

HAMLET

by William Shakespeare

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	}	<i>courtiers at the Danish court</i>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	--------------------------------------

FRANCISCO BARNARDO MARCELLUS	}	<i>Danish soldiers</i>
------------------------------------	---	------------------------

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

ACT 1

Act 1 Scene 1

Enter Barnardo and Francisco, two sentinels.

BARNARDO Who's there?

FRANCISCO

Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

BARNARDO Long live the King!

FRANCISCO Barnardo.

BARNARDO He.

5

FRANCISCO

You come most carefully upon your hour.

BARNARDO

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

FRANCISCO

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

BARNARDO Have you had quiet guard?

10

FRANCISCO Not a mouse stirring.

BARNARDO Well, good night.

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

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

FRANCISCO

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

15

HORATIO Friends to this ground.

MARCELLUS And liegemen to the Dane.

FRANCISCO Give you good night.

MARCELLUS

O farewell, honest *<soldier.>* Who hath relieved
you? 20

FRANCISCO

Barnardo hath my place. Give you good night.
Francisco exits.

MARCELLUS Holla, Barnardo.

BARNARDO Say, what, is Horatio there?

HORATIO A piece of him.

BARNARDO

Welcome, Horatio.—Welcome, good Marcellus. 25

HORATIO

What, has this thing appeared again tonight?

BARNARDO I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS

Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy
And will not let belief take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us. 30
Therefore I have entreated him along
With us to watch the minutes of this night,
That, if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

HORATIO

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear. 35

BARNARDO Sit down awhile,

And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we have two nights seen.

HORATIO Well, sit we down, 40

And let us hear Barnardo speak of this.

BARNARDO Last night of all,

When yond same star that's westward from the pole
 Had made his course t' illumine that part of heaven
 Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself, 45
 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. 50

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 55
 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. 60

HORATIO

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

Ghost exits.

MARCELLUS 'Tis gone and will not answer.

BARNARDO

How now, Horatio, you tremble and look pale.
 Is not this something more than fantasy?
 What think you on 't? 65

HORATIO

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

MARCELLUS Is it not like the King?

HORATIO As thou art to thyself. 70

Such was the very armor he had on
When he the ambitious Norway combated.
So frowned he once when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
'Tis strange. 75

MARCELLUS

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

HORATIO

In what particular thought to work I know not,
But in the gross and scope of mine opinion
This bodes some strange eruption to our state. 80

MARCELLUS

Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon
And foreign mart for implements of war, 85
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? 90

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, 95
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 those his lands
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror. 100

Against the which a moiety competent
 Was gaged by our king, which had <returned>
 To the inheritance of Fortinbras
 Had he been vanquisher, as, by the same comart 105
 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 resolute 110
 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 compulsory, those foresaid lands 115
 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.

[BARNARDO

I think it be no other but e'en so. 120
 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.

HORATIO

A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
 In the most high and palmy state of Rome, 125
 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, 130
 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, 135

Have heaven and Earth together demonstrated
Unto our climates and countrymen.]

Enter Ghost.

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

It spreads his arms.

If thou hast any sound or use of voice, 140
Speak to me.

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

If thou art privy to thy country's fate, 145
Which happily foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak!

Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, <you> spirits oft walk in death, 150
Speak of it. *The cock crows.*

Stay and speak!—Stop it, Marcellus.

MARCELLUS

Shall I strike it with my partisan?

HORATIO Do, if it will not stand.

BARNARDO 'Tis here. 155

HORATIO 'Tis here.

<Ghost exits.>

MARCELLUS 'Tis gone.

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the show of violence,
For it is as the air, invulnerable, 160
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

BARNARDO

It was about to speak when the cock crew.

HORATIO

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.

MARCELLUS

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.

HORATIO

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?

MARCELLUS

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

They exit.

Act 1 Scene 2

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

KING

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
 The memory be green, and that it us befitted
 To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
 To be contracted in one brow of woe,
 Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature 5
 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, 10
 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 15
 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 20
 Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
 Colleague'd 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. 25
 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 30
 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, 35
 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. 40

CORNELIUS/VOLTEMAND

In that and all things will we show our duty.

KING

We doubt it nothing. Heartily farewell.

[*Voltemand and Cornelius exit.*]

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
 You told us of some suit. What is 't, Laertes?
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane
 And lose your voice. What wouldst thou beg, 45
 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. 50
 What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

LAERTES

My dread lord,

Your leave and favor to return to France,
 From whence though willingly I came to Denmark
 To show my duty in your coronation, 55
 Yet now I must confess, that duty done,
 My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France
 And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

KING

Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

POLONIUS

Hath, my lord, [wrung from me my slow leave
By laborsome petition, and at last
Upon his will I sealed my hard consent.]
I do beseech you give him leave to go. 60

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— 65

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. 70
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. 75

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, 80
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected havior of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, [shapes] of grief, 85
That can <denote> me truly. These indeed “seem,”
For they are actions that a man might play;

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. 125
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, 130
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 135
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 140
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 145
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!), 150
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, 155
 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, 160
 She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
 It is not, nor it cannot come to good.
 But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo.

HORATIO Hail to your Lordship. 165

HAMLET I am glad to see you well.
 Horatio—or I do forget myself!

HORATIO
 The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

HAMLET
 Sir, my good friend. I'll change that name with you.
 And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?— 170
 Marcellus?

MARCELLUS My good lord.

HAMLET
 I am very glad to see you. *(To Barnardo.)* Good
 even, sir.—
 But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg? 175

HORATIO
 A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAMLET
 I would not hear your enemy say so,
 Nor shall you do my ear that violence
 To make it truster of your own report
 Against yourself. I know you are no truant. 180
 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.

I think it was to ~~see~~ my mother's wedding. 185

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! 190

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, 195

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? 200

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! 205

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, 210
 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, 215
 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), 220
 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? 225

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, 230
 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 235
 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? 240

ALL Armed, my lord.

HAMLET From top to toe?

ALL My lord, from head to foot.

HAMLET Then saw you not his face?

HORATIO

 O, yes, my lord, he wore his beaver up. 245

HAMLET What, looked he frowningly?

HORATIO

 A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

HAMLET Pale or red?

HORATIO

 Nay, very pale.

HAMLET And fixed his eyes upon you? 250

HORATIO

 Most constantly.

HAMLET I would I had been there.

HORATIO It would have much amazed you.

HAMLET Very like. Stayed it long?

HORATIO

 While one with moderate haste might tell a 255
 hundred.

BARNARDO/MARCELLUS Longer, longer.

HORATIO

 Not when I saw 't.

HAMLET His beard was grizzled, no?

HORATIO

 It was as I have seen it in his life, 260
 A sable silvered.

HAMLET I will watch 't tonight.
 Perchance 'twill walk again.

HORATIO I warrant it will.

HAMLET

 If it assume my noble father's person, 265
 I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape
 And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
 If you have hitherto concealed this sight,

Let it be tenable in your silence still;
 And whatsoever else shall hap tonight, 270
 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 Our duty to your Honor. 275

HAMLET

Your loves, as mine to you. Farewell.
〔All but Hamlet〕 exit.
 My father's spirit—in arms! All is not well.
 I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come!
 Till then, sit still, my soul. *〔Foul〕* deeds will rise,
 Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's
 eyes. 280
He exits.

Act 1 Scene 3

Enter Laertes and Ophelia, his sister.

LAERTES

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

OPHELIA Do you doubt that? 5

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, 10
 No more.

OPHELIA No more but so?

LAERTES Think it no more.

For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
 In thews and ⟨bulk,⟩ but, as this temple waxes, 15
 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, 20
 ⟨For he himself is subject to his birth.⟩
 He may not, as unvalued persons do,
 Carve for himself, for on his choice depends
 The safety and 「the」 health of this whole state.
 And therefore must his choice be circumscribed 25
 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 30
 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 35
 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 40
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon.
 Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes.
 The canker galls the infants of the spring
 Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,
 And, in the morn and liquid dew of youth, 45
 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, 50
 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. 55

LAERTES 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.

POLONIUS

Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame! 60
 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, 65
 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 70
 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. 75
 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. 80
 Neither a borrower nor a lender *<be,>*
 For *<loan>* oft loses both itself and friend,

And borrowing ‹dulls the› edge of husbandry.
 This above all: to thine own self be true,
 And it must follow, as the night the day,
 Thou canst not then be false to any man.
 Farewell. My blessing season this in thee.

85

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.

90

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?

95

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.

100

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.

105

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?

110

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, 115
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— 120

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 125
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. 130
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, 135
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: 140
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth
Have you so slander any moment leisure

As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to 't, I charge you. Come your ways.

OPHELIA I shall obey, my lord. 145
They exit.

Act 1 Scene 4

Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.

HAMLET
The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HORATIO
It is 'a' nipping and an eager air.

HAMLET What hour now?

HORATIO I think it lacks of twelve.

MARCELLUS No, it is struck. 5

HORATIO
Indeed, I heard it not. It then draws near the season
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.
A flourish of trumpets and two pieces goes off.
What does this mean, my lord?

HAMLET
The King doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassail, and the swagg'ring upspring reels; 10
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettledrum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

HORATIO Is it a custom?

HAMLET Ay, marry, is 't, 15
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. 20
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. 25
 So oft it chanches 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 30
 (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, 35
 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 40
 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 45
 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! 50
 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 55

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 60
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
 Say, why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?
⟨Ghost⟩ beckons.

HORATIO

It beckons you to go away with it
 As if it some impartment did desire
 To you alone. 65

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. 70

HORATIO

Do not, my lord.

HAMLET Why, what should be the fear?

I do not set my life at a pin's fee.
 And for my soul, what can it do to that,
 Being a thing immortal as itself? 75
 It waves me forth again. I'll follow it.

HORATIO

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord?
 Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
 That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
 And there assume some other horrible form 80
 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 85
 And hears it roar beneath.]

HAMLET

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

MARCELLUS

You shall not go, my lord. *They hold back Hamlet.*

HAMLET

Hold off your hands.

HORATIO

Be ruled. You shall not go. 90

HAMLET

My fate cries out

And makes each petty arture in this body

As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.

Still am I called. Unhand me, gentlemen.

By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me! 95

I say, away!—Go on. I'll follow thee.

Ghost and Hamlet exit.

HORATIO

He waxes desperate with imagination.

MARCELLUS

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

HORATIO

Have after. To what issue will this come?

MARCELLUS

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark. 100

HORATIO

Heaven will direct it.

MARCELLUS Nay, let's follow him.

They exit.

Act 1 Scene 5

Enter Ghost and Hamlet.

HAMLET

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

GHOST

Mark me.

HAMLET I will.

GHOST My hour is almost come 5
When I to sulfurous 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. 10

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 15
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 20
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their
spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand an end, 25
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! 30

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 35

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, 40
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, 45
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— 50
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 55
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, 60
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So, *<lust,>* though to a radiant angel linked,
Will *<sate>* itself in a celestial bed
And prey on garbage.
But soft, methinks I scent the morning air. 65
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 70

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> 75
 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. 80
 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 85
 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. 90
 But, howsomever 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. 95
 The glowworm shows the matin to be near
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire.
 Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me. <He exits.>

HAMLET

O all you host of heaven! O Earth! What else?
 And shall I couple hell? O fie! Hold, hold, my heart, 100
 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 105

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, 110
 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. 115
 At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark.

[He writes.]

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

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

HORATIO My lord, my lord! 120
 MARCELLUS Lord Hamlet.
 HORATIO Heavens secure him!
 HAMLET So be it.
 MARCELLUS Illo, ho, ho, my lord!
 HAMLET Hillo, ho, ho, boy! Come, *(bird,)* come! 125
 MARCELLUS
 How is ’t, my noble lord?
 HORATIO What news, my lord?
 HAMLET O, wonderful!
 HORATIO
 Good my lord, tell it.
 HAMLET No, you will reveal it. 130
 HORATIO
 Not I, my lord, by heaven.
 MARCELLUS Nor I, my lord.
 HAMLET
 How say you, then? Would heart of man once think
 it?
 But you’ll be secret? 135

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. 140

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, 145
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. 150

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. 155
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. 160

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. 165

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? 170
Come on, you hear this fellow in the cellarage.
Consent to swear.

HORATIO Propose the oath, my lord.

HAMLET

Never to speak of this that you have seen,
Swear by my sword. 175

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 180
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. 185

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 190
(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, 195

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

200

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,

205

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

210

That ever I was born to set it right!

Nay, come, let’s go together.

They exit.

ACT 2

Act 2 Scene 1*Enter old Polonius with his man (Reynaldo.)*

POLONIUS

Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

REYNALDO I will, my lord.

POLONIUS

You shall do marvelous wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquire
Of his behavior. 5

REYNALDO My lord, I did intend it.

POLONIUS

Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir,
Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris;
And how, and who, what means, and where they
keep, 10

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, 15
As thus: "I know his father and his friends
And, in part, him." Do you mark this, Reynaldo?

REYNALDO Ay, very well, my lord.

POLONIUS

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

REYNALDO Very good, my lord. 55

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.”}

60

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,

65

There was he gaming, there {o’ertook} in ’s rouse,
There falling out at tennis”; or perchance
“I saw him enter such a house of sale”—
Videlicet, a brothel—or so forth. See you now
Your bait of falsehood take this carp of truth;

70

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?

75

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. 80

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! 85

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, 90
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? 95

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, 100
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, 105
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, 110
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 115

So much from th' understanding of himself
I cannot dream of. I entreat you both 10
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 15
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
So much as from occasion you may glean,
[Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus]
That, opened, lies within our remedy.

QUEEN

Good gentlemen, he hath much talked of you,
And sure I am two men there is not living 20
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 25
As fits a king's remembrance.

ROSENCRANTZ Both your Majesties

Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty. 30

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

KING

Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern. 35

QUEEN

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

GUILDENSTERN

Heavens make our presence and our practices 40
Pleasant and helpful to him!

QUEEN

Ay, amen!

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit
「with some Attendants.」

Enter Polonius.

POLONIUS

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

KING

Thou still hast been the father of good news. 45

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 50
 As it hath used to do, that I have found
 The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

KING

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

POLONIUS

Give first admittance to th' ambassadors.
 My news shall be the fruit to that great feast. 55

KING

Thyself do grace to them and bring them in.
「Polonius exits.」

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

QUEEN

I doubt it is no other but the main—
 His father's death and our ⟨o'erhasty⟩ marriage. 60

KING

Well, we shall sift him.

Enter Ambassadors ⟨Voltemand and Cornelius «with»
Polonius.⟩

Welcome, my good friends.
Say, Voltemand, what from our brother Norway?

VOLTEMAND

Most fair return of greetings and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress 65
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 70
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. 75
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, 80
With an entreaty, herein further shown,

He gives a paper.

That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprise,
On such regards of safety and allowance
As therein are set down. 85

KING

It likes us well,

And, at our more considered time, we'll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.
Meantime, we thank you for your well-took labor.
Go to your rest. At night we'll feast together. 90
Most welcome home!

Voltemand and Cornelius exit.

POLONIUS

This business is well ended.

My liege, and madam, to expostulate
What majesty should be, what duty is,

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

QUEEN More matter with less art.

POLONIUS

Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
 That he’s mad, ’tis true; ’tis true ’tis pity,
 And pity ’tis ’tis true—a foolish figure,
 But farewell it, for I will use no art.
 Mad let us grant him then, and now remains
 That we find out the cause of this effect,
 Or, rather say, the cause of this defect,
 For this effect defective comes by cause.
 Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
 Perpend.
 I have a daughter (have while she is mine)
 Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
 Hath given me this. Now gather and surmise.
*(He reads.) To the celestial, and my soul’s idol, the
 most beautified Ophelia—*
 That’s an ill phrase, a vile phrase; “beautified” is a
 vile phrase. But you shall hear. Thus: *(He reads.)*
In her excellent white bosom, these, etc.—

QUEEN Came this from Hamlet to her?

POLONIUS

Good madam, stay awhile. I will be faithful.
(He reads the letter.)
Doubt thou the stars are fire,
Doubt that the sun doth move,
Doubt truth to be a liar,
But never doubt I love.

*O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers. I have not
art to reckon my groans, but that I love thee best, O
most best, believe it. Adieu.* 130

*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, 135
All given to mine ear.

KING But how hath she received his love?

POLONIUS What do you think of me?

KING

As of a man faithful and honorable.

POLONIUS

I would fain prove so. But what might you think, 140
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 145

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. 150
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), 155
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. 160

KING, *['to Queen']* 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," 165
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. 170

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. 175

POLONIUS

At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him.
[To the King.] Be you and I behind an arras then.
Mark the encounter. If he love her not,
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state, 180
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. 185
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. 190
- POLONIUS Not I, my lord.
- HAMLET Then I would you were so honest a man.
- POLONIUS Honest, my lord?
- HAMLET Ay, sir. To be honest, as this world goes, is to
be one man picked out of ten thousand. 195
- POLONIUS That's very true, my lord.
- HAMLET For if the sun breed maggots in a dead
dog, being a good kissing carrion—Have you a
daughter?
- POLONIUS I have, my lord. 200
- HAMLET Let her not walk i' th' sun. Conception is a
blessing, but, as your daughter may conceive,
friend, look to 't.
- POLONIUS, *aside* How say you by that? Still harping on
my daughter. Yet he knew me not at first; he said I
was a fishmonger. He is far gone. And truly, in my
youth, I suffered much extremity for love, very near
this. I'll speak to him again.—What do you read, my
lord? 205
- HAMLET Words, words, words. 210
- POLONIUS What is the matter, my lord?
- HAMLET Between who?
- POLONIUS I mean the matter that you read, my lord.
- HAMLET Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here
that old men have gray beards, that their faces are
wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and
plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of
wit, together with most weak hams; all which, sir,
though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I
hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for
yourself, sir, shall grow old as I am, if, like a crab,
you could go backward. 215
220
- 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?	225
POLONIUS	Indeed, that's out of the air. <i>Aside.</i> How pregnant sometimes his replies are! A happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and <i>sanity</i> could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him <i>and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him</i> and my daughter.—My lord, I will take my leave of you.	230
HAMLET	You cannot, <i>sir</i> , take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal—except my life, except my life, except my life.	235
POLONIUS	Fare you well, my lord.	
HAMLET,	<i>aside</i> These tedious old fools. <i>Enter Guildenstern and Rosencrantz.</i>	
POLONIUS	You go to seek the Lord Hamlet. There he is.	
ROSENCRANTZ,	<i>to Polonius</i> God save you, sir. <i>Polonius exits.</i>	
GUILDENSTERN	My honored lord.	240
ROSENCRANTZ	My most dear lord.	
HAMLET	My <i>excellent</i> good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do you both?	
ROSENCRANTZ	As the indifferent children of the earth.	245
GUILDENSTERN	Happy in that we are not <i>overhappy</i> . On Fortune's <i>cap</i> , 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?	250
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 <i>that</i> the world's grown honest.	255

- 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
- GUILDENSTERN Prison, my lord?
- HAMLET Denmark's a prison.
- ROSENCRANTZ Then is the world one.
- HAMLET A goodly one, in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o' th' worst. 265
- ROSENCRANTZ We think not so, my lord.
- HAMLET Why, then, 'tis none to you, for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. To me, it is a prison. 270
- ROSENCRANTZ Why, then, your ambition makes it one. 'Tis too narrow for your mind.
- HAMLET O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams. 275
- GUILDENSTERN Which dreams, indeed, are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.
- HAMLET A dream itself is but a shadow.
- ROSENCRANTZ Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow. 280
- HAMLET Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to th' court? For, by my fay, I cannot reason. 285
- ROSENCRANTZ/GUILDENSTERN We'll wait upon you.
- HAMLET No such matter. I will not sort you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended.) But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore? 290
- 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? 295
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 300
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? 305
- 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 310
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. 315
- 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 320
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 majestic roof, fretted
with golden fire—why, it appeareth nothing to me 325
but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors.
What *a* piece of work is a man, how noble in
reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving

how express and admirable; in action how like
 an angel, in apprehension how like a god: the
 beauty of the world, the paragon of animals—and
 yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man
 delights not me, {no,} nor women neither, though by
 your smiling you seem to say so. 330

ROSENCRANTZ My lord, there was no such stuff in my
 thoughts. 335

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

ROSENCRANTZ To think, my lord, if you delight not in
 man, what Lenten entertainment the players shall
 receive from you. We coted them on the way, and
 hither are they coming to offer you service. 340

HAMLET He that plays the king shall be welcome—his
 Majesty shall have tribute on me. The adventurous
 knight shall use his foil and target, the lover shall
 not sigh gratis, the humorous man shall end his
 part in peace, {the clown shall make those laugh
 whose lungs are {tickle} o’ th’ sear,} and the lady
 shall say her mind freely, or the {blank} verse shall
 halt for ’t. What players are they? 345

ROSENCRANTZ Even those you were wont to take such
 delight in, the tragedians of the city. 350

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. 355

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? 360

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. 365
- HAMLET What, are they children? Who maintains 'em? How are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players (as it is 'most like,' if their means are no better), their writers do them wrong to make them exclaim against their own succession? 370
- 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. 375
- HAMLET Is 't possible? 380
- 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. 385
- 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. 390
- 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. 395
400

GUILDENSTERN In what, my dear lord?

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

Enter Polonius.

POLONIUS Well be with you, gentlemen.

HAMLET Hark you, Guildenstern, and you too—at 405
each ear a hearer! That great baby you see there is
not yet out of his swaddling clouts.

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

HAMLET I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the 410
players; mark it.—You say right, sir, a Monday
morning, 'twas then indeed.

POLONIUS My lord, I have news to tell you.

HAMLET My lord, I have news to tell you: when Roscius 415
was an actor in Rome—

POLONIUS The actors are come hither, my lord.

HAMLET Buzz, buzz.

POLONIUS Upon my honor—

HAMLET Then came each actor on his ass.

POLONIUS The best actors in the world, either for 420
tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical,
historical-pastoral, <tragic-historical,
tragic-comical-historical-pastoral,> scene individable, or
poem unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor
Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, 425
these are the only men.

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

POLONIUS What a treasure had he, my lord?

HAMLET Why, 430
*One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he lovèd passing well.*

POLONIUS, *[aside]* Still on my daughter.

HAMLET Am I not i' th' right, old Jephthah?

POLONIUS If you call me “Jephthah,” my lord: I have a daughter that I love passing well. 435

HAMLET Nay, that follows not.

POLONIUS What follows then, my lord?

HAMLET Why,

As by lot, God wot 440

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 445

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 450

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. 455

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 460

465

method, [as wholesome as sweet and, by very much,
 more handsome than fine.] One speech in 't I 470
 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— 475
 'tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus:
*The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
 Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
 When he lay couchèd in th' ominous horse,
 Hath now this dread and black complexion smeared* 480
*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* 485
*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. 490

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,* 495
*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* 500
*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 505
〈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, 510
The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder

Doth rend the region; so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
Arouse'd vengeance sets him new a-work,
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armor, forged for proof eterne, 515
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.

Out, out, thou strumpet Fortune! All you gods
In general synod take away her power,
Break all the spokes and fellyes¹ from her wheel, 520
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 525
 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. 〈“Moblèd¹ queen” is good.〉

〈FIRST〉 PLAYER
Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames 530
With 〈bisson rheum,〉 a clout upon that head
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,

About her lank and all o'erteemèd loins
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up—
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steeped, 535
'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. 540

POLONIUS Look whe'er he has not turned his color and
 has tears in 's eyes. Prithee, no more. 545

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. 550

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. 555

POLONIUS Come, sirs. 560

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. 565

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. 570

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

ROSENCRANTZ Good my lord.

HAMLET

Ay, so, good-bye to you. 575

〔Rosencrantz and Guildenstern〕 exit.

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit 580

That from her working all *his* visage waned,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit—and all for nothing!
For Hecuba! 585

What's Hecuba to him, or he to *Hecuba*,
That he should weep for her? What would he do
Had he the motive and *the cue* for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech, 590

Make mad the guilty and appall the free,
Confound the ignorant and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause, 595

And can say nothing—no, not for a king
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damned defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me “villain”? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face? 600

Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' th' throat
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha! 'Swounds, I should take it! For it cannot be
But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this 605

I should *have* fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless
villain!

〈O vengeance!〉 610
 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, 615
 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 620
 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; 625
 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, 630
 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.

ACT 3

Act 3 Scene 1

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

KING

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

ROSENCRANTZ

He does confess he feels himself distracted, 5
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. 10

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. 15

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, 20
 And, as I think, they have already order
 This night to play before him.

POLONIUS ' Tis most true,
 And he beseeched me to entreat your Majesties
 To hear and see the matter. 25

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

ROSENCRANTZ
 We shall, my lord. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* 30
and Lords exit.

KING Sweet Gertrude, leave us <too,>
 For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
 That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
 Affront Ophelia.
 Her father and myself, <lawful espials,> 35
 <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. 40

QUEEN I shall obey you.
 And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
 That your good beauties be the happy cause
 Of Hamlet's wildness. So shall I hope your virtues
 Will bring him to his wonted way again, 45
 To both your honors.

OPHELIA Madam, I wish it may.
Queen exits.

POLONIUS
 Ophelia, walk you here.—Gracious, so please you,

We will bestow ourselves. *['To Ophelia.]* Read on this
 book, 50
 That show of such an exercise may color
 Your *⟨loneliness.⟩*—We are oft to blame in this
 ('Tis too much proved), that with devotion's visage
 And pious action we do sugar o'er
 The devil himself. 55

KING, *['aside]* O, 'tis too true!
 How smart a lash that speech doth give my
 conscience.
 The harlot's cheek beautied with plast'ring art
 Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it 60
 Than is my deed to my most painted word.
 O heavy burden!

POLONIUS

I hear him coming. *⟨Let's⟩* withdraw, my lord.
['They withdraw.]

Enter Hamlet.

HAMLET

To be or not to be—that is the question:
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer 65
 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 70
 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, 75
 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,

- HAMLET Ha, ha, are you honest?
- OPHELIA My lord?
- HAMLET Are you fair? 115
- OPHELIA What means your Lordship?
- HAMLET That if you be honest and fair, ⟨your honesty⟩
should admit no discourse to your beauty.
- OPHELIA Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce
than with honesty? 120
- 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. 125
- 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. 130
- 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 135
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. 140
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! 145
- HAMLET If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague
for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as
snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a

nunnery, farewell. Or if thou wilt needs marry,
marry a fool, for wise men know well enough what
monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and
quickly too. Farewell. 150

OPHELIA Heavenly powers, restore him!

HAMLET I have heard of your paintings ⟨too,⟩ well
enough. God hath given you one face, and you
make yourselves another. You jig and amble, and
you ⟨lisp;⟩ you nickname God's creatures and make
your wantonness ⟨your⟩ ignorance. Go to, I'll no
more on 't. It hath made me mad. I say we will have
no more marriage. Those that are married already,
all but one, shall live. The rest shall keep as they are. 155
To a nunnery, go. *He exits.* 160

OPHELIA

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue,
sword, 165
⟨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, 170
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! 175

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 180
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, 185
 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 190
 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 195
 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 200
 Your wisdom best shall think.

KING

It shall be so.

Madness in great ones must not *unwatched* go.
They exit.

Act 3 Scene 2*Enter Hamlet and three of the Players.*

HAMLET Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced
 it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth
 it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the
 town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air
 too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; 5
 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. 45
 That's villainous and shows a most pitiful ambition
 in the fool that uses it. Go make you ready.
⟨Players exit.⟩

Enter Polonius, Guildenstern, and Rosencrantz.

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

POLONIUS And the Queen too, and that presently. 50

HAMLET Bid the players make haste. *⟨Polonius exits.⟩*
 Will you two help to hasten them?

ROSENCRANTZ Ay, my lord. *They exit.*

HAMLET What ho, Horatio!

Enter Horatio.

HORATIO Here, sweet lord, at your service. 55

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

HORATIO
 O, my dear lord—

⟨HAMLET⟩ Nay, do not think I flatter,
 For what advancement may I hope from thee 60
 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 65
 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 70
 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

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. 110

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. 115

HAMLET No, good mother. Here's metal more attractive. *〔Hamlet takes a place near Ophelia.〕*

POLONIUS, *〔to the King〕* Oh, ho! Do you mark that?

HAMLET Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

OPHELIA No, my lord. 120

〔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. 125

OPHELIA What is, my lord?

HAMLET Nothing.

OPHELIA You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET Who, I? 130

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. 135

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, 140

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. 160

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. 165

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.}* 170

HAMLET Is this a prologue or the posy of a ring?

OPHELIA 'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET As woman's love. 175

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.* 180

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.]* 185
190.

PLAYER KING

*Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too.
My operant powers their functions leave to do.
And thou shall live in this fair world behind,
Honored, beloved; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou—* 195

PLAYER QUEEN *O, confound the rest!* 200
*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 205
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. 210
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 215
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. 220
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 225
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, 230
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; 235
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,* 240

*[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.* 245

HAMLET If she should break it now!

PLAYER KING

*’Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile.
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep.* *{Sleeps.}* 250

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. 255

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? 260

HAMLET “The Mousetrap.” Marry, how? Tropically.
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. 265

Enter Lucianus.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

OPHELIA You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

- HAMLET I could interpret between you and your love,
if I could see the puppets dallying. 270
- 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. 275
- 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 280
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 285
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. 290
〔Claudius rises.〕
- OPHELIA The King rises.
- 〈HAMLET What, frighted with false fire?〉
- QUEEN How fares my lord?
- POLONIUS Give o'er the play.
- KING Give me some light. Away! 295
- POLONIUS Lights, lights, lights!
All but Hamlet and Horatio exit.
- HAMLET
Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungallèd play.
For some must watch, while some must sleep:
Thus runs the world away. 300

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. 305

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.* 310

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? 315

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.* 320
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— 325

HAMLET Ay, sir, what of him?

GUILDENSTERN Is in his retirement marvelous distempered.

HAMLET With drink, sir?

GUILDENSTERN No, my lord, with choler. 330

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 <i><start></i> not so wildly from my affair.	335
HAMLET	I am tame, sir. Pronounce.	
GUILDENSTERN	The Queen your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.	340
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 <i><my></i> business.	345
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—	350
ROSENCRANTZ	Then thus she says: your behavior hath struck her into amazement and admiration.	355
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.	360
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.	365
HAMLET	Sir, I lack advancement.	
ROSENCRANTZ	How can that be, when you have the voice of the King himself for your succession in Denmark?	370

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? 375

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? 380

GUILDENSTERN My lord, I cannot.

HAMLET I pray you.

GUILDENSTERN Believe me, I cannot.

HAMLET I do beseech you. 385

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. 390

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. 395
400

Enter Polonius.

God bless you, sir.

Act 3 Scene 3*Enter King, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.*

KING

I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
 To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you.
 I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
 And he to England shall along with you.
 The terms of our estate may not endure 5
 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 10
 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 15
 That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests
 The lives of many. The cress 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 20
 Are mortised and adjoined, which, when it falls,
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,
 Attends the boist'rous <ruin.> Never alone
 Did the king sigh, but <with> a general groan.

KING

Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage, 25
 For we will fetters put about this fear,
 Which now goes too free-footed.

ROSENCRANTZ

We will haste us.

*[Rosencrantz and Guildenstern] exit.**Enter Polonius.*

POLONIUS

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

KING

Thanks, dear my lord.

[Polonius] exits.

O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven; 40
 It hath the primal eldest curse upon 't,
 A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
 Though inclination be as sharp as will.
 My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
 And, like a man to double business bound, 45
 I stand in pause where I shall first begin
 And both neglect. What if this cursèd hand
 Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?
 Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
 To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy 50
 But to confront the visage of offense?
 And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
 To be forestallèd ere we come to fall,
 Or *<pardoned>* being down? Then I'll look up.
 My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer 55
 Can serve my turn? "Forgive me my foul murder"?
 That cannot be, since I am still possessed
 Of those effects for which I did the murder:
 My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
 May one be pardoned and retain th' offense? 60
 In the corrupted currents of this world,
 Offense's gilded hand may *<shove>* by justice,

And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
 Buys out the law. But 'tis not so above:
 There is no shuffling; there the action lies 65
 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? 70
 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. 75
 All may be well. *[He kneels.]*

Enter Hamlet.

HAMLET

Now might I do it *[pat,]* now he is a-praying,
 And now I'll do 't. *[He draws his sword.]*
 And so he goes to heaven,
 And so am I *[revenged.]* That would be scanned: 80
 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, 85
 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, 90
 When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?
 No.
 Up sword, and know thou a more horrid hent.
[He sheathes his sword.]
 When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,

Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed,
 At game, a-swearing, 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. 95
 This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. 100

«Hamlet» exits.

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

He exits.

Act 3 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 5
 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. 10

«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. 15

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, 20
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. 25

QUEEN

What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?

Help, ho!

POLONIUS, *behind the arras* What ho! Help!

HAMLET

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

*He kills Polonius by thrusting a rapier
through the arras.*

POLONIUS, *behind the arras*

O, I am slain! 30

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. 35

QUEEN

As kill a king?

HAMLET	Ay, lady, it was my word.	
	<i>「He pulls Polonius' body from behind the arras.」</i>	
	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.	40
	<i>「To Queen.」</i> 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	45
	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,	50
	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	55
	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.	60
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,	65
	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 <i>⟨heaven⟩</i> -kissing hill,	

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, 110
 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— 115

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? 120

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! 125

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. 130
 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' incorporal air do hold discourse? 135
 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 140
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, 145
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? 150

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! 155
Look where he goes even now out at the portal!
Ghost exits.

QUEEN

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

HAMLET *⟨Ecstasy?⟩* 160

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, 165
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,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven, 170

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 pury times,
 Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
 Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good. 175

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. 180

[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 185

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 190

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. 195

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. 200
 [One word more, good lady.]

QUEEN

What shall I do?

HAMLET

Not this by no means that I bid you do:
 Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed,
 Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse, 205
 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, 210
 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, 215
 Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape,
 To try conclusions, in the basket creep
 And break your own neck down.

QUEEN

Be thou assured, if words be made of breathe 220
 And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
 What thou hast said to me.

HAMLET

I must to England, you know that.

QUEEN

Alack,

I had forgot! 'Tis so concluded on.

HAMLET

[There's letters sealed; and my two schoolfellows, 225
 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 engineer
 Hoist with his own petard; and 't shall go hard 230
 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. 235
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. 240
 [They] exit, (Hamlet tugging in Polonius.)

ACT 4

Act 4 Scene 1

*Enter King and Queen, with Rosencrantz and
Guildenstern.*

KING

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

QUEEN

[Bestow this place on us a little while.]
[*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit.*]
Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen tonight!

5

KING What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

QUEEN

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

10

KING

O heavy deed!

It had been so with us, had we been there.
His liberty is full of threats to all—
To you yourself, to us, to everyone.
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answered?
It will be laid to us, whose providence

15

Should have kept short, restrained, and out of haunt
 This mad young man. But so much was our love, 20
 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, 25
 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 30
 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, 35
 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 40
 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! 45
 My soul is full of discord and dismay.

They exit.

Act 4 Scene 2
 〈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? 5

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? 10

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, 15
 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 20
 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 25
 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—

GUILDENSTERN A “thing,” my lord?

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

30

They exit.

Act 4 Scene 3

Enter King and two or three.

KING

I have sent to seek him and to find the body.
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!
Yet must not we put the strong law on him.
He’s loved of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes; 5
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 10
Or not at all.

Enter Rosencrantz.

How now, what hath befallen?

ROSENCRANTZ

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

KING But where is he? 15

ROSENCRANTZ

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

KING

Bring him before us.

ROSENCRANTZ

Ho! Bring in the lord.

They enter [with Hamlet.]

KING Now, Hamlet, where’s Polonius?

HAMLET At supper. 20

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. 25

[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.] 30

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. 35

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. 40

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 45

[With fiery quickness.] Therefore prepare thyself. The bark is ready, and the wind at help, Th' associates tend, and everything is bent For England. 50

HAMLET For England?

KING Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET Good.

KING

So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes. 55

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, 60
 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 65
 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 70
 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, 75
 And thou must cure me. Till I know 'tis done,
 Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin.

He exits.

Act 4 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. 5

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? 10

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. 15

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; 20
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. 25

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. 30

CAPTAIN God be wi' you, sir. *「He exits.」*

ROSENCRANTZ Will 't please you go, my lord?

HAMLET

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

[All but Hamlet exit.]

How all occasions do inform against me
And spur my dull revenge. What is a man 35
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 40
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 45
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, 50
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, 55
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, 60
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 65
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.]

Act 4 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 5
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 10
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 15
thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

HORATIO

'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may
strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds. 20

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. 25

⟨*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 30
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; 35
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.*

Oh, ho!

QUEEN Nay, but Ophelia—

OPHELIA Pray you, mark. 40

*〔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. 45*

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. 50

OPHELIA Pray let's have no words of this, but when
they ask you what it means, say you this:

「Sings.」 *Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day,
 All in the morning betime,
 And I a maid at your window,
 To be your Valentine. 55*
*Then up he rose and donned his clothes
 And dupp'd the chamber door,
 Let in the maid, that out a maid
 Never departed more. 60*

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. 65*
*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." 70*

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 75
 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 80
 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 85
 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 90
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, 95
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 100
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! 105
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 110
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, 115
⟨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! 120

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. 125

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 130
bastard,
Cries "cuckold" to my father, brands the harlot
Even here between the chaste unsmirched brow
Of my true mother.

KING What is the cause, Laertes, 135

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, 140
Why thou art thus incensed.—Let him go,
Gertrude.—
Speak, man.

LAERTES Where is my father?

KING Dead. 145

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 profoundest pit! 150
 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? 155

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 160
 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? 165

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 170
 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. 175

A 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 180
 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, 185
 It sends some precious instance of itself
 After the thing it loves.)
- OPHELIA *sings*
They bore him barefaced on the bier,
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny,
And in his grave rained many a tear. 190
 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 195
 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, 200
 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 205
 may call it herb of grace o' Sundays. You *must* wear
 your rue with a difference. There's a daisy. I would
 give you some violets, but they withered all when
 my father died. They say he made a good end.
Sings. *For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.* 210
- LAERTES
 Thought and afflictions, passion, hell itself
 She turns to favor and to prettiness.

OPHELIA	<i>[sings]</i> 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.	215
	<i>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.</i>	220
	And of all Christians' souls, [I pray God.] God be wi' you. <i>[She exits.]</i>	
LAERTES	Do you [see] this, O God?	225
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	230
	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.	235
LAERTES	Let this be so. His means of death, his obscure funeral (No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones, No noble rite nor formal ostentation)	240
	Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth, That I must call 't in question.	
KING	So you shall, And where th' offense is, let the great ax fall. I pray you, go with me.	245
	<i>They exit.</i>	

Act 4 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. 5

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.〕* 10

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.* 15

〈He〉 that thou knowest thine, 30
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.

Act 4 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. 5

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. 10

KING O, for two special reasons,
 Which may to you perhaps seem much unswayed,
 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), 15
 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, 20
 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, 25
 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. 30

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. 35
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?⟩

MESENTER Letters, my lord, from
Hamlet.⟩ 40
These to your Majesty, this to the Queen.

KING From Hamlet? Who brought them?

MESENTER

Sailors, my lord, they say. I saw them not.
They were given me by Claudio. He received them
[Of him that brought them.] 45

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.⟩* 50

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?
Or is it some abuse and no such thing? 55

LAERTES Know you the hand?

KING 'Tis Hamlet's character. "Naked"—
And in a postscript here, he says "alone."
Can you ⟨advise⟩ me?

LAERTES

I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come. 60
 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?), 65
 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 70
 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 75
 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 80
 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. 85

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 90
 Than settled age his sables and his weeds,
 Importing health and graveness.] Two months since

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 130

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”

135

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?

140

LAERTES

To cut his throat i’ th’ church.

KING

No place indeed should murder sanctuarize; 145
 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 150
 The Frenchman gave you; bring you, in fine,
 together

And wager ⟨on⟩ your heads. He, being remiss,
 Most generous, and free from all contriving,
 Will not peruse the foils, so that with ease, 155
 Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
 A sword unbated, and in a ⟨pass⟩ of practice
 Requite him for your father.

Act 5

Act 5 Scene 1

Enter [Gravedigger and Another.]

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

OTHER I tell thee she is. Therefore make her grave
straight. The crowner hath sat on her and finds it
Christian burial. 5

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

OTHER Why, 'tis found so.

[GRAVEDIGGER] 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. 10

OTHER Nay, but hear you, goodman delver—

[GRAVEDIGGER] Give me leave. Here lies the water;
good. Here stands the man; good. If the man go to
this water and drown himself, it is (will he, nill he)
he goes; mark you that. But if the water come to him
and drown him, he drowns not himself. *Argal*, he
that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his
own life. 15
20

OTHER But is this law?

[GRAVEDIGGER] 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. 25
- 「GRAVEDIGGER」 Why, there thou sayst. And the more
pity that great folk should have count'nance in this
world to drown or hang themselves more than
their even-Christian. Come, my spade. There is no
ancient gentlemen but gard'ners, ditchers, and 30
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. 35
- 「GRAVEDIGGER」 What, art a heathen? How dost thou
understand the scripture? The scripture says Adam
dugged. Could he dig without arms?」 I'll put another
question to thee. If thou answerest me not to the
purpose, confess thyself— 40
- OTHER Go to!
- 「GRAVEDIGGER」 What is he that builds stronger than
either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?
- OTHER The gallows-maker; for that 「frame」 outlives a
thousand tenants. 45
- 「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. 50
- 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. 55
- 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. 60

*「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 behove,
O, methought there—a—was nothing—a—meet.* 65

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. 70

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.* 75
「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? 80

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? 85

HORATIO Ay, my lord.

HAMLET Why, e'en so. And now my Lady Worm's, 90
 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. 95

「GRAVEDIGGER」 *sings*
A pickax and a spade, a spade,
For and a shrouding sheet,
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.
 「He digs up more skulls.」

HAMLET There's another. Why may not that be the 100
 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 105
 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 110
 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. 115

HAMLET Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

HORATIO Ay, my lord, and of calves' skins too.

HAMLET They are sheep and calves which seek out
 assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow.—
 Whose grave's this, sirrah? 120

「GRAVEDIGGER」 Mine, sir.
 「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.	125
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.	130
「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?	135
「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?	140 145
「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?	150
「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.	155
HAMLET	Why?	
「GRAVEDIGGER」	'Twill not be seen in him there. There the men are as mad as he.	160

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. 200

HORATIO What's that, my lord?

HAMLET Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' th' earth? 205

HORATIO E'en so.

HAMLET And smelt so? Pah! *He puts the skull down.*

HORATIO E'en so, my lord.

HAMLET To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bunghole? 210

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. 215
O, that that earth which kept the world in awe Should patch a wall t' expel the *winter's* flaw! 220

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. 225
Couch we awhile and mark. *They step aside.*

LAERTES What ceremony else? 230

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, 235
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, 240
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 245
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, 250
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; 255
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 cursèd head
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense 260
Deprived thee of!—Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.
{Leaps in the grave.}

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made
T' o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus. 265

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, 270
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, 275
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! 280

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 285
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. 290
Woo't weep, woo't fight, woo't fast, woo't tear
thysel,
Woo't drink up eisel, eat a crocodile?

Act 5 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 5
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 10
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, 15
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 20
(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, 25
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. 30
Handing him a paper.

But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

HORATIO I beseech you.

HAMLET

Being thus benetted round with ¹villainies,
 Or I could make a prologue to my brains,
 They had begun the play. I sat me down, 35
 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 40
 Th' effect of what I wrote?

HORATIO Ay, good my lord.

HAMLET

An earnest conjuration from the King,
 As England was his faithful tributary,
 As love between them like the palm might flourish, 45
 As peace should still her wheaten garland wear
 And stand a comma 'tween their amities,
 And many suchlike ¹ases of great charge,
 That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
 Without debatement further, more or less, 50
 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, 55
 Which was the model of that Danish seal;
 Folded the writ up in the form of th' other,
¹Subscribed it, gave 't th' impression, placed it
 safely,
 The changeling never known. Now, the next day 60
 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. 65
 'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
 Between the pass and fell incensèd points
 Of mighty opposites.

HORATIO Why, what a king is this! 70

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 75
 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? 80

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, 85
 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. 90

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? 95
- 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. 100
- 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. 105
- 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. 110
- 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— 115
- 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.
*[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.* 120
- 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 125

verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article, and his infusion of such dearth and rareness as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.	130
OSRIC Your Lordship speaks most infallibly of him.	
HAMLET The concernancy, sir? Why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?	135
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?	140
OSRIC Of Laertes?	
HORATIO His purse is empty already; all 's golden words are spent.	
HAMLET Of him, sir.	145
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—	150
[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.]	155
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	160

- responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and
of very liberal conceit. 165
- 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. 170
- 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— 175
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 180
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. 185
- 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 190
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. 195
- 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. 200

HAMLET He did <comply,> sir, with his dug before he sucked it. Thus has he (and many more of the same breed that I know the drossy age dotes on) only got the tune of the time, and, out of an habit of encounter, a kind of <yeasty> collection, which carries them through and through the most 「fanned」 and <winnowed> opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out. 205

〔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. 210

HAMLET I am constant to my purposes. They follow the King's pleasure. If his fitness speaks, mine is ready now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now. 215

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. 220

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. 225

HORATIO Nay, good my lord—

HAMLET It is but foolery, but it is such a kind of <gaingiving> as would perhaps trouble a woman. 230

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 235

now; if it be not now, yet it *<will>* come. The
readiness is all. Since no man of aught he leaves
knows, what is 't to leave betimes? Let be.

*A table prepared. <Enter> Trumpets, Drums, and Officers
with cushions, King, Queen, [Osric,] and all the state,
foils, daggers, <flagons of wine,> and Laertes.*

KING

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

[He puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's.]

HAMLET, *[to Laertes]*

Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong; 240
But pardon '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 245
That might your nature, honor, and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

Was 't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet.
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes, 250
Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it.

Who does it, then? His madness. If 't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
<Sir, in this audience>

Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil 255
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, 260
Whose motive in this case should stir me most

To my revenge; but in my terms of honor
I stand aloof and will no reconciliation
Till by some elder masters of known honor
I have a voice and precedent of peace
To *<keep>* my name ungor'd. But *<till>* that time 265

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. 295
 And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

Trumpets the while.

HAMLET Come on, sir.

LAERTES Come, my lord. *⟨They play.⟩* 300

HAMLET One.

LAERTES No.

HAMLET Judgment!

OSRIC A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAERTES Well, again. 305

KING

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

⟨He drinks and then drops the pearl in the cup.⟩

Drum, trumpets, and shot.

Give him the cup.

HAMLET

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

Come. *⟨They play.⟩* Another hit. What say you? 310

LAERTES

⟨A touch, a touch.⟩ I do confess ’t.

KING

Our son shall win.

QUEEN He’s fat and scant of breath.—

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin; rub thy brows.

The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet. 315

⟨She lifts the cup.⟩

HAMLET Good madam.

KING Gertrude, do not drink.

QUEEN

I will, my lord; I pray you pardon me. *⟨She drinks.⟩*

KING , *⟨aside⟩*

It is the poisoned cup. It is too late.

HAMLET

I dare not drink yet, madam—by and by. 320

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. 325

I pray you pass with your best violence.

I am *afear'd* you make a wanton of me.

LAERTES Say you so? Come on. *Play.*

OSRIC Nothing neither way.

LAERTES Have at you now! 330

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? 335

LAERTES

Why as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric.

He falls.

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! 340

The drink, the drink! I am poisoned. *She dies.*

HAMLET

O villainy! Ho! Let the door be locked. *Osric exits.*

Treachery! Seek it out.

LAERTES

It is here, Hamlet. *⟨Hamlet,⟩* thou art slain.
 No med'cine in the world can do thee good. 345
 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. 350
 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.

It is a poison tempered by himself. 360
 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.— 365
 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. *〔He picks up the cup.〕* 375

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! 380

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 <and 'shot' within.>
What warlike noise is this? 385

Enter Osrice.

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. 390
I cannot live to hear the news from England.
But I do prophesy th' election lights
On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice.
So tell him, with th' occurrents, more and less,
Which have solicited—the rest is silence. 395
<O, O, O, O!> *<Dies.>*

HORATIO
Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.
〔March within.〕
Why does the drum come hither?

*Enter Fortinbras with the 'English' Ambassadors <with
Drum, Colors, and Attendants.>*

FORTINBRAS Where is this sight? 400

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? 405

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? 410

HORATIO Not from his
 mouth,
 Had it th' ability of life to thank you. 415
 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, 420
 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, 425
 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. 430
 For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune.
 I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
 Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

HORATIO
 Of that I shall have also cause to speak,

And from his mouth whose voice will draw *<on>* 435
more.
But let this same be presently performed
Even while men's minds are wild, lest more
mischance
On plots and errors happen. 440

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 445
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.>*