, sit we down,

FTLN 0041 And let us hear Barnardo speak of this.

FTLN 0042 BARNARDO Last night of all,

FTLN 0043 When yond same star that’s westward from the pole

FTLN 0044 Had made his course t’ illume that part of heaven

FTLN 0045 Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

FTLN 0046 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 harrows 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.

HORATIO

Is not this something more than fantasy?

What think you on ’t?

Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.
HORATIO  As thou art to thyself.
FTLN 0071

Such was the very armor he had on
FTLN 0072

When he the ambitious Norway combated.
FTLN 0073

So frowned he once when, in an angry parle,
FTLN 0074

He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
FTLN 0075

'Tis strange.  
FTLN 0076

MARCELLUS
FTLN 0077

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

HORATIO
FTLN 0078

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
FTLN 0081

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 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.

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,

Did forfeit, with his life, all his lands
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror.
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.

I think it be no other but e’en so.
Well may it sort that this portentous figure
Comes armèd through our watch so like the king
That was and is the question of these wars.

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,
Hamlet

ACT 1. SC. 1

It spreads his arms.

The cock crows.

Enter Ghost.

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

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,

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, 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.*
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,
Colleaguèd 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.

In that and all things will we show our duty.

We doubt it nothing. Heartily farewell.

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?

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.

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,
Nor, 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.

Hail to your Lordship.
I am glad to see you well.
Horatio—or I do forget myself!
The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.
Sir, my good friend. I’ll change that name with you.
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?—
Marcellus?
My good lord.
I am very glad to see you. [To Barnardo.] Good even, sir.—
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?
A truant disposition, good my lord.
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 see 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.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
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.

HAMLET
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.

HAMLET
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-surprised 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.

HAMLET But where was this?

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.

HAMLET ’Tis very strange.

HORATIO
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**

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<th>Text</th>
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<td>All armed, my lord. From top to toe?</td>
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<td>My lord, from head to foot.</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>Then saw you not his face?</td>
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<td>O, yes, my lord, he wore his beaver up.</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>What, looked he frowningly?</td>
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<td>A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Pale or red?</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>Nay, very pale.</td>
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<td>And fixed his eyes upon you?</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>Most constantly.</td>
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<td>I would I had been there.</td>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>It would have much amazed you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Very like. Stayed it long?</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.</td>
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<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Longer, longer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Not when I saw ’t.</td>
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<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>His beard was grizzled, no?</td>
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<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>It was as I have seen it in his life,</td>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>A sable silvered.</td>
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<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>I will watch tonight.</td>
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<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Perchance ’twill walk again.</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>I warrant it will.</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>If it assume my noble father’s person,</td>
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<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>I’ll speak to it, though hell itself should gape</td>
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<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>If you have hitherto concealed this sight,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever 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
Our duty to your Honor.

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.

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 \( \text{bulk,} \) 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,
\( \text{(For he himself is subject to his birth.)} \)
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends
The safety and \( \text{[the]} \) 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 \( \text{\textquotesingleAround not calumnious strokes.} \)
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,

Whiles, (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,
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.

LAERTES
Farewell. Laertes exits.

POLONIUS
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.

OPHELIA
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 scanter 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.

I shall obey, my lord.

They exit.

Scene 4

Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

It is a nipping and an eager air.

What hour now?

I think it lacks of twelve.

No, it is struck.

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?

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.

Is it a custom?

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.

HORATIO Look, my lord, it comes.

HAMLET

Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou com’st in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee. I’ll call thee “Hamlet,”
“King,” “Father,” “Royal Dane.” O, answer me!
Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulcher,
Wherein we saw thee quietly interred,
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws
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?

Hamlet
ACT 1. SC. 4

(Ghost) beckons.

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

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

HORATIO
No, by no means.

HAMLET
It will not speak. Then I will follow it.

Do not, my lord.

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.

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

FTLN 0703

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

MARCELLUS

FTLN 0704

You shall not go, my lord.  

[They hold back Hamlet.]

HAMLET

FTLN 0705

Hold off your hands.

HORATIO

FTLN 0706

Be ruled. You shall not go.

HAMLET

FTLN 0707

My fate cries out

FTLN 0708

And makes each petty arture in this body

FTLN 0709

As hardy as the Nemean lion’s nerve.

FTLN 0710

Still am I called. Unhand me, gentlemen.

FTLN 0711

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

FTLN 0712

I say, away!—Go on. I’ll follow thee.

Ghost and Hamlet exit.

HORATIO

FTLN 0713

He waxes desperate with imagination.

MARCELLUS

FTLN 0714

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

HORATIO

FTLN 0715

Have after. To what issue will this come?

MARCELLUS

FTLN 0716

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HORATIO

FTLN 0717

Heaven will direct it.

MARCELLUS

FTLN 0718

Nay, let’s follow him.  

They exit.

[Scene 5]

Enter Ghost and Hamlet.

HAMLET

FTLN 0719

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

GHOST

FTLN 0721

Mark me.
HAMLET I will.

GHOST My hour is almost come
When I to sulph'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
Thy knotted and combinéd 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 forgèd 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, <i>lust</i> though to a radiant angel linked,
Will <i>sate</i> 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 cursèd 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.

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.

My lord, my lord!
Lord Hamlet.
Heavens secure him!
So be it.
Illo, ho, ho, my lord!
Hillo, ho, ho, boy! Come, (bird,) come!
How is ’t, my noble lord?
What news, my lord?
O, wonderful!
Good my lord, tell it.
No, you will reveal it.
Not I, my lord, by heaven.
Nor I, my lord.
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.
HAMLET

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?

GHOST  Come on, you hear this fellow in the cellarage.

HAMLET  Consent to swear.

HORATIO  Propose the oath, my lord.

HAMLET  Never to speak of this that you have seen,

Swear by my sword.

GHOST, *beneath*  Swear.

HAMLET  *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.

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.>

POILONIUS

Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

REYNALDO I will, my lord.

POILONIUS

You shall do marvelous wisely, good Reynaldo,

Before you visit him, to make inquire

Of his behavior.

My lord, I did intend it.

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?

Ay, very well, my lord.

POILONIUS

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

73
But if ’t be he I mean, he’s very wild,
Addicted so and so.” And there put on him
What forgeries you please—marry, 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 unreclaimèd 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 ⟨i’ th’⟩ working,
Mark you, your party in converse, him you would
sound,
Having ever seen in the prenominant 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—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.

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.

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

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

Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

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.

Heavens make our presence and our practices
Pleasant and helpful to him!
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 assure 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.

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.

Enter Ambassadors (Voltemand and Cornelius with)
Polonius.)
Welcome, my good friends.

Say, Voltemand, what from our brother Norway?

WOLTEMAND

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.

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, 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.

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.

More matter with less art.

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.—

Came this from Hamlet to her?

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.
Hamlet

ACT 2. SC. 2

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.

But how hath she received his love?
What do you think of me?

As of a man faithful and honorable.

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.

Do you think (‘tis) this?
QUEEN    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    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    How may we try it further?

POLONIUS

You know sometimes he walks four hours together

Here in the lobby.

QUEEN    So he does indeed.

POLONIUS

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

’Tis so.

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    We will try it.

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.]

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

HAMLET    Well, God-a-mercy.
POLONIUS  Do you know me, my lord?
HAMLET  Excellent well. You are a fishmonger.
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.
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.
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.
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.

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

FTLN 1321 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? 260

FTLN 1325 GUILDENSTERN Prison, my lord?

FTLN 1326 HAMLET Denmark’s a prison.

FTLN 1327 ROSENCRANTZ Then is the world one.

FTLN 1328 HAMLET A goodly one, in which there are many confines,
wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o’ th’ worst.

FTLN 1330 ROSENCRANTZ We think not so, my lord.

FTLN 1331 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. 270

FTLN 1335 ROSENCRANTZ Why, then, your ambition makes it one.

FTLN 1336 ’Tis too narrow for your mind.

FTLN 1337 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. 275

FTLN 1340 GUILDENSTERN Which dreams, indeed, are ambition,
for the very substance of the ambitious is merely
the shadow of a dream.

FTLN 1342 HAMLET A dream itself is but a shadow.

FTLN 1344 ROSENCRANTZ Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy
and light a quality that it is but a shadow’s shadow. 280

FTLN 1346 HAMLET Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs
and outstretched heroes the beggars’ shadows.

FTLN 1348 Shall we to th’ court? For, by my fay, I cannot
reason. 285

FTLN 1350 ROSENCRANTZ/GUILDENSTERN We’ll wait upon you.

FTLN 1351 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

FTLN 1355 Elsinore?

FTLN 1356 ROSENCRANTZ 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 majestical 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
de 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
de 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 ’tickl’ 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?

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.

A 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.
In what, my dear lord?

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

Enter Polonius.

Well be with you, gentlemen.

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.

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

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

My lord, I have news to tell you.

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

The actors are come hither, my lord.

Buzz, buzz.

Upon my honor—

Then came each actor on his ass.

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.

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

What a treasure had he, my lord?

Why,

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

Still on my daughter.

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 bread 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.

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

〈FIRST〉 PLAYER 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 andfellies 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’eremèd loins
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up—
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steeped,
‘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

FTLN 1639    Ay, so, good-bye to you.

FTLN 1640    «Rosencrantz and Guildenstern» exit.

FTLN 1641    Now I am alone.

FTLN 1642    O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!

FTLN 1643    Is it not monstrous that this player here,

FTLN 1644    But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

FTLN 1645    Could force his soul so to his own conceit

FTLN 1646    That from her working all his visage wanned,

FTLN 1647    Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,

FTLN 1648    A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

FTLN 1649    With forms to his conceit—and all for nothing!

FTLN 1650    For Hecuba!

FTLN 1651    What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,

FTLN 1652    That he should weep for her? What would he do

FTLN 1653    Had he the motive and the cue for passion

FTLN 1654    That I have? He would drown the stage with tears

FTLN 1655    And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,

FTLN 1656    Make mad the guilty and appall the free,

FTLN 1657    Confound the ignorant and amaze indeed

FTLN 1658    The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,

FTLN 1659    A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak

FTLN 1660    Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,

FTLN 1661    And can say nothing—no, not for a king

FTLN 1662    Upon whose property and most dear life

FTLN 1663    A damned defeat was made. Am I a coward?

FTLN 1664    Who calls me “villain”? breaks my pate across?

FTLN 1665    Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?

FTLN 1666    Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i’ th’ throat

FTLN 1667    As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?

FTLN 1668    Ha! ’Swounds, I should take it! For it cannot be

FTLN 1669    But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall

FTLN 1670    To make oppression bitter, or ere this

FTLN 1671    I should (have) fatted all the region kites

FTLN 1672    With this slave’s offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!

FTLN 1673    Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless

    villain!
Hamlet

ACT 2. SC. 2

He exits.

〈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.
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’erraught 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.

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

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.

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

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.

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.

Madam, I wish it may. [Queen exits.]  
Ophelia, walk you here.—Gracious, so please you,
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.

Hamlet

Good my lord,
How does your Honor for this many a day?
I humbly thank you, well.
My lord, I have remembrances of yours
That I have longèd long to redeliver.
I pray you now receive them.
No, not I. I never gave you aught.
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 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. 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
OPHELIA Heavenly powers, restore him!

HAMLET I have heard of your paintings 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.

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.

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?

And the Queen too, and that presently.

Bid the players make haste. 〈Polonius exits.〉

Will you two help to hasten them?

Ay, my lord.

What ho, Horatio!

Enter Horatio.

Here, sweet lord, at your service.

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

O, my dear lord—

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
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.

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

〈Sound a flourish.〉

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.〉

How fares our cousin Hamlet?
Excellent, i’ faith, of the chameleon’s dish. I
eat the air, promise-crammed. You cannot feed
capons so.
I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet. These
words are not mine.
No, nor mine now. 〈To Polonius.〉 My lord, you
played once i’ th’ university, you say?
HAMLET

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.

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      You are merry, my lord.
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.]
HAMLET  Is this a prologue or the posy of a ring?

OPHELIA  ’Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET  As woman’s love.

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—
O, confound the rest!

PLAYER QUEEN

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!

HAMLET

'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?


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

ACT 3. SC. 2

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

Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing,

(Confederate) season, else no creature seeing,

Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,

With Hecate’s ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,

Thy natural magic and dire property

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.

QUEEN How fares my lord?

POLONIUS Give o’er the play.

KING Give me some light. Away!

POLONIUS Lights, lights, lights!

All but Hamlet and Horatio exit.

HAMLET Why, let the strucken deer go weep,
The hart ungallèd play.

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.

Come, some music!

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. "He takes a recorder and turns to Guildenstern." 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.                      405

HAMLET   Do you see yonder cloud that’s almost in
         shape of a camel?                    410

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.                        415

〈POLONIUS〉 I will say so.

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

          [All but Hamlet exit.]              420

’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.  430

He exits.
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  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.

Enter Polonius.
POLONIUS

FTLN 2362  My lord, he’s going to his mother’s closet.
FTLN 2363  Behind the arras I’ll convey myself 30
FTLN 2364  To hear the process. I’ll warrant she’ll tax him
FTLN 2365  home;
FTLN 2366  And, as you said (and wisely was it said),
FTLN 2367  ’Tis meet that some more audience than a mother, 35
FTLN 2368  Since nature makes them partial, should o’erhear
FTLN 2369  The speech of vantage. Fare you well, my liege.
FTLN 2370  I’ll call upon you ere you go to bed
FTLN 2371  And tell you what I know.
FTLN 2372  Thanks, dear my lord.

KING

FTLN 2373  O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven; 40
FTLN 2374  It hath the primal eldest curse upon ’t,
FTLN 2375  A brother’s murder. Pray can I not,
FTLN 2376  Though inclination be as sharp as will. 45
FTLN 2377  My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
FTLN 2378  And, like a man to double business bound,
FTLN 2379  I stand in pause where I shall first begin 50
FTLN 2380  And both neglect. What if this cursèd hand
FTLN 2381  Were thicker than itself with brother’s blood?
FTLN 2382  Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
FTLN 2383  To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
FTLN 2384  But to confront the visage of offense? 55
FTLN 2385  And what’s in prayer but this twofold force,
FTLN 2386  To be forestallèd ere we come to fall,
FTLN 2387  Or [pardoned] being down? Then I’ll look up.
FTLN 2388  My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
FTLN 2389  Can serve my turn? “Forgive me my foul murder”?
FTLN 2390  That cannot be, since I am still possessed 60
FTLN 2391  Of those effects for which I did the murder:
FTLN 2392  My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
FTLN 2393  May one be pardoned and retain th’ offense?
FTLN 2394  In the corrupted currents of this world,
FTLN 2395  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.

Enter 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 <reversed.> 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,
Hamlet

ACT 3. SC. 4

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.

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.
    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 thralled,
But it reserved some quantity of choice
To serve in such a difference.] What devil was ’t
That thus hath cozened 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.
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.
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.

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,
Hamlet

ACT 3. SC. 4

QUEEN

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.

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.

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.

I must to England, you know that.

Alack,
I had forgot! 'Tis so concluded on.

[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.
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.*
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.]

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

QUEEN
What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

KING
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!

QUEEN
It had been so with us, had we been there.

KING
His liberty is full of threats to all—
To you yourself, to us, to everyone.

QUEEN
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answered?

KING
It will be laid to us, whose providence

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191

**Hamlet**

**ACT 4. SC. 1**

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. [...]"

[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 Hamlet.

HAMLET Safely stowed.

GENTLEMEN, within Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

HAMLET But soft, what noise? Who calls on Hamlet?

O, here they come.

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—
A “thing,” my lord?

Of nothing. Bring me to him. (Hide fox, and all after!)

They exit.

Scene 3

Enter King and two or three.

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.

How now, what hath befallen?

Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord,

We cannot get from him.

But where is he?

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

Bring him before us.

Ho! Bring in the lord.

They enter 'with Hamlet.'

Now, Hamlet, where’s Polonius?

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

ACT 4. SC. 4

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.

“All but the King exit.”

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.

Scene 4

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.  [All but the Captain exit.]

[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.  [He exits.]

ROSECRANZ  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.

**Queen** Let her come in.

*Gentleman exits.*

*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 [sings]

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.

[ Sings.] 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.

[ Sings.] White his shroud as the mountain snow—

Enter King.

QUEEN Alas, look here, my lord.

OPHELIA [sings]

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:
Hamlet

ACT 4, SC. 5

[Sings.] 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.

KING  Pretty Ophelia—

OPHELIA

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

[Sings.] 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.”

KING  How long hath she been thus?

OPHELIA  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.  ⟨She exits.⟩

KING

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

[Horatio exits.]

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 unsmirchèd 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.

La noise within: “Let her come in!”

LAERTES How now, what noise is that?

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 \(\text{sings}\)

They bore him barefaced on the bier,
(Heb 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 \(\text{must}\) 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.

\(\text{Sings.}\) 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.

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.

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?
Hamlet

ACT 4. SC. 7

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?

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,
	ogether
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.

Alas, then she is drowned.
Drowned, drowned.
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.

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.

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

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

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

Why, 'tis found so.

It must be *se 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.

Why, but hear you, goodman delver—

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.

But is this law?

Ay, marry, is 't—crowner's 'quest law.
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’rance 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—

GRAVEDIGGER 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

ACT 5. SC. 1

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

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.

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 assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow.— Whose grave’s this, sirrah?

GRAVEDIGGER  Mine, sir.

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**

**ACT 5. SC. 1**

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?
HAMLET Nay, I know not.
GRAVEDIGGER A pestilence on him for a mad rogue!
GRAVEDIGGER He poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once.
HAMLET This same skull, sir, was, sir, Yorick’s skull, the King’s jester.
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 gibles 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!  

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 (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.  

(They step aside.)
LAERTES What ceremony else?

HAMLET That is Laertes, a very noble youth. Mark.

LAERTES What ceremony else?

DOCTOR
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 strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

LAERTES
Must there no more be done?

DOCTOR 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.

LAERTES 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.

HAMLET, 〈to Horatio〉 What, the fair Ophelia?

QUEEN Sweets to the sweet, farewell!

〈She scatters flowers.〉

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.

LAERTES O, treble woe

Fall ten times 〈treble〉 on that cursed 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.〉
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.

QUEEN
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.

HAMLET
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.

KING
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?

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 cases 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.  [Aside to Horatio.]
Dost know this waterfly?

HORATIO, [aside to Hamlet]    No, my good lord.

HAMLET, [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.  [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 <sultry> and hot <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.  [He motions to
Osric to put on his hat.]

OSRIC    Nay, good my lord, for my ease, in good faith.

[HAMLET, Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes—believe
me, an absolute gentleman,] full of most excellent
differences, of very soft society and great showing.
Indeed, to speak 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]  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—

HAMLET  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 '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 dig 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 whonsoever, 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 \(\text{will}\) come. The readiness is all. Since no man of aught he leaves knows, what is \(\text{t}\) to leave betimes? Let be.

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

KING

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

\[\text{He puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's.}\]

HAMLET, \(\text{to Laertes}\)

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.

\(\text{Sir, in this audience}\)

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.

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 \(\text{keep}\) my name ungored. But \(\text{till}\) 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.

You mock me, sir.

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.

(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,

〈Prepare to play.〉
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.  \(\text{They play.}\)
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.

\(\text{He drinks and then drops the pearl in the cup.}\)

\(\text{Drum, trumpets, and shot.}\)

Give him the cup.

HAMLET I’ll play this bout first. Set it by awhile.
Come. \(\text{They play.}\) Another hit. What say you?
LAERTES \(\text{A touch, a touch.} \) 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.

\(\text{She lifts the cup.}\)

HAMLET Good madam.
KING Gertrude, do not drink.
QUEEN I will, my lord; I pray you pardon me.

\(\text{She drinks.}\)

KING, \(\text{aside}\)

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, [to Claudius]
My lord, I’ll hit him now.

KING  
I do not think ’t.

LAERTES, [aside]
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.

OSRIC  
Nothing neither way.

LAERTES  
Say you so? Come on.  [Play.]

OSRIC  
Have at you now!

Laertes wounds Hamlet. Then (in scuffling they change rapiers,) and Hamlet wounds Laertes.

KING  
Part them. They are incensed.

HAMLET  
Nay, come again.

The Queen falls.

OSRIC  
Look to the Queen there, ho!

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

OSRIC  
How is ’t, Laertes?

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.

HAMLET  
O villainy! Ho! Let the door be locked.

Treachery! Seek it out.
Hamlet

ACT 5. SC. 2

LAERTES
It is here, Hamlet. 〈Hamlet,〉 thou art slain. 345
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. 355

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.

KING
It is a poison tempered by himself. 360

LAERTES
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. 370

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.  \(\text{He picks up the cup.}\)

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.

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

Enter Osric.

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

HAMLET  O, I die, Horatio!
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’ occurrients, more and less,
Which have solicited—the rest is silence.

\(\text{O, O, O!}\)
\(\text{Dies.}\)

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

\(\text{March within.}\)

Why does the drum come hither?

Enter Fortinbras with the \(\text{English}\) Ambassadors \(\text{with Drum, Colors, and Attendants.}\)

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 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.)_