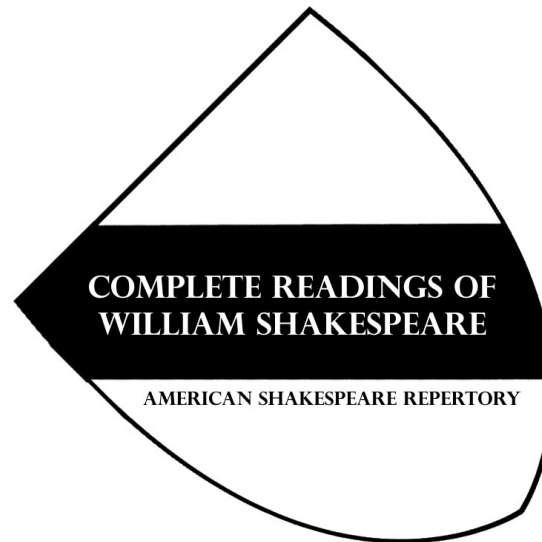


# HAMLET

EDITED BY JUSTIN ALEXANDER  
THE COMPLETE READINGS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
READING 18 – NOVEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup>, 2010





# CAST LIST

HAMLET	JUSTIN ALEXANDER
CLAUDIUS	TIM PERFECT
GERTRUDE	ANN CARROLL
POLONIUS	CRAIG JOHNSON
LAERTES	PHIL D. HENRY
OPHELIA	MARETTA ZILIC
HORATIO	LUCAS GERSTNER
ROSENCRANTZ	ROB SIEG
GUILDENSTERN	ALLEN VOIGT
GHOST & PLAYER KING	PHIL D. HENRY
BARNARDO & PLAYER QUEEN	ANN RICE
FRANCISCO & FORTINBRAS	JANINE HEGARTY
MARCELLUS & PRIEST	ADELIN PHELPS
GRAVEDIGGER & OSRIC	CARA KLUVER
GRAVEDIGGER & OTHERS	BRIGID KELLEY

### TEXTUAL NOTES

- [ ] = emendation
- [ / ] = emendation adopted from Q1
- < > = Q2 only
- { } = emendation from F
- { / } = F only
- ~~Strike-thru text~~ indicates deleted text.
- All-capitalized names in stage directions indicate the name has been normalized.
- Speech-headings silently normalized.
- Punctuation silently modernized, but with minimal interference to preserve acting instructions/choices in meaning.

# ACT I, 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.

**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?

**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?

**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?

**FRANCISCO** Barnardo hath my place;  
Give you good night.

*Exit Francisco.*

**MARCELLUS** Holla, Barnardo.

**BARNARDO** Say, what, is Horatio there?

**HORATIO** A piece of him.

**BARNARDO** Welcome, Horatio; welcome good Marcellus.

**HORATIO** What, has this thing appear'd 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;  
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.

**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.

*Exit Ghost.*

**HORATIO** Well, sit we down,  
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'illuminate that part of heaven  
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,  
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** Thou art a scholar, speak to it Horatio.

**BARNARDO** Looks it not like the King? Mark it Horatio.

**HORATIO** Most like, it harrows me with fear and wonder.

**BARNARDO** It would be spoke to.

**MARCELLUS** Speak to it, Horatio.

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

**MARCELLUS** It is offended.

**BARNARDO** See, it stalks away!

**HORATIO** Stay, speak, speak, I charge thee speak.

**MARCELLUS** 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

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

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

**MARCELLUS** Is it not like the king?

**HORATIO** As thou art to thyself.  
Such was the very armor he had on  
When he the ambitious Norway combated;  
So frown'd he once, when in an angry parle  
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.  
'Tis strange.

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

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

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

Who is't that can inform me?

**HORATIO**

That can I.

At least the whisper goes so; our last King,  
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,  
Was as you know by Fortinbras of Norway,  
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,  
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet  
(For so this side of our known world esteem'd him)  
Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a seal'd compact  
Well ratified by law and heraldry  
Did forfeit (with his life) all these his lands,  
Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror.  
Against the which a moiety competent  
Was gaged by our King, which had {return'd}  
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,  
Had he been vanquisher, as by the same {cov'nant},  
And carriage of the article [design'd],  
His fell to Hamlet; now, sir, young Fortinbras  
Of unimproved mettle, hot and full,  
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there  
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute  
For food and diet to some enterprise  
That hath a stomach in't, which is no other  
(As it doth well appear unto our state)  
But to recover of us by strong hand  
And terms compulsatory, those foresaid lands  
So by his father lost; and this, I take it,  
Is the main motive of our preparations,  
The source of this our watch, and the chief head  
Of this post-haste and rummage in the land.

<**BARNARDO** I think it be no other, but e'en so;  
Well may it sort that this portentous figure  
Comes armed 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,  
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  
[Disaster'd] in the sun and the moist star,  
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,  
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.  
And even the like precursor of [fear'd] events  
As harbingers preceding still the fates  
And prologue to the omen coming on  
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
Unto our climatures and countrymen.>

*Enter Ghost.*

But soft, behold, lo where it comes again;  
I'll cross it though it blast me:

*It spreads his arms.*

Stay, illusion,

If thou hast any sound or use of voice,  
Speak to me;  
If there be any good thing to be done  
That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,  
Speak to me.  
If thou art privy to thy country's fate  
Which happily foreknowing may avoid  
O speak:  
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life  
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,

*The cock crows.*

For which they say {you} spirits oft walk in death,

Speak of it, stay and speak, stop it, Marcellus.

**MARCELLUS** Shall I strike {at} it with my partisan?

**HORATIO** Do if it will not stand.

**BARNARDO** 'Tis here.

**HORATIO** 'Tis here.

**MARCELLUS** 'Tis gone.

*{Exit Ghost.}*

We do it wrong, being so majestic,  
To offer it the show of violence,  
For it is as the air, invulnerable,  
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 Saviour's birth is celebrated  
This bird of dawning singeth all night long,  
And then they say no spirit [dares] 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.

*Exeunt.*



## {ACT I, SCENE 2}

*Flourish. Enter Claudius (King of Denmark), Gertrude the Queen,  
Counsel: as Polonius and his son Laertes, (and his sister Ophelia)  
Hamlet, {Lords Attendant}, [and the two Ambassadors].*

**CLAUDIUS** Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom  
To be contracted in one brow of woe,  
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature,  
That we with wisest sorrow think on him  
Together with remembrance of ourselves:  
Therefore our sometime sister, now our Queen,  
The imperial jointress to this warlike state,  
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,  
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,  
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,  
Taken to wife: Nor have we herein barr'd  
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
With this affair along (for all our thanks).  
Now follows that you know young Fortinbras,  
Holding a weak supposal of our worth  
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death  
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,  
Colleagued with {the} dream of his advantage,  
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,  
Importing the surrender of those lands  
Lost by his father, with all bands of law,  
To our most valiant brother; so much for him:

*{Enter Voltmand and Cornelius.}*

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 bed-rid scarcely hears  
Of this his nephew's purpose, to suppress  
His further gait herein, in that the levies,  
The lists, and full proportions are all made  
Out of his subject; and we here dispatch  
You, good Cornelius, and you, {Voltmand},  
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,  
Giving to you no further personal power  
To business with the King more than the scope  
Of these delated articles allow:  
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

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

**CLAUDIUS** We doubt it nothing, heartily farewell.

*{Exit Voltmand and Cornelius.}*

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

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

**CLAUDIUS** Have you your father's leave, what says Polonius?

**POLONIUS** /He/ hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave  
By laborsome petition, and at last  
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent;  
I do beseech you give him leave to go.

**CLAUDIUS** Take thy fair hour, Laertes, time be thine  
And thy best graces spend it at thy will:  
But now my cousin Hamlet, and my son.

**HAMLET** A little more than kin, and less than kind.

**CLAUDIUS** How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

**HAMLET** Not so ~~much~~ my lord, I am too much i' the sun.

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

**HAMLET** Aye madam, it is common.

**GERTRUDE** 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, cold mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,  
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief  
That can ~~denote~~ me truly; these indeed seem,

For they are actions that a man might play;  
But I have that within which passes show,  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

**CLAUDIUS** 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,  
To give these mourning duties to your father;  
But you must know your father lost a father,  
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound  
In filial obligation for some term  
To do obsequious sorrow; but to persever  
In obstinate condolement is a course  
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief;  
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,  
A heart unfortified, or mind impatient,  
An understanding simple and unschool'd;  
For what we know must be, and is as common  
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,  
Why should we in our peevish opposition  
Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven,  
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,  
To reason most absurd, whose common theme  
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried  
From the first corse till he that died today,  
"This must be so": We pray you throw to earth  
This unprevailing woe, and think of us  
As of a father, for let the world take note  
You are the most immediate to our throne,  
And with no less nobility of love  
Than that which dearest father bears his son,  
Do I impart toward you. For your intent  
In going back to school in Wittenberg,  
It is most retrograde to our desire,  
And we beseech you bend you to remain  
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,  
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

**GERTRUDE** 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.

**CLAUDIUS** Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply;  
Be as ourself in Denmark; madam come,  
This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet  
Sits smiling to my heart, in grace whereof,  
No jocund health that Denmark drinks today,  
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,  
And the king's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,  
Respeaking earthly thunder; come away.

*Flourish.*

*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*

**HAMLET** O that this too too {solid} flesh would melt,  
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,  
Or that the everlasting had not fix'd  
His cannon 'gainst {self}-slaughter; O God, God,  
How {weary}, stale, flat, and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world?  
Fie on't, ah fie, 'tis an unweeded garden  
That grows to seed, things rank and gross in nature  
Possess it merely. That it should come thus:  
But two months dead (nay not so much, not two)  
So excellent a King, that was to this  
Hyperion to a {satyr}; so loving to my mother  
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly; heaven and earth  
Must I remember? Why, she {would} hang on him  
As if increase of appetite had grown  
By what it fed on, and yet within a month;  
Let me not think on't; frailty, thy name is woman;  
A little month, or ere those shoes were old  
With which she followed my poor father's body  
Like Niobe, all tears. Why she, {even she}

(O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason  
Would have mourn'd longer) married with my uncle,  
My father's brother, but no more like my father  
Than I to Hercules, within a month,  
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,  
She married. O most wicked speed; to post  
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets;  
It is not, nor it cannot come to good,  
But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

*Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo.*

**HORATIO** Hail to your lordship.

**HAMLET** I am glad to see you well;  
Horatio, or I do forget myself.

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

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

**MARCELLUS** My good lord.

**HAMLET** I am very glad to see you, (good even sir)  
But what in faith make you from Wittenberg?

**HORATIO** A truant disposition, good my lord.

**HAMLET** I would not hear your enemy say so,  
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence  
To make it truster of your own report  
Against yourself, I know you are no truant,  
But what is your affair in Elsinore?  
We'll teach you {to drink deep} ere you depart.

**HORATIO** My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

**HAMLET** I prithee do not mock me, fellow student,  
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

**HORATIO** Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.

**HAMLET** Thrift, thrift, Horatio, the funeral baked meats  
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables;  
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven  
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio;  
My father, methinks I see my father.

**HORATIO** Where, my lord?

**HAMLET** In my mind's eye, Horatio.

**HORATIO** I saw him once, {he} was a goodly King.

**HAMLET** {He} was a man take him for all in all  
I shall not look upon his like again.

**HORATIO** My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

**HAMLET** Saw, who?

**HORATIO** My lord, the King your father.

**HAMLET** The King my father?

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

**HAMLET** For God's love, let me hear.

**HORATIO** Two nights together had these gentlemen,  
Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch  
In the dead waste and middle of the night,  
Been thus encounter'd: A figure like your father,  
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,  
Appears before them, and with solemn march  
Goes slow and stately by them; thrice he walk'd  
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes  
Within his truncheon's length, whilst they distill'd  
Almost to jelly, with the act of fear  
Stand dumb and speak not to him; this to me  
In dreadful secrecy impart they did,  
And I with them the third night kept the watch,  
Where as they had deliver'd, both in time,  
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,  
The apparition comes: I knew your father;  
These hands are not more like.

**HAMLET** But where was this?

**MARCELLUS** My lord, upon the platform where we watch.

**HAMLET** Did you not speak to it?

**HORATIO** My lord, I did,  
But answer made it none; yet once methought  
It lifted up its head, and did address  
Itself to motion like as it would speak:  
But even then the morning cock crew loud,  
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away  
And vanish'd from our sight.

**HAMLET** 'Tis very strange.

**HORATIO** As I do live, my honor'd lord, 'tis true,  
And we did think it writ down in our duty

To let you know of it.

**HAMLET** {Indeed}, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.  
Hold you the watch to-night?

**ALL** We do, my lord.

**HAMLET** Armed say you?

**ALL** Armed, my good lord.

**HAMLET** From top to toe?

**ALL** My good lord, from head to foot.

**HAMLET** Why then saw you not his face?

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

**HAMLET** How look'd he, frowningly?

**HORATIO** A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

**HAMLET** Pale, or red?

**HORATIO** Nay, very pale.

**HAMLET** And fix'd his eyes upon you.

**HORATIO** Most constantly.

**HAMLET** I would I had been there.

**HORATIO** It would {have} much amazed you.

**HAMLET** Very like, stay'd it long?

**HORATIO** While one with moderate haste might tell a  
{hundred}.

**BOTH** Longer, longer.

**HORATIO** Not when I saw't.

**HAMLET** His beard was grizzled, no?

**HORATIO** It was, as I have seen it in his life,  
A sable silver'd.

**HAMLET** I will watch tonight,  
Perchance 'twill walk again.

**HORATIO** I warr'nt it will.

**HAMLET** If it assume my noble father's person,  
I'll speak to it though hell itself should gape  
And bid me hold my peace; I pray you all  
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight  
Let it be tenable in your silence still,  
And whatsoever else shall hap tonight,  
Give it an understanding but no tongue;  
I will requite your loves, so fare you well:  
Upon the platform 'twixt eleven and twelve  
I'll visit you.

**ALL** Our duty to your honour.

*Exeunt.*

**HAMLET** Your loves, as mine to you, farewell.  
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.

*Exit.*

## {ACT I, SCENE 3}

*Enter Laertes and Ophelia (his sister).*

**LAERTES** My necessaries are embark'd, farewell;  
And, sister, as the winds give benefit  
And convoy {is} assistant, do not sleep,  
But let me hear from you.

**OPHELIA** Do you doubt that?

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

**OPHELIA** No more but so.

**LAERTES** Think it no more.  
For nature crescent does not grow alone  
In thews and bulks, but as this temple waxes  
The inward service of the mind and soul  
Grows wide withal; perhaps he loves you now,  
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch  
The virtue of his will, but you must fear,  
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;  
{For he himself is subject to his birth:}  
He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends  
The safety and health of this whole state,  
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed  
Unto the voice and yielding of that body  
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,  
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it

As he in his particular act and place  
May give his saying deed, which is no further  
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.  
Then weigh what loss your honor may sustain  
If with too credent ear you list his songs,  
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open  
To his unmas'tred importunity.  
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,  
And keep you in the rear of your affection,  
Out of the shot and danger of desire;  
"The chariest maid is prodigal enough,  
If she unmask her beauty to the moon:  
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes,  
The canker galls the infants of the spring  
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,  
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth  
Contagious blastments are most imminent."  
Be wary then, best safety lies in fear,  
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

**OPHELIA** I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,  
As watchman to my heart.; but, good my brother,  
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,  
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven  
{Whilst like} a puff'd and reckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads.  
And reaks not his own rede.

*Enter Polonius.*

**LAERTES** O fear me not;  
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,  
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail

And you are stay'd for; there my blessing with thee,  
And these few precepts in thy memory  
Look thou character: Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act;  
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar;  
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
Grapple them {to} thy soul with hoops of steel;  
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd {comrade}; beware  
Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,  
Bear't that th'opposed may beware of thee;  
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;  
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment;  
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy,  
For the apparel oft proclaims the man  
And they in France of the best rank and station  
{Are} of a most select and generous chief in that:  
Neither a borrower nor a lender {be},  
For {loan} oft loses both itself and friend,  
And borrowing {dulls the} edge of husbandry;  
This above all, to thine ownself be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man:  
Farewell, my blessing season this in thee.

**LAERTES** Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

**POLONIUS** The time invests you, go, your servants tend.

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

**OPHELIA** 'Tis in my memory lock'd,  
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

**LAERTES** Farewell.

*Exit Laertes.*

**POLONIUS** What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

**OPHELIA** So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

**POLONIUS** Marry, well bethought;  
'Tis told me he hath very oft of late  
Given private time to you, and you yourself  
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous;  
If it be so, as so 'tis put on me,  
And that in way of caution, I must tell you,  
You do not understand yourself so clearly  
As it behooves my daughter and your honor.  
What is between you? Give me up the truth.

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

**POLONIUS** Affection, puh, you speak like a green girl  
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance;  
Do you believe his tenders as you call them?

**OPHELIA** I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

**POLONIUS** Marry I will teach you; think yourself a baby  
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay  
Which are not sterling; tender yourself more dearly  
Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,  
[Wronging] it thus) you'll tender me a fool.

**OPHELIA** My lord, he hath importun'd me with love  
In honorable fashion.

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

**OPHELIA** I shall obey, my lord.

*Exeunt.*

## [ACT I, SCENE 4]

*Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.*

**HAMLET** The air bites {shrewdly}; it is very cold.

**HORATIO** It is {a} nipping and an eager air.

**HAMLET** What hour now?

**HORATIO** I think it lacks of twelve.

**MARCELLUS** No, it is struck.

**HORATIO** Indeed; I heard it not; it then draws near the season  
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

*A flourish of trumpets and two pieces go off.*

What does this mean, my lord?

**HAMLET** The king doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,  
Keeps wassail and the swagg'ring up-spring reels:  
And as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,  
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out  
The triumph of his pledge.

**HORATIO** Is it a custom?

**HAMLET** Aye marry is't,  
But to my mind, though I am native here  
And to the manner born, it is a custom  
More honour'd in the breach than the observance.  
<This heavy headed revel east and west  
Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations;  
They clepe us drunkards and with swinish phrase



Soil our addition, and indeed it takes  
 From our achievements, though perform'd at height,  
 The pith and marrow of our attribute;  
 So oft it chanceth in particular men,  
 That for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
 As in their birth wherein they are not guilty  
 (Since nature cannot choose his origin)  
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion  
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
 Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens  
 The form of plausible manners; that these men  
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect  
 Being nature's livery or fortune's star,  
 Their 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 eale  
 Doth all the noble substance of a doubt  
 To his own scandal.>

*Enter Ghost.*

**HORATIO** Look, my lord, it comes.

**HAMLET** Angels and ministers of grace defend us:  
 Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,  
 Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,  
 Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,  
 Thou comest in such a questionable shape  
 That I will speak to thee; I'll call thee Hamlet,  
 King, father, royal Dane; O answer me,  
 Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell  
 Why thy canonized bones hearsed in death  
 Have burst their cerements? Why the sepulchre  
 Wherein we saw thee quietly interr'd  
 Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws  
 To cast thee up again? What may this mean

That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel  
 Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,  
 Making night hideous, and we fools of nature  
 So horridly to shake our disposition  
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?  
 Say why is this, wherefore, what should we do?

*{Ghost} beckons {Hamlet}.*

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

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

**HORATIO** No, by no means.

**HAMLET** It will not speak, then I will follow it.

**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?  
 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  
 Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason  
 And draw you into madness? Think of it,  
 <The very place puts toys of desperation,  
 Without more motive, into every brain

That looks so many fathoms to the sea  
And hears it roar beneath.>

**HAMLET** It waves me still;  
Go on, I'll follow thee.

**MARCELLUS** You shall not go, my lord.

**HAMLET** Hold off your hands.

**HORATIO** Be ruled, you shall not go.

**HAMLET** My fate cries out  
And makes each petty [artery] in this body  
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve;  
Still am I call'd; unhand me, gentlemen;  
By heaven I'll make a ghost of him that lets me;  
I say away, go on, I'll follow thee.

*Exit Ghost and Hamlet.*

**HORATIO** He waxes desperate with {imagination}.

**MARCELLUS** Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

**HORATIO** Have after; to what issue will this come?

**MARCELLUS** Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

**HORATIO** Heaven will direct it.

**MARCELLUS** Nay, let's follow him.

*Exeunt.*

[ACT I, 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  
When I to sulph'rous and tormenting flames  
Must render up myself.

**HAMLET** Alas poor ghost.

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

**HAMLET** Speak, I am bound to hear.

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

**HAMLET** What?

**GHOST** I am thy father's spirit,  
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,  
And for the day confined to fast in fires,  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burnt and purg'd away: But that I am forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison house,  
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word  
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres,  
Thy knotted and combined locks to part  
And each particular hair to stand an end  
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine;  
But this eternal blazon must not be  
To ears of flesh and blood; list, list, O list:

If thou didst ever thy dear father love.

**HAMLET** O God.

**GHOST** Revenge his foul, and most unnatural murder.

**HAMLET** Murder.

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

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

**GHOST** I find thee apt,  
And duller should'st thou be than the fat weed  
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf  
Would'st thou not stir in this: Now Hamlet hear,  
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,  
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark  
Is by a forged process of my death  
Rankly abused: But know thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown.

**HAMLET** O my prophetic soul! My uncle?

**GHOST** Aye that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts  
(O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power  
So to seduce) won to his shameful lust  
The will of my most seeming-virtuous Queen;  
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there  
From me whose love was of that dignity  
That it went hand in hand even with the vow  
I made to her in marriage, and to decline

Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor  
To those of mine;  
But virtue as it never will be moved,  
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,  
So {lust}, though to a radiant angel link'd,  
Will sate itself in a celestial bed  
And prey on garbage.  
But soft, methinks I scent the morning air;  
Brief let me be: Sleeping within my orchard,  
My custom always of the afternoon,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,  
With juice of cursed {hebenon} in a vial,  
And in the porches of my ears did pour  
The lep'rous distilment, whose effect  
Holds such an enmity with blood of man  
That swift as quicksilver it courses through  
The natural gates and alleys of the body,  
And with a sudden vigor it doth {posset}  
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,  
The thin and wholesome blood; so did it mine,  
And a most instant tetter bark'd about  
Most lazar-like with vile and loathsome crust  
All my smooth body.  
Thus was I sleeping by a brother's hand  
Of life, of crown, of Queen at once dispatch'd,  
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,  
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd,  
No reck'ning made, but sent to my account  
With all my imperfections on my head;  
O horrible, O horrible, most horrible.  
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not,  
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
A couch for luxury and damned incest.  
But howsoever thou pursues this act,  
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven,  
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,

To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once,  
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,  
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire;  
Adieu, adieu, adieu, remember me.

*Exit.*

**HAMLET** O all you host of heaven, O earth, what else?  
And shall I couple hell? O fie, hold, hold my heart,  
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,  
But bear me swiftly up; remember thee;  
Aye thou poor ghost, {while} memory holds a seat  
In this distracted globe, remember thee,  
Yea, from the table of my memory  
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past  
That youth and observation copied there,  
And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain,  
Unmix'd with baser matter, yes by heaven,  
O most pernicious woman.  
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain;  
My tables; meet it is I set it down,  
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain,  
At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark.  
So, uncle, there you are; now to my word,  
It is adieu, adieu, remember me.  
I have sworn't.

*Enter Horatio and Marcellus.*

**HORATIO** My lord, my lord.

**MARCELLUS** Lord Hamlet.

**HORATIO** Heavens secure him.

**HAMLET** So be it.

**MARCELLUS** Illo, ho, ho, my lord.

**HAMLET** Hillo, ho, ho, boy come, and come.

**MARCELLUS** How is't, my noble lord?

**HORATIO** What news, my lord?

**HAMLET** O, wonderful.

**HORATIO** Good my lord, tell it.

**HAMLET** No, you will reveal it.

**HORATIO** Not I, my lord, by heaven.

**MARCELLUS** Nor I, my lord.

**HAMLET** How say you, then, would heart of man once think it;  
But you'll be secret?

**BOTH** Aye, by heaven.

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

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

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

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

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

**HORATIO** There's no offence, my lord.

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

**HORATIO** What is't, my lord? We will.

**HAMLET** Never make known what you have seen to-night.

**BOTH** My lord, we will not.

**HAMLET** Nay but swear't.

**HORATIO** In faith, my lord, not I.

**MARCELLUS** Nor I, my lord, in faith.

**HAMLET** Upon my sword.

**MARCELLUS** We have sworn, my lord, already.

**HAMLET** Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

*Ghost cries under the stage.*

**GHOST** Swear.

**HAMLET** Ha, ha, boy, say'st thou so? Art thou there truepenny?  
Come on, you hear this fellow in the cellarage,  
Consent to swear.

**HORATIO** Propose the oath, my lord.

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

**GHOST** Swear.

**HAMLET** Hic et ubique? Then we'll shift our ground:  
Come hither, gentlemen,  
And lay your hands again upon my sword.  
Swear by my sword,  
Never to speak of this that you have heard.

**GHOST** Swear by his sword.

**HAMLET** Well said, old mole, can'st work i'th'earth so fast?  
A worthy pioneer. Once more remove, good friends.

**HORATIO** O day and night, but this is wondrous strange.

**HAMLET** And therefore as a stranger give it welcome;  
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy; but come  
Here as before, never, so help you mercy,  
How strange or odd {soe'er} I bear myself,  
(As I perchance hereafter shall think meet  
To put an antic disposition on)  
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall  
With arms encumb'ed thus, or this head shake,  
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,  
As "Well, well, we know" or "We could and if we would",  
Or "If we list to speak" or "There be, an if they might",

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note  
That you know aught of me: this {not to do},  
So grace and mercy at your most need help you:  
{Swear.}

**GHOST** Swear.

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

*Exeunt.*

## {ACT II, SCENE 1}

*Enter old Polonius with his man or two.  
{Enter Polonius and Reynaldo.}*

**POLONIUS** Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

**REYNALDO** I will, my lord.

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

**REYNALDO** My lord, I did intend it.

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

**REYNALDO** Aye, very well, my lord.

**POLONIUS** "And in part him," but you may say, "Not well,  
But if't be he I mean, he's very wild,  
Addicted so and so," and there put on him  
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank  
As may dishonour him, take heed of that,  
But sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips  
As are companions noted and most known  
To youth and liberty.

**REYNALDO** As gaming, my lord.

**POLONIUS** Aye, or drinking, fencing, swearing,  
Quarrelling, drabbing: you may go so far.

**REYNALDO** My lord, that would dishonour him.

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

**REYNALDO** But, my good lord.

**POLONIUS** Wherefore should you do this?

**REYNALDO** Aye my lord,  
I would know that.

**POLONIUS** Marry sir, here's my drift,  
And I believe it is a fetch of wit;  
You laying these slight sallies on my son,  
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd with working,  
Mark you your party in converse, him you would sound,  
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes  
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assur'd  
He closes with you in this consequence:  
"Good sir," (or so) or "friend" or "gentleman",  
According to the phrase or the addition  
Of man and country.

**REYNALDO** Very good, my lord.

**POLONIUS** And then, sir, does he this, {he} does... What was I  
about to say?

By the mass, I was about to say something;  
Where did I leave?

**REYNALDO** At "closes in the consequence":  
{At friend, or so, and gentleman.}

**POLONIUS** At closes in the consequence, aye marry,  
He closes thus, "I know the gentleman,  
I saw him yesterday, or th'other day,  
Or then, or then, with such or such, and, as you say,  
There was a gaming there, or took 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 takes this carp of truth,  
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,  
With windlasses and with assays of bias,  
By indirections find directions out;  
So by my former lecture and advice  
Shall you my son; you have me, have you not?

**REYNALDO** My lord, I have.

**POLONIUS** God buy you, fare ye well.

**REYNALDO** Good my lord.

**POLONIUS** Observe his inclination in yourself.

**REYNALDO** I shall, my lord.

**POLONIUS** And let him ply his music.

**REYNALDO** Well, my lord.

*Exit Reynaldo.  
Enter Ophelia.*

**POLONIUS** Farewell. How now, Ophelia, what's the matter?

**OPHELIA** O my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted.

**POLONIUS** With what i'th' name of God?

**OPHELIA** My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,  
Lord Hamlet with his doublet all unbraced,  
No hat upon his head, his stockings foul'd,  
Ungart' red, and down-gyved to his ankle,  
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,  
And with a look so piteous in purport  
As if he had been loosed out of hell  
To speak of horrors, he comes before me.

**POLONIUS** Mad for thy love?

**OPHELIA** My lord, I do not know,  
But truly I do fear it.

**POLONIUS** What said he?

**OPHELIA** He took me by the wrist, and held me hard,  
Then goes he to the length of all his arm,  
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
He falls to such perusal of my face  
As he would draw it; long stay'd he so;  
At last, a little shaking of mine arm,  
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound  
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
And end his being; that done, he lets me go,  
And with his head over his shoulder turn'd

He seem'd to find his way without his eyes,  
For out a' doors he went without their helps,  
And to the last bended their light on me.

**POLONIUS** Come, go with me, I will go seek the King;  
This is the very ecstasy of love,  
Whose violent property fordoes itself  
And leads the will to desperate undertakings  
As oft as any passion under heaven  
That does afflict our natures: I am sorry;  
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

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

**POLONIUS** That hath made him mad.  
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment  
I had not coted him; I fear'd he did but trifle  
And meant to wreck thee, but beshrew my jealousy:  
By heaven, it is as proper to our age  
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions  
As it is common for the younger sort  
To lack discretion; come, go we to the King;  
This must be known, which, being kept close, might move  
More grief to hide than hate to utter love.

*Exeunt.*



## {ACT II, SCENE 2}

*Flourish.*

*Enter King and Queen, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

**CLAUDIUS** Welcome dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern,  
Moreover, that we much did long to see you,  
The need we have to use you did provoke  
Our hasty sending; something have you heard  
Of Hamlet's transformation; so call it,  
Sith nor th'exterior, nor the inward man  
Resembles that it was; what it should be,  
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him  
So much from th'understanding of himself  
I cannot dream of: I entreat you both  
That being of so young days brought up with him,  
And sith so neighbor'd to his youth and havior,  
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court  
Some little time, so by your companies  
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,  
So much as from occasion you may glean,  
Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus,  
That open'd lies within our remedy.

**GERTRUDE** Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you,  
And sure I am two men there {are} not living  
To whom he more adheres; if it will please you  
To show us so much gentry and good will  
As to expend your time with us awhile,  
For the supply and profit of our hope,  
Your visitation shall receive such thanks  
As fits a King's remembrance.

**ROSENCRANTZ** Both your Majesties  
Might by the sovereign power you have of us,  
Put your dread pleasures more into command

Than to entreaty.

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

**CLAUDIUS** Thanks Rosencrantz, and gentle Guildenstern.

**GERTRUDE** Thanks Guildenstern, and gentle Rosencrantz.  
And I beseech you instantly to visit  
My too much changed son; go some of you  
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

**GUILDENSTERN** Heavens make our presence and our practices  
Pleasant and helpful to him.

**GERTRUDE** Aye amen.

*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.  
Enter Polonius.*

**POLONIUS** Th'ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,  
Are joyfully return'd.

**CLAUDIUS** Thou still hast been the father of good news.

**POLONIUS** Have I, my lord? I assure my good liege  
I hold my duty as I hold my soul,  
Both to my God and to my gracious King;  
And I do think, or else this brain of mine  
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure  
As it hath used to do, that I have found  
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

**CLAUDIUS** 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.

**CLAUDIUS** Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

*[Exit Polonius.]*

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

**GERTRUDE** I doubt it is no other but the main;  
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

*Enter {Polonius}, Ambassadors {Voltemand and Cornelius}.*

**CLAUDIUS** Well, we shall sift him. Welcome, my good friends:  
Say Voltemand, what from our brother Norway?

**VOLTEMAND** Most fair return of greetings and desires;  
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress  
His nephew's levies, which to him appear'd  
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack,  
But, better look'd into, he truly found  
It was against your highness; whereat griev'd  
That so his sickness, age, and impotence  
Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests  
On Fortinbras; which he in brief obeys,  
Receives rebuke from Norway, and, in fine,  
Makes vow before his uncle never more  
To give th'assay of arms against your Majesty:  
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,  
Gives him three-score thousand crowns in annual fee  
And his commission to employ those soldiers  
So levied (as before) against the Polack,  
With an entreaty, herein further shown,  
That it might please you to give quiet pass  
Through your dominions for this enterprise

On such regards of safety and allowance  
As therein are set down.

**CLAUDIUS** It likes us well,  
And, at our more consider'd time, we'll read,  
Answer, and think upon this business:  
Meantime, we thank you for your well-took labor;  
Go to your rest, at night we'll feast together;  
Most welcome home.

*Exeunt Ambassadors.*

**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.

**GERTRUDE** 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:

*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 in her excellent white bosom, these &c.*

**GERTRUDE** Came this from Hamlet to her?

**POLONIUS** Good madam, stay awhile, I will be faithful:

*Letter.*

*Doubt thou the stars are fire,  
Doubt that the sun doth move,  
Doubt truth to be a liar,  
But never doubt I love.*

*O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers. I have not art to reckon my groans, but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu. Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him. Hamlet.*

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

**CLAUDIUS** But how hath she  
Receiv'd his love?

**POLONIUS** What do you think of me?

**CLAUDIUS** As of a man faithful and honorable.

**POLONIUS** I would fain prove so, but what might you think

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

**CLAUDIUS** Do you think {'tis} this?

**GERTRUDE** It may be very like.

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

**CLAUDIUS** 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.

**CLAUDIUS** How may we try it further?

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

**GERTRUDE** So he does indeed.

**POLONIUS** At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him;  
Be you and I behind an arras then,  
Mark the encounter; if he love her not,  
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,  
Let me be no assistant for a state  
But keep a farm and carters.

**CLAUDIUS** We will try it.

**GERTRUDE** But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

**POLONIUS** Away, I do beseech you both away,

*Exit King and Queen.*

I'll board him presently, oh give me leave,  
How does my good Lord Hamlet?

**HAMLET** Well, God-a-mercy.

**POLONIUS** Do you know me, my lord?

**HAMLET** Excellent well, you are a fishmonger.

**POLONIUS** Not I, my lord.

**HAMLET** Then I would you were so honest a man.

**POLONIUS** Honest, my lord?

**HAMLET** Aye sir, to be honest as this world goes,

Is to be one man pick'd out of ten thousand.

**POLONIUS** That's very true, my lord.

**HAMLET** For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a  
god kissing carrion. Have you a daughter?

**POLONIUS** I have, my lord.

**HAMLET** Let her not walk i'th'sun; conception is a blessing,  
but as your daughter may conceive, friend, look to 't.

**POLONIUS** 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, far gone, and truly in my youth I suff' red much extremity for  
love, very near this. I'll speak to him again. What do you read, my  
lord?

**HAMLET** Words, words, words.

**POLONIUS** What is the matter, my lord?

**HAMLET** Between who?

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

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

**POLONIUS** Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't;  
will you walk out of the air, my lord?

HAMLET Into my grave.

POLONIUS Indeed that's out of the air; how pregnant sometimes his replies are, a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, {and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him} and my daughter. My lord, I will take my leave of you.

HAMLET You cannot take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal: Except my life, except my life, except my life.

*Enter Guildenstern and Rosencrantz.*

POLONIUS Fare you well, my lord.

HAMLET These tedious old fools.

POLONIUS You go to seek the Lord Hamlet, there he is.

ROSENCRANTZ God save you, sir.

*[Exit Polonius.]*

GUILDENSTERN My honor'd lord.

ROSENCRANTZ My most dear lord.

HAMLET My {excellent} good friends, how dost thou Guildenstern? Ah Rosencrantz, good lads how do you both?

ROSENCRANTZ As the indifferent children of the earth.

GUILDENSTERN Happy, in that we are not {over}-happy;  
On fortune's {cap} we are not the very button.

HAMLET Nor the soles of her shoe?

ROSENCRANTZ Neither, my lord.

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

GUILDENSTERN 'Faith, her privates we.

HAMLET In the secret parts of fortune? Oh most true, she is a strumpet. {What's the} news?

ROSENCRANTZ None my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

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?

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.

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.

ROSENCRANTZ Why then your ambition makes it one: 'Tis too narrow for your mind.

**HAMLET** O God, I could be bounded in a nut shell and count myself a King of infinite space; were it not that I have bad dreams.

**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.

**HAMLET** Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretch'd heroes the beggars' shadows: Shall we to th'court? For, by my fay, I cannot reason.

**BOTH** 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?

**ROSENCRANTZ** To visit you, my lord, no other occasion.

**HAMLET** Beggar that I am, I am ever poor in thanks; but I thank you, and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny: Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me, come, come, nay speak.

**GUILDENSTERN** What should we say, my lord?

**HAMLET** Anything but to th'purpose: You were sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to color; I know the good King and Queen have sent for you.

**ROSENCRANTZ** To what end, my lord?

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

**ROSENCRANTZ** What say you?

**HAMLET** Nay then I have an eye of you: If you love me hold not off.

**GUILDENSTERN** My lord, we were sent for.

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

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

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

**ROSENCRANTZ** To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you; we

coted them on the way, and hither are they coming to offer you service.

**HAMLET** He that plays the King shall be welcome; his Majesty shall have tribute on me; the adventurous Knight shall use his foil and target; the Lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; {the Clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o'th'sere}; and the Lady shall say her mind freely: Or the {blank} verse shall halt for't. What players are they?

**ROSENCRANTZ** Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the Tragedians of the City.

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

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

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

**ROSENCRANTZ** No indeed are they not.

**HAMLET** How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

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

**HAMLET** What, are they children? Who maintains 'em? How are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players (as it is [most like] if their means are

[not] better) their writers do them wrong to make them exclaim against their own succession?

**ROSENCRANTZ** 'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides: And the nation [holds] it no sin to tarre them to controversy: There was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the Poet and the Player went to cuffs in the question.

**HAMLET** Is't possible?

**GUILDENSTERN** Oh there has been much throwing about of brains.

**HAMLET** Do the boys carry it away?

**ROSENCRANTZ** Aye that they do, my lord, Hercules and his load too.}

**HAMLET** It is not very strange, for my uncle is King of Denmark, and those that would make mouths at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats apiece for his picture in little; 'sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

*A Flourish {for the Players}.*

**GUILDENSTERN** There are the players.

**HAMLET** Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore; your hands, come then; th'appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony; let me comply with you in this garb, {lest my} extent to the players (which I tell you must show fairly outwards) should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: But my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

**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 each ear a hearer; that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling clouts.

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

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

**POLONIUS** My lord, I have news to tell you.

**HAMLET** My lord, I have news to tell you:  
When Roscius was an actor in Rome.

**POLONIUS** The actors are come hither, my lord.

**HAMLET** Buz, buz.

**POLONIUS** Upon my honor.

**HAMLET** Then came each Actor on his Ass.

**POLONIUS** The best actors in the world, either for Tragedy, Comedy, History, Pastoral, Pastoral-Comical, Historical-Pastoral, {Tragical-Historical, Tragical-Comical-Historical-Pastoral}, scene individable, or poem unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy nor Plaustus too light, for the law of writ and the liberty: These are the only men.

**HAMLET** O Jephthah, Judge of Israel, what a treasure had'st thou?

**POLONIUS** What a treasure had he, my lord?

**HAMLET** Why, one fair daughter and no more, the which he loved passing well.

**POLONIUS** Still on my daughter.

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

**POLONIUS** If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

**HAMLET** Nay, that follows not.

**POLONIUS** What follows then, my lord?

**HAMLET** Why, "As by Lot, God Wot", and then you know, "It came to pass, as most like it was." The first row of the pious chanson will show you more, for look where my abridgment comes.

*Enter {four or five} Players.*

You are welcome, masters, welcome all, I am glad to see thee well, welcome good friends. Oh old friend, why thy face is valenc'd since I saw thee last; come'st thou to bear me in Denmark? What, my young lady and mistress, by lady your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last by the altitude of a chopine; pray God your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not crack'd 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.

{1} **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 caviar 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 {affectation}, but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine: One speech in't I chiefly loved, 'twas Aeneas' {*Tale*} to *Dido*, and thereabout of it especially when he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory begin at this line, let me see, let me see--

The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast—

'Tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus.

The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,  
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble  
When he lay couched in th'ominous horse,  
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd  
With heraldry more dismal head to foot,  
Now is he total gules, horridly trick'd  
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,  
Baked and impasted with the parching streets  
That lend a tyrannous and a damned light  
To their lord's murder; roasted in wrath and fire,  
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,  
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus  
Old grandsire Priam seeks.

So proceed you.

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

{1} **PLAYER** Anon he finds him,  
Striking too short at Greeks, his antic sword,  
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,  
Repugnant to command; unequal match'd,  
Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide,  
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword  
The unnerved father falls: {Then senseless Ilium,}  
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top  
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash  
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear; for lo his sword,  
Which was declining on the milky head  
Of reverent Priam, seem'd i'th'air to stick,  
So as a painted tyrant Pyrrhus stood  
And like a neutral to his will and matter,  
Did nothing:  
But as we often see, against some storm,  
A silence in the heavens, the wrack stand still,  
The bold winds speechless, and the orb below  
As hush as death anon the dreadful thunder  
Doth rend the region, so after Pyrrhus' pause  
A roused vengeance sets him new a-work,  
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall  
On Mars' armor forg'd for proof eterne  
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
Now falls on Priam.  
Out, out, thou strumpet Fortune; all you gods  
In general synod 'take away her power,  
Break all the spokes and [fellies] from her wheel,  
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven  
As low as to the fiends.

**POLONIUS** This is too long.

**HAMLET** It shall to the barber's, with your beard; prithee say on, he's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps; say on, come to Hecuba.

**{1} PLAYER** But who, {O who}, had seen the {ennobled} Queen—

**HAMLET** The {ennobled} Queen.

**POLONIUS** That's good: {Ennobled Queen is good.}

**{1} PLAYER** Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames  
With bisson rheum, a clout upon that head  
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,  
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,  
A blanket in the alarm of fear caught up;  
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,  
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd;  
But if the gods themselves did see her then,  
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport  
In mincing with his sword her {husband's} limbs,  
The instant burst of clamor that she made,  
Unless things mortal move them not at all,  
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,  
And passion in the gods.

**POLONIUS** Look where he has not turn'd his color and has tears  
in's eyes; prithee no more.

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

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

**HAMLET** God's bodkin, man, much better; use every man  
after his dessert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after  
your own honor and dignity; the less they deserve the more merit is  
in your bounty. Take them in.

**POLONIUS** Come sirs.

**HAMLET** Follow him, friends, we'll hear a play to-morrow;  
dost thou hear me, old friend, can you play the murder of Gonzago?

**[1] PLAYER** Aye, my lord.

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

**{1} PLAYER** Aye my lord.

**HAMLET** Very well, follow that lord, and look you mock him  
not. My good friends, I'll leave you {till} night; you are welcome to  
Elsinore.

*Exeunt Polonius and Players.*

**ROSENCRANTZ** Good my lord.

*Exeunt.*

*{Manet Hamlet.}*

**HAMLET** Aye, so God bye to you: Now I am alone.  
O what a rogue and peasant slave am I.  
Is it not monstrous that this player here  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
That from her working all the visage wann'd,  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
With forms to his conceit; and all for nothing,  
For Hecuba.  
What's Hecuba to him, or he to her,  
That he should weep for her? What would he do  
Had he the motive and {the cue} for passion

That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,  
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,  
Make mad the guilty, and appall the free,  
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed  
The very faculties of eyes and ears; yet I,  
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak  
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,  
And can say nothing; no, not for a King,  
Upon whose property and most dear life  
A damn'd defeat was made: Am I a coward?  
Who calls me villain? Breaks my pate across?  
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?  
Tweaks me by the nose? Gives me the lie i'th' throat  
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?  
Hah, 'swounds I should take it: For it cannot be  
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall  
To make oppression bitter, or ere this  
I should {have} fatted all the region kites  
With this slave's offal; bloody, bawdy villain;  
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!  
{Oh vengeance!}  
Why what an ass am I; this is most brave,  
That I, the son of a dear {father} murdered,  
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
Must like a whore unpack my heart with words  
And fall a-cursing like a very drab;  
A {scullion}? Fie upon't, foh. About my brains.  
I have heard that guilty creatures sitting at a play  
Have, by the very cunning of the scene,  
Been struck so to the soul that presently  
They have proclaim'd their malefactions:  
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ: I'll have these players  
Play something like the murder of my father  
Before mine uncle; I'll observe his looks,  
I'll tent him to the quick; if {he but} blench  
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen

May be {the devil}, and the {devil} hath power  
T'assume a pleasing shape, yea, and perhaps,  
Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,  
As he is very potent with such spirits,  
Abuses me to damn me; I'll have grounds  
More relative than this; the play 's the thing  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.

*Exit.*

## [ACT III, SCENE 1]

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

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

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

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

**GERTRUDE** 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.

**GERTRUDE** Did you assay him to any pastime?

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

**POLONIUS** 'Tis most true,

And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties  
To hear and see the matter.

**CLAUDIUS** 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.

*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

**CLAUDIUS** 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  
{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 the affliction of his love or no  
That thus he suffers for.

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

**OPHELIA** Madam, I wish it may.

**POLONIUS** Ophelia, walk you here, gracious so please you;  
We will bestow ourselves; read on this book,  
That show of such an exercise may color  
Your {loneliness}. We are oft to blame in this;  
'Tis too much proved, that with devotion's visage

And pious action we do sugar o'er  
The devil himself.

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

*Enter Hamlet.*

**POLONIUS** I hear him coming, {let's} withdraw, my lord.

**HAMLET** To be, or not to be, that is the question;  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And, by opposing, end them; to die, to sleep,  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd; to die, to sleep,  
To sleep, perchance to dream; aye there's the rub,  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil  
Must give us pause; there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life:  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? Who would {these} fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,

The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards {of us all},  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pitch and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action. Soft you now,  
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remember'd.

**OPHELIA** Good my lord,  
How does your honour for this many a day?

**HAMLET** I humbly thank you, well.

**OPHELIA** My lord, I have remembrances of yours  
That I have longed long to redeliver;  
I pray you now receive them.

**HAMLET** No, not I, I never gave you aught.

**OPHELIA** My honor'd lord, you know right well you did,  
And with them words of so sweet breath composed  
As made these things more rich; their perfume lost,  
Take these again, for to the noble mind  
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind;  
There, my lord.

**HAMLET** Ha, ha, are you honest?

**OPHELIA** My lord?

**HAMLET** Are you fair?

**OPHELIA** What means your lordship?

**HAMLET** That if you be honest and fair, you should admit no discourse to your beauty.

**OPHELIA** Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

**HAMLET** Aye truly, for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness; this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof; I did love you once.

**OPHELIA** Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

**HAMLET** You should not have believed me, for virtue cannot so {inoculate} our old stock but we shall relish of it; I loved you not.

**OPHELIA** I was the more deceived.

**HAMLET** Get thee {to} a nunnery; why would'st 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 offences 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, believe none of us, go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

**OPHELIA** At home, my lord.

**HAMLET** Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool nowhere but in's own house. Farewell.

**OPHELIA** O help him, you sweet heavens.

**HAMLET** If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry; be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny; get thee to a nunnery, farewell. Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool, for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them: To a nunnery go, and quickly too, farewell.

**OPHELIA** Heavenly powers restore him.

**HAMLET** I have heard of your paintings well enough; God hath given you one face and you make yourselves another; you jig, {you} amble, and you {lisp}, you nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance; go to, I'll no more on't, it hath made me mad. I say we will have no more marriage; those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are: To a nunnery go.

*Exit.*

**OPHELIA** O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!  
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword;  
Th'expectation and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form;  
Th'observed of all observers, quite, quite down;  
And I of ladies most deject and wretched,  
That suck'd the honey of his music'd vows,  
Now see {that} noble and most sovereign reason  
Like sweet bells jangled out of time and harsh;  
That unmatch'd form and stature of blown youth  
Blasted with ecstasy: O woe is me  
T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see.

*Enter King and Polonius.*

**CLAUDIUS** Love? His affections do not that way tend,  
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,  
Was not like madness; there's something in his soul  
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,

And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose  
Will be some danger; which for to prevent,  
I have in quick determination  
Thus set it down: He shall with speed to England,  
For the demand of our neglected tribute;  
Haply the seas and countries different,  
With variable objects, shall expel  
This something-settled matter in his heart,  
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus  
From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

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

**CLAUDIUS** It shall be so;  
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.

*Exeunt.*

## [ACT III, SCENE 2]

*Enter Hamlet and three of the Players.*

**HAMLET** Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounc'd it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as [lief] the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand thus, but use all gently, for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the 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 dumbshews and noise: I would have such a fellow whipp'd for o'erdoing Termagant, it out-Herod's Herod, pray you avoid it.

**PLAYER** I warrant your honour.

**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 any thing 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 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 make the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre 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 reform'd that indifferently with us.

**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 mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered; that's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it: Go make you ready. How now, my lord, will the King hear this piece of work?

*{Exit Players.}*

*Enter Polonius, Guildenstern, and Rosencrantz.*

**POLONIUS** And the Queen too, and that presently.

**HAMLET** Bid the players make haste.

*{Exit Polonius.}*

Will you two help to hasten them?

**ROSENCRANTZ** Aye, my lord.

*Exeunt [Rosencrantz and Guildenstern].*

**HAMLET** What {hoa}, Horatio?

*Enter Horatio.*

**HORATIO** Here sweet lord, at your service.

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

**HORATIO** O my dear lord.

**HAMLET** Nay, do not think I flatter,

For what advancement may I hope from thee  
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits  
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd?  
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,  
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee  
Where thrift may follow fawning; dost thou hear?  
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice  
And could of men distinguish, her election  
S'hath seal'd thee for herself, for thou hast been  
As one in suff'ring all that suffers nothing;  
A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards  
Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and blest are those  
Whose blood and judgment are so well comeddled  
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger  
To sound what stop she please: Give me that man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core; aye in my heart of heart  
As I do thee. Something too much of this.  
There is a play tonight before the King;  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
Which I have told thee of my father's death;  
I prithee when thou see'st that act afoot,  
Even with the very comment of thy soul  
Observe my uncle; if his occulted guilt  
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,  
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,  
And my imaginations are as foul  
As Vulcan's stithy; give him heedful note,  
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,  
And after we will both our judgments join  
In censure of his seeming.

**HORATIO** Well, my lord,  
If {he} steal aught the whilst this play is playing  
And 'scape {detecting}, I will pay the theft.



*Enter Trumpets and Kettle Drums, King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia,  
{Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and other Lords attendant with his Guard  
carrying Torches. Danish March. Sound a Flourish.}*

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

**CLAUDIUS** How fares our cousin Hamlet?

**HAMLET** Excellent, i' faith,  
Of the chameleon's dish, I eat the air,  
Promise cramm'd, you cannot feed capons so.

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

**HAMLET** No, nor mine now, my lord.  
You play'd once i'th'university you say.

**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 kill'd me.

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

**ROSENCRANTZ** Aye, my lord, they stay upon your patience.

**GERTRUDE** Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

**HAMLET** No good mother, here's mettle more attractive.

**POLONIUS** O ho, do you mark that?

**HAMLET** Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

**OPHELIA** No, my lord.

**{HAMLET}** I mean, my head upon your lap?

**OPHELIA** Aye, my lord.}

**HAMLET** Do you think I meant country matters?

**OPHELIA** I think nothing, my lord.

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

**OPHELIA** What is, my lord?

**HAMLET** Nothing.

**OPHELIA** You are merry, my lord.

**HAMLET** Who, I?

**OPHELIA** Aye, my lord.

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

**OPHELIA** Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

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

*The Trumpets sound. Dumbshow follows.*

*Enter a King and a Queen, the Queen embracing him and he her. 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 her. The dead body is carried away, the poisoner woos the Queen with gifts, she seems harsh awhile, but in the end accepts love.*

*{Hautboys play. The dumbshow enters.*

*Enter a King and Queen, very lovingly; the Queen embracing him. She kneels and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up and declines his head upon her neck. Lays him down upon a bank of flowers. She seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exits. The Queen returns, finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The poisoner, with some two or three mutes comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away: The poisoner woos the Queen with gifts; she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love. Exeunt.}*

*[Enter in a Dumbshow the King and the Queen. He sits down in an arbor, she leaves him. Then enters Lucianus with poison in a vial and pours it in his ears and goes away. Then the Queen cometh and finds him dead and goes away with the other.]*

**OPHELIA**      What means this, my lord?

**HAMLET**      Marry, this {is mitching} malicho, {that} means mischief.

**OPHELIA**      Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

*Enter Prologue.*

**HAMLET**      We shall know by this fellow; the players cannot keep {counsel}, they'll tell all.

**OPHELIA**      Will [he] tell us what this show meant?

**HAMLET**      Aye, or any show that you will show him; be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

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

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

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

**OPHELIA**      'Tis brief, my lord.

**HAMLET**      As woman's love.

*Enter [two players as] King and Queen.*

**[PLAYER] KING**      Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round  
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus orb'd the ground,  
And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen  
About the world have times twelve thirties been,  
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands  
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

**[PLAYER] QUEEN**      So many journeys may the sun and moon  
Make us again count o'er ere love be done;  
But woe is me, you are so sick of late,  
So far from cheer and from our 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,

Either none, in neither aught, or in extremity;  
Now what my {love} is proof hath made you know,  
And as my love is sized, my fear is so;  
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;  
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

[PLAYER] KING       'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;  
My operant powers their functions leave to do,  
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,  
Honor'd, beloved; and haply one as kind  
For husband shalt thou--

[PLAYER] QUEEN                               O confound the rest;  
Such love must needs be treason in my breast;  
In second husband let me be accurst;  
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

HAMLET       That's wormwood.

[PLAYER] QUEEN       The instances that second marriage move  
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love;  
A second time I kill my husband dead,  
When second husband kisses me in bed.

[PLAYER] KING       I do believe you think what now you speak,  
But what we do determine oft we break;  
Purpose is but the slave to memory;  
Of violent birth, but poor validity,  
Which now, {like} fruit unripe, sticks on the tree  
But [falls] unshaken when they mellow be.  
Most necessary 'tis that we forget  
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt;  
What to ourselves in passion we propose,  
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.  
The violence of either grief or joy  
Their own {enactors} with themselves destroy;  
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;

Grief {joys}, joy grieves on slender accident;  
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange  
That even our loves should with our fortunes change:  
For 'tis a question, left us yet to prove,  
Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love.  
The great man down you mark his favorite flies,  
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies,  
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;  
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,  
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,  
Directly seasons him his enemy.  
But orderly to end where I begun,  
Our wills and fates do so contrary run  
That our devices still are overthrown;  
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own;  
So think thou wilt no second husband wed,  
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

[PLAYER] QUEEN       Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light,  
Sport and repose lock from me day and night,  
To desperation turn my trust and hope,  
And 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 I be a widow, ever I be wife.

HAMLET       If she should break it now.

[PLAYER] KING       'Tis deeply sworn, sweet, leave me here awhile;  
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile  
The tedious day with sleep.

[PLAYER] QUEEN                               Sleep rock thy brain,  
*{Sleeps.}*

And never come mischance between us twain.

{Exit.}

**HAMLET** Madam, how like you this play?

**GERTRUDE** The lady doth protest too much methinks.

**HAMLET** O but she'll keep her word.

**CLAUDIUS** Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in't?

**HAMLET** No, no, they do but jest; poison in jest; no offence i'th'world.

**CLAUDIUS** What do you call the play?

**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. This is one Lucianus, nephew to the King.

*Enter Lucianus.*

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

**HAMLET** I could interpret between you and your love,  
If I could see the puppets dallying.

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

**HAMLET** It would cost you a groaning to take off {my} edge.

**OPHELIA** Still better and worse.

**HAMLET** So you mistake your husbands. Begin murderer, leave thy damnable faces and begin; come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

**LUCIANUS** Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;  
Considerate season, else no creature seeing;  
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,  
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice invected,  
Thy natural magic and dire property,  
On wholesome life usurps immediately.

**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.

**OPHELIA** The King rises.

{**HAMLET** What, frightened with false fire.}

**GERTRUDE** How fares my lord?

**POLONIUS** Give o'er the play.

**CLAUDIUS** Give me some light, away.

**POLONIUS** Lights, lights, lights.

*Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio.*

**HAMLET** Why, let the stricken deer go weep,  
The hart ungalled play,  
For some must watch, while some must sleep,  
Thus runs the world away.

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers (if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me) with provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players?

**HORATIO** Half a share.

**HAMLET** A whole one I.  
For thou dost know, oh Damon dear,  
This realm dismantled was  
Of Jove himself, and now reigns here  
A very, very pajock.

**HORATIO** You might have rhymed.

**HAMLET** O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a  
thousand pound. Did'st perceive?

**HORATIO** Very well, my lord.

**HAMLET** Upon the talk of the poisoning.

**HORATIO** I did very well note him.

**HAMLET** Ah ha, come, some music; come, the recorders,  
For if the King like not the comedy,  
Why then belike he likes it not perdy.  
Come, some music.

*Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

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

**HAMLET** Sir, a whole history.

**GUILDENSTERN** The King, sir—

**HAMLET** Aye sir, what of him?

**GUILDENSTERN** Is in his retirement marvelous distemp' red.

**HAMLET** With drink, sir?

**GUILDENSTERN** No, my lord, {rather} with choler.

**HAMLET** Your wisdom should show itself more richer  
To signify this to his doctor,  
For for me to put him to his purgation  
Would perhaps plunge him into more choler.

**GUILDENSTERN** Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame  
And {start} not so wildly from my affair.

**HAMLET** I am tame, sir, pronounce.

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

**HAMLET** You are welcome.

**GUILDENSTERN** Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of  
the right breed; if it shall please you to make me a wholesome  
answer, I will do your mother's commandment; if not, your pardon,  
and my return, shall be the end of {my} business.

**HAMLET** Sir, I cannot.

**GUILDENSTERN** What, my lord?

**HAMLET** Make you a wholesome answer, my wit's diseas'd; but,  
sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or rather, as you say,  
my mother: Therefore no more, but to the matter. My mother, you say—

**ROSENCRANTZ** Then thus she says, your behavior hath  
struck her into amazement and admiration.

**HAMLET** O wonderful son that can so 'stonish a mother, but is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

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

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

**ROSENCRANTZ** My lord, you once did love me.

**HAMLET** And do still, by these pickers and stealers.

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

**HAMLET** Sir, I lack advancement.

**ROSENCRANTZ** How can that be, when you have the voice of the King himself for your succession in Denmark?

*Enter the Players with Recorders.*

**HAMLET** Aye sir, but while the grass grows; the proverb is something musty. O, the recorders, let me see one. To withdraw with you, why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

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

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

**GUILDENSTERN** My lord, I cannot.

**HAMLET** I pray you.

**GUILDENSTERN** Believe me, I cannot.

**HAMLET** I do beseech you.

**GUILDENSTERN** I know no touch of it, my lord.

**HAMLET** It is as easy as lying; govern these ventages with your fingers and {thumb}, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music, look you, these are the stops.

**GUILDENSTERN** But these cannot I command to any utt'rance of harmony; I have not the skill.

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

*Enter Polonius.*

**POLONIUS** My lord, the Queen would speak with you, and presently.

**HAMLET** Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

**POLONIUS** By th'mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.

**HAMLET** Methinks it is like a weasel.

**POLONIUS** It is back'd like a weasel.

## [ACT III, SCENE 3]

**HAMLET** Or like a whale.

**POLONIUS** Very like a whale.

**HAMLET** Then I will come to my mother by and by. They fool me to the top of my bent. I will come by and by. {~~Leave me friends.~~}

{**POLONIUS**} I will say so.

{Exit.}

**HAMLET** By and by is easily said. {Leave me friends.}

{*Exeunt.*  
*Manet Hamlet.*}

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

*Exit.*

*Enter King, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.*

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

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

**ROSENCRANTZ** The single and peculiar life is bound  
With all the strength and armor of the mind  
To keep itself from noyance, but much more  
That spirit upon whose weal depend and rest  
The lives of many; the cease of Majesty  
Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw  
What's near it with it; or it is a massy wheel,  
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,  
To whose {huge} spokes ten thousand lesser things  
Are mortised and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,  
Each small annexment, petty consequence,  
Attends the boist'rous rain. Never alone  
Did the King sigh, but {with} a general groan.

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

**ROSENCRANTZ** We will haste us.

*Exeunt Gentlemen.*

*Enter Polonius.*

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

*Exit.*

**CLAUDIUS** Thanks dear my lord.  
O my offence is rank, it smells to heaven,  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,  
A brother's murder; pray can I not,  
Though inclination be as sharp as will,  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,  
And like a man to double business bound  
I stand in pause where I shall first begin  
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand  
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?  
Is there not rain enough in the sweet Heavens  
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy  
But to confront the visage of offence?  
And what's in prayer but this two-fold force,  
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
Or {pardon'd} being down? Then I'll look up.  
My fault is past, but oh what form of prayer  
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder?  
That cannot be since I am still possess'd  
Of those effects for which I did the murder;  
My crown, mine own ambition, and my Queen;  
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?

In the corrupted currents of this world  
Offence's gilded hand may {shove} by justice  
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself  
Buys out the law, but 'tis not so above;  
There is no shuffling, there the action lies  
In his true nature, and we ourselves compell'd  
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 can not repent?  
O wretched state, O bosom black as death,  
O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,  
Art more engaged; help, angels, make assay,  
Bow stubborn knees, and heart with strings of steel  
Be soft as sinews of the newborn babe;  
All may be well.

*[He kneels.]*

*Enter Hamlet.*

**HAMLET** Now might I do it, but now {he} is a' praying;  
And now I'll do't, and so {he} goes to heaven,  
And so am I reveng'd, that would be scann'd;  
A villain kills my father, and, for that,  
I his sole son do this same villain send  
To heaven.  
Why, this is {hire and salary}, not revenge;  
{He} took my father grossly full of bread,  
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May,  
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven,  
But in our circumstance and course of thought,  
'Tis heavy with him: And am I then revenged,  
To take him in the purging of his soul,  
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?  
No.  
Up sword, and know thou a more horrid hent;  
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 damn'd and black  
As hell whereto it goes; my mother stays,  
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

*Exit.*

**CLAUDIUS** My words fly up, my thoughts remain below;  
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

*Exit.*

## [ACT IV, SCENE 1]

[Act III, Scene 4]

*Enter Gertrude 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 screen'd and stood between  
Much heat and him; I'll silence me even here;  
Pray you, be round {with him}.

*{Enter Hamlet.}*

*{HAMLET (within) Mother, mother, mother.}*

**GERTRUDE** I'll {warrant} you, fear me not:  
Withdraw, I hear him coming.

*[Exit Polonius.]*

*{Enter Hamlet.}*

**HAMLET** Now mother, what's the matter?

**GERTRUDE** Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

**HAMLET** Mother, you have my father much offended.

**GERTRUDE** Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

**HAMLET** Go, go, you question with a {wicked} tongue.

**GERTRUDE** Why, how now, Hamlet?

**HAMLET** What's the matter now?

**GERTRUDE** Have you forgot me?

**HAMLET** No by the rood, not so,  
 You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife,  
 And, would it were not so, you are my mother.

**GERTRUDE** 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.

**GERTRUDE** What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?  
 Help, {help, hoa}!

**POLONIUS** What, hoa, help, {help, help}.

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

*Kills Polonius.*

**POLONIUS** O I am slain.

**GERTRUDE** O me, what hast thou done?

**HAMLET** Nay, I know not, is it the King?

**GERTRUDE** 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.

**GERTRUDE** As kill a king.

**HAMLET** Aye lady, {'twas} my word.

*[Discovers Polonius.]*

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,  
 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 damned custom have not brass'd it so  
 That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

**GERTRUDE** What have I done, that thou dare'st wag thy tongue  
 In noise so rude against me?

**HAMLET** Such an act  
 That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,  
 Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose  
 From the fair forehead of an innocent love  
 And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows  
 As false as dicers' oaths; O such a deed  
 As from the body of contraction plucks  
 The very soul and sweet religion makes  
 A rhapsody of words; heaven's face does glow  
 O'er this solidity and compound mass  
 With heated visage; as against the doom  
 Is thought-sick at the act.

**GERTRUDE** Aye me, what act,  
 {That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?}

**HAMLET** Look here, upon this picture, and on this,  
 The counterfeit presentment of two brothers;  
 See what a grace was seated on this brow,  
 Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,  
 An eye like Mars to threaten and command,  
 A station like the herald Mercury  
 New-lighted on a {heaven-kissing} hill,  
 A combination and a form indeed  
 Where every God did seem to set his seal

To give the world assurance of a man;  
 This was your husband. Look you now, what follows.  
 Here is your husband like a mildew'd ear,  
 Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?  
 Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed  
 And batten on this moor? Ha, have you eyes?  
 You cannot call it love, for at your age  
 The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,  
 And waits upon the judgment, and what judgment  
 Would step from this to this? <Sense sure you have  
 Else could you not have motion, but sure that sense  
 Is apoplex'd, for madness would not err  
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd  
 But it reserv'd some quantity of choice  
 To serve in such a difference.> What devil was't  
 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?  
 <Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,  
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all;  
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense  
 Could not so mope:> O shame where it thy blush?  
 Rebellious hell,  
 If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,  
 To flaming youth let virtue be as wax  
 And melt in her own fire; proclaim no shame  
 When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,  
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn  
 And reason pardons will.

**GERTRUDE** O Hamlet speak no more,  
 Thou turn'st my very eyes into my soul,  
 And there I see such black and griev'd spots  
 As will leave there their tinct.

**HAMLET** Nay, but to live  
 In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed  
 Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love  
 Over the nasty sty.

**GERTRUDE** O speak to me no more,  
 These words like daggers enter in my ears;  
 No more, sweet Hamlet.

**HAMLET** A murderer and a villain;  
 A slave that is not twentieth part the kith  
 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!

**GERTRUDE** No more.

*Enter Ghost.*

**HAMLET** A king of shreds and patches—  
 Save me and hover o'er me with your wings,  
 You heavenly guards: What would your gracious figure?

**GERTRUDE** Alas he's mad.

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

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

**HAMLET** How is it with you, lady?

**GERTRUDE** Alas, how is't with you?  
 That you do bend your eye on vacancy

And with th'incorporal air do hold discourse?  
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep,  
And, as the sleeping soldiers in th'alarm,  
Your bedded {hairs}, like life in excrements,  
Starts up, and stands [on] end. O gentle son,  
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper  
Sprinkle cool patience; whereon do you look?

**HAMLET** On him, on him, look you how pale he glares;  
His form and cause conjoin'd preaching to stones  
Would make them capable; do not look upon me,  
Lest with this piteous action you convert  
My stern effects; then what I have to do  
Will want true color, tears perchance for blood.

**GERTRUDE** To whom do you speak this?

**HAMLET** Do you see nothing there?

**GERTRUDE** Nothing at all, yet all that is I see.

**HAMLET** Nor did you nothing hear?

**GERTRUDE** No, nothing but ourselves.

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

*Exit Ghost.*

**GERTRUDE** This the very coinage of your brain;  
This bodiless creation ecstasy  
Is very cunning in.

**HAMLET** {Ecstasy?}  
My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time

And makes as healthful music; it is not madness  
That I have utt' red; bring me to the test,  
And {I} the matter will reword, which madness  
Would gambol from; mother, for love of grace  
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul  
That not your trespass but my madness speaks;  
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,  
{Whilst} rank corruption mining all within  
Infects unseen; confess yourself to heaven,  
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,  
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,  
To make them ranker; forgive me this my virtue,  
For in the fatness of these pursy times  
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,  
Yea curb and woo for leave to do him good.

**GERTRUDE** 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 mine uncle's bed;  
Assume a virtue if you have it not;  
<That monster custom, who all sense doth eat,  
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this;  
That to the use of actions fair and good  
He likewise gives a frock or livery  
That aptly is put on. Refrain tonight,>  
And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
To the next abstinence, <the next more easy:  
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,  
And either {curb} the devil, or throw him out  
With wondrous potency:> Once more good night,  
And when you are desirous to be bless'd,  
I'll blessing beg of you, for this same lord  
I do repent; but heaven hath pleased it so,  
To punish me with this, and this with me,  
That I must be their scourge and minister;

I will bestow him and will answer well  
The death I gave him. So again good night;  
I must be cruel only to be kind;  
This bad begins and worse remains behind.  
<One word more, good lady.>

**GERTRUDE** What shall I do?

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

**GERTRUDE** Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath  
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe  
What thou hast said to me.

**HAMLET** I must to England, you know that.

**GERTRUDE** Alack I had forgot. 'Tis so concluded on.

**HAMLET** <There's letters seal'd, and my two schoolfellows,  
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,  
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,  
But I will delve one yard below their mines  
And blow them at the moon: O 'tis most sweet  
When in one line two crafts directly meet.>  
This man shall set me packing;  
I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room.  
Mother, good night indeed. This councilor  
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.

*Exit.*

[Act IV, Scene 1]

*Enter King (and Queen) with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

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

**GERTRUDE** <Bestow this place on us a little while.>

[*Exit Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen to-night!

**CLAUDIUS** What Gertrude, how does Hamlet?

**GERTRUDE** 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.

**CLAUDIUS** 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 every one;  
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?  
It will be laid to us, whose providence  
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt,  
This mad young man; but so much was our love  
We would not understand what was most fit,  
But like the owner of a foul disease,  
To keep it from divulging, let it feed  
Even on the pith of life: Where is he gone?

**GERTRUDE** To draw apart the body he hath kill'd,  
O'er whom his very madness like some ore  
Among a mineral of metals base,  
Shows itself pure; {he} weeps for what is done.

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

*Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

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

*{Exit Gentlemen.}*

Come Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends,  
And let them know both what we mean to do  
And what's untimely done; {so haply slander,}

<Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,  
As level as the cannon to his blank,  
Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name,  
And hit the woundless air;> O come away,  
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

*Exeunt.*

## [ACT IV, SCENE 2]

*Enter Hamlet {Rosencrantz, and others}.*

**HAMLET** Safely stowed.

**{GENTLEMEN WITHIN}** Hamlet, Lord Hamlet.

**HAMLET** <But soft>, what noise, who calls on Hamlet?  
O here they come.

*{Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.}*

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

**HAMLET** {Compounded} it with dust whereto 'tis kin.

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

**HAMLET** Do not believe it.

**ROSENCRANTZ** Believe what?

**HAMLET** That I can keep your counsel and not mine own;  
Besides, to be demanded of a sponge?  
What replication should be made by the son of a king?

**ROSENCRANTZ** Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

**HAMLET** Aye sir, that soaks up the King's countenance, his  
rewards, his authorities; but such officers do the King best service in  
the end; he keeps them, like an {ape}, in the corner of his jaw; first  
mouth'd to be last swallowed; when he needs what you have  
gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

**ROSENCRANTZ** I understand you not, my lord.

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

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

**HAMLET** The body is with the King, but the King is not with  
the body. The King is a thing—

**GUILDENSTERN** A thing, my lord.

**HAMLET** Of nothing, bring me to him. {Hide fox, and all  
after.}

*Exeunt.*

## [ACT IV, SCENE 3]

*Enter King and two or three.*

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

*Enter Rosencrantz and all the rest.*

How now, what hath befall'n?

**ROSENCRANTZ** Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,  
We cannot get from him.

**CLAUDIUS** But where is he?

**ROSENCRANTZ** Without, my lord, guarded to know your pleasure.

**CLAUDIUS** Bring him before us.

**ROSENCRANTZ** Ho, bring in the lord.

*They enter.  
{Enter Hamlet and Guildenstern.}*

**CLAUDIUS** Now Hamlet, where's Polonius?

**HAMLET** At supper.

**CLAUDIUS** 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.

<**CLAUDIUS** Alas, alas.

**HAMLET** A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a King, and cat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.>

**CLAUDIUS** What dost you mean by this?

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

**CLAUDIUS** 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.

**CLAUDIUS** Go seek him there.

**HAMLET** {He} will stay till ye come.

**CLAUDIUS** Hamlet, this deed for thine especial safety  
(Which we do tender as we dearly grieve  
For that which thou hast done) must send thee hence  
{With fiery quickness}: Therefore prepare thyself;  
The bark is ready and the wind at help,  
Th'associates tend, and every thing is bent



For England.

Howe'er my haps, my joys {were} ne'er begun.

*Exit.*

**HAMLET** For England.

**CLAUDIUS** Aye Hamlet.

**HAMLET** Good.

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

**HAMLET** I see a cherub that sees them; but come, for England.  
Farewell, dear mother.

**CLAUDIUS** Thy loving father, Hamlet.

**HAMLET** My mother: Father and mother is man and wife,  
Man and wife is one flesh, {and} so my mother.  
Come, for England.

*Exit.*

**CLAUDIUS** Follow him at foot, tempt him with speed aboard;  
Delay it not, I'll have him hence tonight.  
Away, for every thing is seal'd and done  
That else leans on th'affair; pray you make haste.

*[Exeunt all but the King.]*

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

## [ACT IV, 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 promis'd march  
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.  
If that his Majesty would aught with us,  
We shall express our duty in his eye,  
And let him know so.

**CAPTAIN** I will do't, my lord.

**FORTINBRAS** Go softly on.

*[Exeunt. Manet Captain.]*  
*<Enter Hamlet, Rosencrantz, et cetera.*

**HAMLET** Good sir, whose powers are these?

**CAPTAIN** They are of Norway, sir.

**HAMLET** How purposed, sir, I pray you?

**CAPTAIN** Against some part of Poland.

**HAMLET** Who commands them, sir?

**CAPTAIN** The nephews to old Norway, Fortinbras.

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

**CAPTAIN** Truly to speak, and with no addition,  
We go to gain a little patch of ground

That hath in it no profit but the name.  
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;  
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole  
A ranker rate should it be sold in fee.

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

**CAPTAIN** Yes, it is already garrison'd.

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

**CAPTAIN** God buy you, sir.

*[Exit.]*

**ROSENCRANTZ** Will't please you go, my lord?

**HAMLET** I'll be with you straight, go a little before.

*[Exeunt. Manet Hamlet.]*

How all occasions do inform against me  
And spur my dull revenge. What is a man  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more:  
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,  
Looking before and after, gave us not  
That capability and god-like reason  
To fust in us unused; now whether it be  
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple  
Of thinking too precisely on th'event  
(A thought which quarter'd hath but one part wisdom  
And ever three parts coward) I do not know  
Why yet I live to say this thing's to do,

Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means  
To do't; examples gross as earth exhort me;  
Witness this army of such mass and charge,  
Led by a delicate and tender prince,  
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd  
Makes mouths at the invisible event,  
Exposing what is mortal, and unsure,  
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,  
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great  
Is not to stir without great argument,  
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw  
When honour's at the stake; how stand I then  
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,  
Excitements of my reason and my blood,  
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see  
The imminent death of twenty thousand men  
That for a fantasy and trick of fame  
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,  
Which is not tomb enough and continent  
To hide the slain? O from this time forth  
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth.

*Exit.>*

## [ACT V, SCENE 1]

[Act IV, Scene 5]

*Enter Horatio, Gertrude, and a Gentleman.*

**GERTRUDE** I will not speak with her.

**GENTLEMAN** She is importunate, indeed distract:  
Her mood will needs be pitied.

**GERTRUDE** What would she have?

**GENTLEMAN** She speaks much of her father, says she hears  
There's tricks i'th'world, and hems, and beats her heart,  
Spurns enviously at straws, speaks things in doubt  
That carry but half sense; her speech is nothing,  
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move  
The hearers to collection; they {aim} at it  
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts,  
Which as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield them,  
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,  
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

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

{**GERTRUDE**} Let her come in.

*Enter Ophelia.*

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.

**OPHELIA** Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark?

**GERTRUDE** How now Ophelia?

*She sings.*

**OPHELIA**

*How should I your true love know from another one?  
By his cockle hat and staff and his sandal shoon.*

**GERTRUDE** Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

**OPHELIA** Say you, nay pray you mark:

*He is dead and gone, lady, he is dead and gone;  
At his head a grass-green turf, at his heels a stone.*

*{Enter King.}*

**GERTRUDE** Nay but Ophelia.

**OPHELIA** Pray you, mark.

*White his shroud as the mountain snow.*

*Enter King.*

**GERTRUDE** Alas, look here, my lord.

**OPHELIA**

*Larded all with sweet flowers,  
Which bewept to the ground did not go  
With true-love showers.*

**CLAUDIUS** How do you, pretty lady?

**OPHELIA** Well [God 'ild] 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.

**CLAUDIUS** Conceit upon her father.

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

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

**CLAUDIUS** Pretty Ophelia.

**OPHELIA** Indeed without an oath I'll make an end on't:

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

(He answers.)

*So would I a' done, by yonder sun,  
And thou hadst not come to my bed.*

**CLAUDIUS** How long hath she been thus?

**OPHELIA** I hope all will be well; we must be patient, but I cannot choose but weep to think they would lay him i'th' cold ground; my brother shall know of it, and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come my coach, good night ladies, good night. Sweet ladies good night, good night.

*{Exit.}*

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

*O this is the poison of deep grief, it springs  
All from her father's death, and now behold*

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

*A noise within.  
Enter a Messenger.*

{GERTRUDE Alack, what noise is this?}

CLAUDIUS Attend, where {are} my Switzers? Let them guard the door.  
What is the matter?

GENTLEMAN Save yourself, my lord.  
The ocean overpeering of his list  
Eats not the flats with more impiteous haste  
Than young Laertes in a riotous head  
O'erbears your officers: The rabble call him Lord,  
And as the world were now but to begin,  
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,  
The ratifiers and props of every word,

They cry, "Choose we, Laertes shall be King";  
Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,  
"Laertes shall be King, Laertes King."

GERTRUDE How cheerfully on the false trail they cry.

*A noise within.*

O this is counter, you false Danish dogs.

CLAUDIUS The doors are broke.

*Enter Laertes with others.*

LAERTES Where is this King? Sirs, stand you all without.

ALL No, let's come in.

LAERTES I pray you, give me leave.

ALL We will, we will.

LAERTES I thank you, keep the door. O thou vile king,  
Give me my father.

GERTRUDE Calmly, good Laertes.

LAERTES That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard,  
Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot  
Even here between the chaste unsmirched brow  
Of my true mother.

CLAUDIUS What is the cause, Laertes,  
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?  
Let him go Gertrude, do not fear our person;  
There's such divinity doth hedge a King  
That treason can but peep to what it would,

Acts little of his will; tell me Laertes  
Why thou art thus incensed; let him go Gertrude.  
Speak man.

**LAERTES** Where is my father?

**CLAUDIUS** Dead.

**GERTRUDE** But not by him.

**CLAUDIUS** 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  
I dare damnation; to this point I stand,  
That both the worlds I give to negligence;  
Let come what comes, only I'll be reveng'd  
Most thoroughly for my father.

**CLAUDIUS** Who shall stay you?

**LAERTES** My will, not all the worlds:  
And for my means, I'll husband them so well,  
They shall go far with little.

**CLAUDIUS** Good Laertes,  
If you desire to know the certainty  
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge  
That, [swoopstake], you will draw both friend and foe,  
Winner and loser?

**LAERTES** None but his enemies.

**CLAUDIUS** Will you know them then?

**LAERTES** To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms

And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,  
Repast them with my blood.

**CLAUDIUS** Why, now you speak  
Like a good child, and a true gentleman.  
That I am guiltless of your father's death,  
And am most sensibly in grief for it,  
It shall as level to your judgment peer  
As day does to your eye.

*A noise within.*

[**SOMEONE WITHIN**] Let her come in.

*Enter Ophelia.*

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

**OPHELIA**  
*They bore him barefaced on the bier,  
{Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny:}  
And in his grave rain'd many a tear,  
Fare you well, my dove.*

**LAERTES** Had'st thou thy wits and did'st persuade revenge  
It could not move thus.

**OPHELIA** You must sing a-down a-down,  
And you call him a-down-a. O how the wheel becomes it;  
It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.

**LAERTES** This nothing's more than matter.

**OPHELIA** There's rosemary, that's for remembrance, pray you  
love remember, and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

**LAERTES** A document in madness, thoughts and  
remembrance fitted.

**OPHELIA** There's fennel for you, and columbines, there's rue  
for you, and here's some for me; we may call it herb of grace a'  
Sundays; you may wear your rue with a difference; there's a daisy; I  
would give you some violets, but they wither'd all when my father  
died; they say {he} made a good end.

*For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.*

**LAERTES** Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself  
She turns to favor and to prettiness.

**OPHELIA**

*And will {he} not come again?  
And will {he} not come again?  
No, no, he is dead,  
Go to thy death-bed,  
He never will come again.*

*His beard was as white as snow,  
{All} flaxen was his pole:  
He is gone, he is gone,  
And we cast away moan;  
God a' mercy on his soul.*

And of all Christian souls. God buy you.

*{Exeunt Ophelia.}*

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

**CLAUDIUS** Laertes, I must commune with your grief,  
Or you deny me right; go but apart,  
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,  
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me;  
If by direct or by collateral hand  
They find us touch'd, 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 labour with your soul  
To give it due content.

**LAERTES** Let this be so.  
His means of death, his obscure funeral;  
No trophy sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones;  
No noble rite, nor formal ostentation  
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,  
That I must call't in question.

**CLAUDIUS** So you shall,  
And where th'offence is, let the great axe fall.  
I pray you go with me.

*Exeunt.*

## [ACT V, SCENE 2]

[Act IV, Scene 2]

*Enter Horatio and [Gentleman].*

**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.

*[Exit Gentleman.]*

I do not know from what part of the world  
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

*Enter Sailors.*

**SAILOR** God bless you, sir.

**HORATIO** Let him bless thee too.

**SAILOR** {He} shall, sir, {and'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.

**HORATIO** *Horatio, when thou shalt have overlook'd 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 would'st fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb, yet are they much too light for the {bore} of the matter. These good fellows will bring*

*thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England; of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.*

*{He} that thou knowest thine, Hamlet.*

Come, I will make you way for these your letters,  
And do't the speedier that you may direct me  
To him from whom you brought them.

*Exeunt.*



## [ACT V, SCENE 3]

[Act IV, Scene 7]

*Enter King and Laertes.*

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

**LAERTES** It well appears: But tell me  
Why you proceed not against these feats  
So criminal and so capital in nature,  
As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things else  
You mainly were stirr'd up.

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

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

*Enter a Messenger with Letters.*

{How now? What news?}

**MESSENGER** {Letters, my lord, from Hamlet.  
These to your Majesty, this to the Queen.

**CLAUDIUS** From Hamlet? Who brought them?

**MESSENGER** Sailors, my lord, they say, I saw them not;  
They were given me by Claudio, he received them  
Of him that brought them.

**CLAUDIUS** Laertes, you shall hear them: Leave us.

*{Exit Messenger.}*

*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  
you pardon, thereunto recount the occasion of my sudden return.*

Hamlet.

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

**LAERTES** Know you the hand?

**CLAUDIUS** 'Tis Hamlets character. Naked;  
And in a postscript here he says alone;  
Can you {advise} me?

**LAERTES** I am lost in it, my lord, but let him come;  
It warms the very sickness in my heart  
That I {shall} live and tell him to his teeth;  
Thus did'st thou.

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

**LAERTES** Aye my lord,  
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

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

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

**CLAUDIUS** It falls right,  
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,  
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality  
Wherein, they say, you shine; your sum of parts  
Did not together pluck such envy from him  
As did that one, and that, in my regard,  
Of the unworthiest siege.

**LAERTES** What part is that, my lord?

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

**LAERTES** A Norman was't?

**CLAUDIUS** A Norman.

**LAERTES** Upon my life, Lamord.

**CLAUDIUS** The very same.

**LAERTES** I know him well; he is the brooch indeed  
And gem of all the nation.

**CLAUDIUS** He made confession of you,  
And gave you such a masterly report  
For art and exercise in your defense,  
And for your rapier most especially,  
That he cried out 'twould be a sight indeed  
If one could match you; <the scrimers of their nation  
He swore had neither motion, guard, nor eye,  
If you oppos'd them.> Sir, this report of his

Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy  
That he could nothing do but wish and beg  
Your sudden coming o'er to play with him.  
Now out of this—

**LAERTES** What out of this, my lord?

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

**LAERTES** Why ask you this?

**CLAUDIUS** Not that I think you did not love your father,  
But that I know love is begun by time,  
And that I see, in passages of proof,  
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it;  
<There lives within the very flame of love  
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it,  
And nothing is at a like goodness still,  
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,  
Dies in his own too much; that we would do  
We should do when we would: For this “would” changes,  
And hath abatements and delays as many  
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;  
And then this “should” is like a spendthrift’s sigh,  
That hurts by easing. But to the quick o’th’ulcer;>  
Hamlet comes back, what would you undertake  
To show yourself indeed your father’s son  
More than in words?

**LAERTES** To cut his throat i’th’church.

**CLAUDIUS** No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize,  
Revenge should have no bounds: But good Laertes,  
Will you do this? Keep close within your chamber;  
Hamlet, return’d, shall know you are come home;

We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,  
And set a double varnish on the fame  
The Frenchman gave you; bring you in fine together  
And wager o'er your heads; he being remiss,  
Most generous, and free from all contriving  
Will not peruse the foils, so that with ease,  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
A sword unbated, and in a pace of practice  
Requite him for your father.

**LAERTES** I will do't,  
And for {that} purpose I'll anoint my sword;  
I bought an unction of a mountebank  
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,  
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,  
Collected from all simples that have virtue  
Under the moon, can save the thing from death  
That is but scratch'd withal; I'll touch my point  
With this contagion, that if I gall him slightly  
It may be death.

**CLAUDIUS** Let's further think of this,  
Weigh what convenience both of time and means  
May fit us to our shape; if this should fail,  
And that our drift look through our bad performance,  
'Twere better not assay'd; therefore this project  
Should have a back or second that might hold  
If this {should} blast in proof; soft, let me see,  
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings--  
I {ha't}; when in your motion you are hot and dry,  
As make your bouts more violent to that end,  
And that he calls for drink, I'll have {prepared} him  
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,  
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,  
Our purpose may hold there. <But stay, what noise?>  
{How [now] sweet Queen?}

*Enter Queen.*

*Exit.*

**GERTRUDE** One woe doth tread upon another's heel,  
So fast they follow; your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

**LAERTES** Drown'd, O where?

**GERTRUDE** There is a willow grows ascant the brook,  
That shows his {hoar} leaves in the glassy stream;  
There with fantastic garlands did she make  
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples  
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,  
But our cull-cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.  
There on the pendent boughs, her coronet weeds  
Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliver broke;  
When down her weedy trophies and herself  
Fell in the weeping brook her clothes spread wide,  
And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up;  
Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds  
As one incapable of her own distress,  
Or like a creature native and endued  
Unto that element; but long it could not be  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
To muddy death.

**LAERTES** Alas, then she is drown'd.

**GERTRUDE** Drown'd, drown'd.

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

**CLAUDIUS** Let's follow, Gertrude;  
How much I had to do to calm his rage,  
Now fear I this will give it start again,  
Therefore let's follow.

*Exeunt.*

## [ACT V, SCENE 4]

[Act V, Scene 1]

*Enter two Clowns.*

**1 CLOWN** Is she to be buried in Christian burial when she willfully seeks her own salvation?

**2 CLOWN** I tell thee she is, therefore make her grave straight; the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

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

**2 CLOWN** Why, 'tis found so.

**1 CLOWN** 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 drown'd herself wittingly.

**2 CLOWN** Nay, but hear you, goodman delver—

**1 CLOWN** 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.

**2 CLOWN** But is this law?

**1 CLOWN** Aye marry is't, crowner's quest law.

**2 CLOWN** [Well], you ha' the truth on't, if this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out a' Christian burial.

**1 CLOWN** Why, there thou say'st, 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 gentleman but gardeners, ditchers, and gravemakers, they hold up Adam's profession.

**2 CLOWN** Was he a gentleman?

**1 CLOWN** He was the first that ever bore arms.

{**2 CLOWN** Why, he had none.

**1 CLOWN** What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says "Adam digg'd"; could he dig without arms?} I'll put another question to thee; if thou answerest me not to the purpose confess thyself.

**2 CLOWN** Go to.

**1 CLOWN** What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

**2 CLOWN** The gallows-maker, for that {frame} outlives a thousand tenants.

**1 CLOWN** 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.

**2 CLOWN** Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

**1 CLOWN** Aye, tell me that and unyoke.

**2 CLOWN** Marry, now I can tell.

**1 CLOWN** To't.

**2 CLOWN** Mass, I cannot tell.

*{Enter Hamlet and Horatio afar off.}*

**1 CLOWN** Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating, and when you are ask'd this question next, say a grave-maker, the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee in, and fetch me a stoup of liquor.

*[Exit Second Clown.]*

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

*[He throws up a shovel.]*

**HAMLET** Has this fellow no feeling of his business? {He} sings at grave-making.

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

**HAMLET** 'Tis e'en so, the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

**1 CLOWN** *Song.*  
*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.*

**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 jaw-bone

that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

**HORATIO** It might, my lord.

**HAMLET** Or of a courtier, which could say, "Good morrow, sweet lord; how dost thou, sweet lord?" This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when {he} went to beg it, might it not?

**HORATIO** Aye my lord.

**HAMLET** Why e'en so, and now my Lady Worm's, chopless and knock'd about the {mazzard} with a sexton's spade; here's fine revolution and we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding but to play at loggats with them? Mine ache to think on't.

**1 CLOWN** *Song.*  
*A pick-axe and a spade, a spade,*  
*For and a shrouding sheet,*  
*O a pit of clay for to be made*  
*For such a guest is meet.*

**HAMLET** There's another. Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quillies, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum, this fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: {Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries}, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? Will vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases and double then the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box, and must th'inheritor himself have no more, ha?

**HORATIO** Not a jot more, my lord.

**HAMLET** Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

**HORATIO** Aye 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?

**1 CLOWN** Mine, sir:  
*{O} a pit a clay for to be made,  
 {For such a guest is meet.}*

**HAMLET** I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in't.

**1 CLOWN** You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours; for my part I do not lie in't, yet it is mine.

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

**1 CLOWN** 'Tis a quick lie, sir, 'twill away again from me to you.

**HAMLET** What man dost thou dig it for?

**1 CLOWN** For no man, sir.

**HAMLET** What woman then?

**1 CLOWN** For none neither.

**HAMLET** Who is to be buried in't?

**1 CLOWN** 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 taken a 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 a grave-maker?

**1 CLOWN** 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?

**1 CLOWN** 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** Aye marry, why was he sent into England?

**1 CLOWN** Why, because {he} was mad: {He} shall recover his wits there, or if {he} do not, 'tis no great matter there.

**HAMLET** Why?

**1 CLOWN** 'Twill, a not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

**HAMLET** How came he mad?

**1 CLOWN** Very strangely they say.

**HAMLET** How strangely?

**1 CLOWN** Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

**HAMLET** Upon what ground?

**1 CLOWN** Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

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

**1 CLOWN** 'Faith, if {he} be not rotten before {he} die, as we have many pocky corses {now-a-days} that will scarce hold the laying in, {he} will last you some eight year, or nine year. A tanner will last you nine year.

**HAMLET** Why he more than another?

**1 CLOWN** Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that {he} will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now hath lain i'th'earth {three and twenty} years.

**HAMLET** Whose was it?

**1 CLOWN** A whoreson mad fellow's it was, whose do you think it was?

**HAMLET** Nay, I know not.

**1 CLOWN** A pestilence on him for a mad rogue; a' pour'd a flagon of Rhenish on my head once; this same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the King's jester.

**HAMLET** This?

**1 CLOWN** E'en that.

**HAMLET** {Let me see.} Alas, poor Yorick; I knew him, Horatio, a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy; he hath bore me on his back a thousand times, and now how abhorred in my imagination it is: My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kiss'd I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? Your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning.

Quite chopfall'n. Now get you to my lady's table, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

**HORATIO** What's that, my lord?

**HAMLET** Dost thou think Alexander look'd o' this fashion i'th'earth?

**HORATIO** E'en so.

**HAMLET** And smelt so? Pah.

**HORATIO** E'en so, my lord.

**HAMLET** To what base uses we may return, Horatio? Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till {he} find it stopping a bung-hole?

**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: 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 turn'd to clay,  
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.  
O that that earth which kept the world in awe  
Should patch a wall t'expell the {winter's} flaw.

*Enter King, Queen, Laertes, and the corse [in] {a coffin, with Lords Attendant}, [with a Priest after the coffin].*

But soft, but soft awhile, here comes the King,  
The Queen, the Courtiers; who is this thy follow?  
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken



The corse they follow did with desp'rate hand

**LAERTES** What ceremony else?

**HAMLET** That is Laertes, a very noble youth, mark.

**LAERTES** What ceremony else?

**PRIEST** Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd  
As we have warranty; her death was doubtful,  
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,  
She should in ground unsanctified been lodg'd  
Till the last trumpet: For charitable prayers,  
/Shards/, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her:  
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin {rites},  
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home  
Of bell and burial.

**LAERTES** Must there no more be done?

**PRIEST** No more be done.  
We should profane the service of the dead  
To sing a requiem and such rest to her  
As to peace-parted souls.

**LAERTES** Lay her i'th'earth,  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring: I tell thee, churlish priest,  
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be  
When thou liest howling.

**HAMLET** What, the fair Ophelia.

**GERTRUDE** Sweets to the sweet, farewell;  
I hoped thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife;  
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,  
And not have strew'd thy grave.

**LAERTES** O treble woe  
Fall ten times {treble} on that cursed head  
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense  
Deprived thee of; hold off the earth awhile,  
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

*{Leaps in the grave.}*

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made  
To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus.

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

*[Hamlet leaps in after Laertes.]*

**LAERTES** The devil take thy soul.

**HAMLET** Thou pray'st not well.  
I prithee take thy fingers from my throat,  
For though I am not splenitive and rash,  
Yet have I something in me dangerous,  
Which let thy wisdom fear; hold off thy hand.

**CLAUDIUS** Pluck them asunder.

**GERTRUDE** Hamlet, Hamlet.

**ALL** Gentlemen.

**HORATIO** Good my lord, be quiet.

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

**GERTRUDE** O my son, what theme?

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

**CLAUDIUS** O he is mad, Laertes.

**GERTRUDE** For love of God, forbear him.

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

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

**HAMLET** Hear you, sir,  
What is the reason that you use me thus?  
I lov'd you ever; but it is no matter;  
Let Hercules himself do what he may,  
The cat will mew and dog will have his day.

*Exit Hamlet and Horatio.*

**CLAUDIUS** I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.  
Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech,  
We'll put the matter to the present push:  
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.  
This grave shall have a living monument;  
An hour of quiet thereby shall we see;  
{Till} then in patience our proceeding be.

*Exeunt.*

## [ACT V, SCENE 4]

[Act V, 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; my thought I lay  
Worse than the mutines in the bilbo, rashly  
(And praised be rashness for it). Let us know,  
Our indiscretion {sometimes} serves us well,  
When our deep plots do fall; and that should learn us  
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will.

**HORATIO** That is most certain.

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

**HORATIO** Is't possible?

**HAMLET** Here's the commission, read it at more leisure;  
But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

**HORATIO** I beseech you.

**HAMLET** Being thus be-netted round with villains  
({Ere} I could make a prologue to my brains,  
They had begun the play) I sat me down,  
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair;  
I once did hold it, as our statist do,  
A baseness to write fair, and labor'd much  
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now  
It did me yeoman's service; wilt thou know  
Th'effect of what I wrote?

**HORATIO** Aye, good my lord.

**HAMLET** An earnest conjuration from the King,  
As England was his faithful tributary,  
As love between them like the palm might flourish,  
As peace should stiff her wheaten garland wear  
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,  
And many such-like {as'es} of great charge,  
That on the view, and knowing of these contents,  
Without debatement further more or less,  
He should {the} bearers put to sudden death,  
Not shriving time allow'd.

**HORATIO** How was this seal'd?

**HAMLET** Why, even in that was heaven ordinant;  
I had my father's signet in my purse,  
Which was the model of that Danish seal;  
Folded the writ up in form of th'other,  
{Subscribed} it, gave't th'impression, placed it safely,

The changeling never known: Now the next day  
Was our sea fight, and what to this was sequent  
Thou knowest already.

**HORATIO** So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

**HAMLET** {Why, man, they did make love to this employment.}  
They are not near my conscience; their defeat  
Does by their own insinuation grow;  
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes  
Between the pass and fell incensed points  
Of mighty opposites.

**HORATIO** Why, what a King is this!

**HAMLET** Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon?  
He that hath kill'd my King, and whored my mother,  
Popp'd in between th'election and my hopes,  
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,  
And with such cozenage; is't not perfect conscience,  
{To quit him with this arm? And is't not to be damn'd  
To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil?

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

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

**HORATIO** Peace, who comes here?

*Enter young Osric.*

**OSRIC** Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

**HAMLET** I humbly thank you, sir.  
Dost know this water-fly?

**HORATIO** No, my good lord.

**HAMLET** Thy state is the more gracious, for 'tis a vice to know  
him. He hath much land, and fertile: Let a beast be lord of beasts and  
his crib shall stand at the King's mess; 'tis a chough, but as I say,  
spacious in the possession of dirt.

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

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

**OSRIC** I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

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

**OSRIC** It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

**HAMLET** But yet methinks it is very {sultry} and hot {for} my  
complexion.

**OSRIC** Exceedingly, my lord, it is very sultry, as 'twere I cannot tell  
how: My lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that {he} has laid a  
great wager on your head; sir, this is the matter

**HAMLET** I beseech you remember.

**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.

**HAMLET** Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you, though I know to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory; and yet but raw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But in the 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.

**OSRIC** Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

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

**OSRIC** Sir?

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

**HAMLET** What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

**OSRIC** Of Laertes?

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

**HAMLET** Of him, sir.

**OSRIC** I know you are not ignorant—

**HAMLET** I would you did, sir, yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir?>

**OSRIC** You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is.

<**HAMLET** I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; but to know a man well were to know himself.

**OSRIC** I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.>

**HAMLET** What's his weapon?

**OSRIC** Rapier and dagger.

**HAMLET** That's two of his weapons, but well.

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

**HAMLET** What call you the carriages?

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

**OSRIC** The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

**HAMLET** The phrase would be more germane to the matter if we could carry cannon by our sides, I would it might be hangers till then. But on: Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this all [{"empawned"}] as you call it?

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

**HAMLET** How if I answer no?

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

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

**OSRIC** Shall I deliver you so?

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

**OSRIC** I commend my duty to your lordship.

**HAMLET** {Yours, yours.}

*[Exit Osric.]*

{He} does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

**HORATIO** This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

**HAMLET** He did comply with his dug before {he} suck'd 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 {outward} habit of encounter; a kind of histy collection which carries them through and through the most fond and {winnowed} opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

*<Enter a Lord.*

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

**HAMLET** I am constant to my purpose, they follow the King's pleasure, if his fitness speaks, mine is ready: Now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

**LORD** The King, and Queen, and all are coming down.

**HAMLET** In happy time.

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

**HAMLET** She well instructs me.>

*[Exit Lord.]*

**HORATIO** You will lose {this wager}, 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 would'st not think how ill all's here about my heart; but it is no matter.

**HORATIO** Nay, good my lord.

**HAMLET** It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of game-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman.

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

**HAMLET** Not a whit, we defy augury, there is special providence in the fall of a sparrow; if it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it {will} come; the readiness is all, since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.

*A table prepared (and flagons of wine on it). Trumpets, drums, and officers with cushions; King, Queen, and all the state; {other attendants with} foils, daggers, {and gauntlets}; and Laertes.*

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

**HAMLET** Give me your pardon, sir, I have done you wrong,  
But pardon't, as you are a gentleman;  
This presence knows,  
And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd  
With a sore distraction; what I have done  
That might your nature, honor, and exception  
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.  
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet.  
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,  
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,  
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.  
Who does it, then? His madness. If't be so,  
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;  
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.  
{Sir, in this audience}  
Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil  
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts  
That I have shot my arrow o'er the house  
And hurt my brother.

**LAERTES** I am satisfied in nature,  
Whose motive in this case should stir me most  
To my revenge, but in my terms of honor  
I stand aloof, and will no 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  
I do receive your offer'd love like love,  
And will not wrong it.

**HAMLET** I embrace it freely,  
And will this brother's wager frankly play.  
Give us the foils. {Come on.}

**LAERTES** Come, one for me.

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

**LAERTES** You mock me, sir.

**HAMLET** No, by this hand.

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

**HAMLET** Very well, my lord.  
Your grace has laid the odds a'th'weaker side.

**CLAUDIUS** I do not fear it, I have seen you both,  
But since he is {better'd}, we have therefore odds.

**LAERTES** This is too heavy: Let me see another.

**HAMLET** This likes me well; these foils have all a length?

*{Prepare to play.}*

**OSRIC** Aye, my good lord.

**CLAUDIUS** Set me the stoops of wine upon that table;  
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,  
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,  
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire.  
The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath,  
And in the cup an onyx shall he throw,  
Richer than that which four successive Kings  
In Denmark's crown have worn: Give me the cups,  
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,  
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,  
The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,  
Now the King dunks to Hamlet. Come, begin.

*Trumpets the while.*

And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

**HAMLET** Come on, sir.

**LAERTES** Come, my lord.

*[Here they play. A hit.]*

**HAMLET** One.

**LAERTES** No.

**HAMLET** Judgment.

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

**LAERTES** Well, again.

*Drum, trumpets, and shot.  
Flourish, a piece goes off.*

**CLAUDIUS** Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine.

Here's to thy health: Give him the cup.

**HAMLET** I'll play this bout first, set it by awhile.

*[They play again.]*

Come, another hit. What say you?

**LAERTES** {A touch, a touch,} I do confess.

**CLAUDIUS** Our son shall win.

**GERTRUDE** He's fat, and scant of breath.  
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows;  
The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

**HAMLET** Good madam.

**CLAUDIUS** Gertrude, do not drink.

**GERTRUDE** I will, my lord, I pray you pardon me.

*[She drinks.]*

**CLAUDIUS** It is the poison'd cup, it is too late.

**HAMLET** I dare not drink yet, madam, by and by.

**GERTRUDE** Come, let me wipe thy face.

**LAERTES** My lord, I'll hit him now.

**CLAUDIUS** I do not think't.

**LAERTES** And yet it is almost against my conscience.

**HAMLET** Come for the third, Laertes, you but dally.



I pray you pass with your best violence;  
I am sure you make a wanton of me.

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

**OSRIC** Nothing, neither way.

**LAERTES** Have at you now.

*{In scuffling they change rapiers.}*

*[They catch one another's rapiers and both are wounded. Laertes falls down.*

*The Queen falls down and dies.]*

**CLAUDIUS** Part them, they are incens'd.

**HAMLET** Nay, come again.

**OSRIC** Look to the queen there, {hoa}.

**HORATIO** They bleed on both sides; how is it, my lord?

**OSRIC** How is't, Laertes?

**LAERTES** Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric,  
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

**HAMLET** How does the Queen?

**CLAUDIUS** She [swoons] to see them bleed.

**GERTRUDE** No, no, the drink, the drink, O my dear Hamlet,  
The drink, the drink, I am poison'd.

**HAMLET** O villainy! How? Let the door be lock'd;  
Treachery, seek it out.

**LAERTES** It is here, Hamlet.

*{Hamlet}, thou art slain;  
No med'cine in the world can do thee good;  
In thee there is not half an hour's life;  
The treacherous instrument is in {thy} hand,  
Unbated and envenom'd; the foul practice  
Hath turn'd itself on me, lo here I lie  
Never to rise again; thy mother's poison'd;  
I can no more; the King, the King's to blame.*

**HAMLET** The point envenom'd, too; then venom to thy work.

*{Hurts the King.}*

**ALL** Treason, treason.

**CLAUDIUS** O yet defend me, friends, I am but hurt.

**HAMLET** Here thou incestuous, {murderous} damned Dane,  
Drink off this potion; is thy onyx here?  
Follow my mother.

*King dies.*

**LAERTES** He is justly served;  
It is a poison temper'd by himself.  
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet;  
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,  
Nor thine on me.

*Dies.*

**HAMLET** Heaven make thee free of it, I follow thee;  
I am dead, Horatio; wretched Queen, adieu.  
You that look pale, and tremble at this chance,  
That are but mutes or audience to this act,  
Had I but time, as this fell sergeant Death  
Is strict in his arrest, O I could tell you--  
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead,

Thou livest, report me and my cause aright  
To the unsatisfied.

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

**HAMLET** As th'art 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 {live} behind me?  
If thou did'st 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.*

What warlike noise is this?

*Enter Osric.*

**OSRIC** Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,  
To th'ambassadors of England gives this warlike volley.

**HAMLET** O I die Horatio,  
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit;  
I cannot live to hear the news from England,  
But I do prophesy th'election lights  
On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice,  
So tell him, with th'occurents, more and less,  
Which have solicited. The rest is silence.

*{Dies.}*

**HORATIO** Now cracks a noble heart; good night sweet Prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.  
Why does the drum come hither?

*Enter Fortinbras with the Ambassadors, {with Drum, Colors, and Attendants}.*

**FORTINBRAS** Where is this sight?

**HORATIO** What is it you would see?  
If aught of woe, or wonder, cease your search.

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

**AMBASSADOR** The sight is dismal  
And our affairs from England come too late;  
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,  
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,  
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead;  
Where should we have our thanks?

**HORATIO** Not from his mouth  
Had it the ability of life to thank you;  
He never gave commandment for their death;  
But since so jump upon this bloody question  
You from the Polack wars and you from England  
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies  
High on a stage be placed to the view,  
And let me speak to {the} 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 for no cause;  
And in this upshot purposes mistook  
Fall'n on th'inventors' reads: All this can I  
Truly deliver.

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

**HORATIO**     Of that I shall have also cause to speak,  
And from his mouth whose voice will draw no more;  
But let this same be presently perform'd,  
Even while men's minds are wild, lest more mischance  
On plots and errors happen.

**FORTINBRAS**                    Let four captains  
Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,  
For he was likely, had he been put on,  
To have proved most royal; and for his passage  
The soldiers' music and the rites of war  
Speak loudly for him:  
Take up the bodies; such a sight as this  
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.  
Go bid the soldiers shoot.

*{Exeunt Marching.  
After the which a peal of ordnance are shot off.}*

**FINIS.**



ERROR: undefined  
OFFENDING COMMAND:

STACK: