

William Shakespeare  
**THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK**

*William Shakespeare, The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, Jesús Tronch (ed.), Valencia: ARTELOPE, 2013. Text edited by Jesús Tronch, and checked by Donald L. Bailey.*

Joan Oleza Simó (principal) Tronch Pérez, Jesus (editor)

2794 verses

---

### List of Characters

**MESSENGER** in 4.5

**SAILOR** in 4.6

**1 CLOWN** a gravedigger (in 5.1)

**2 CLOWN** in 5.1

**DOCTOR** of divinity (in 5.1)

**OSRIC** a courtier (in 5.2)

**LORD** in 5.2

**AMBASADOR** from England (in 5.2)

**CORNELIUS VOLTEMAND**

**HORATIOMARCELLUSBARNARDO**

**MARCELLUSBARNARDO**

**HORATIOMARCELLUS**

**ROSENCRANTZ\_GUILDENSTERN**

**LORDS**

**GENTLEMAN** in 4.6

**MESSENGER** in 4.7

**HAMLET** Prince of Denmark, son of the late King Hamlet of Denmark

**KING CLAUDIUS** brother of the late King Hamlet

**QUEEN GERTRUDE** Hamlet's mother, now wife of King Claudius

**GHOST OF THE LATE KING HAMLET**

**OPHELIA** daughter of Polonius

**POLONIUS** counsellor to the King

**LAERTES** son of Polonius

**HORATIO** friend of Hamlet

**FORTINBRAS** Prince of Norway

**ROSENCRANTZ** former schoolfellow of Hamlet

**GUILDENSTERN** former schoolfellow of Hamlet

**FRANCISCO** sentinel (in 1.1)

**BARNARDO** sentinel

**MARCELLUS** sentinel

**VOLTEMAND** ambassador to Norway

**CORNELIUS** ambassador to Norway

**REYNALDO** servant of Polonius (in 2.1)

**PLAYER**

**PROLOGUE** in 3.2

**PLAYER KING** in 3.2

**PLAYER QUEEN** in 3.2

**LUCIANUS** in 3.2

**CAPTAIN** of the Norwegian army (in 4.4)

**GENTLEMAN** in 4.5

**FOLLOWERS** of Laertes (in 4.5)

# Act I

## [1.1]

*(Enter Barnardo and Francisco, two sentinels.)*

**BARNARDO**

Who's there? 1

**FRANCISCO**

Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself. 2

**BARNARDO**

Long live the King — 3

**FRANCISCO**

Barnardo. 4

**BARNARDO**

He. 5

**FRANCISCO**

You come most carefully upon your hour — 6

**BARNARDO**

'Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco — 7

**FRANCISCO**

For this relief much thanks Hola . 'Tis bitter cold, 8

And I am sick at heart. 9

**BARNARDO**

Have you had quiet guard? 10

**FRANCISCO**

Not a mouse stirring. 11

**BARNARDO**

Well, good night. 12

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus, 13

The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste. 14

*(Enter Horatio and Marcellus.)*

**FRANCISCO**

I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who is there? 15

**HORATIO**

Friends to this ground. 16

**MARCELLUS**

And liegemen to the Dane. 17

**FRANCISCO**

Give you good night. 18

**MARCELLUS**

Oh, farewell, honest soldier. Who hath relieved you? 19

**FRANCISCO**

Barnardo hath my place. Give you good night. 20

*(Exit Francisco.)*

**MARCELLUS**

Holla, Barnardo! 21

**BARNARDO**

Say, what, is Horatio there? 22

**HORATIO**

A piece of him. 23

**BARNARDO**

Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus — 24

**HORATIO**

What, has this thing appeared again tonight? 25

**BARNARDO**

I have seen nothing. 26

**MARCELLUS**

Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy, 27

And will not let belief take hold of him, 28

Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us. 29

Therefore I have entreated him along 30

With us to watch the minutes of this night, 31

That, if again this apparition come, 32

He may approve our eyes and speak to it. 33

**HORATIO**

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear. 34

**BARNARDO**

Sit down awhile,

And let us once again assail your ears, 35

That are so fortified against our story, 36

What we have two nights seen. 37

**HORATIO**

Well, sit we down,

And let us hear Barnardo speak of this. 38

**BARNARDO**

Last night of all, 39

When yond same star that's westward from the pole 40

Had made his course t'illuminate that part of heaven 41

Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself, 42

The bell then beating one — 43

*(Enter Ghost.)*

**MARCELLUS**

Peace, break thee off. 44

Look where it comes again. 45

**BARNARDO**

In the same figure like the King that's dead. 46

**MARCELLUS**

Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio. 47

**BARNARDO**

Looks 'a not like the King? Mark it, Horatio. 48

**HORATIO**

Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder. 49

**BARNARDO**

It would be spoke to. 50

**MARCELLUS**

Speak to it, Horatio.

**HORATIO**

What art thou that usurp'st this time of night 51

Together with that fair and warlike form 52

In which the majesty of buried Denmark 53

Did sometimes march? By heaven, I charge thee speak. 54

**MARCELLUS**

It is offended. 55

**BARNARDO**

See, it stalks away.

**HORATIO**

Stay! Speak, speak! I charge thee speak! 56

*(Exit Ghost.)*

**MARCELLUS**

'Tis gone and will not answer. 57

**BARNARDO**

How now, Horatio? You tremble and look pale. 58

Is not this something more than fantasy? 59

What think you on't? 60

**HORATIO**

Before my God, I might not this believe 61

Without the sensible and true avouch 62

Of mine own eyes. 63

**MARCELLUS**

Is it not like the King?

**HORATIO**

As thou art to thyself. 64

Such was the very armour he had on 65

When he the ambitious Norway combated. 66

So frowned he once when in an angry parle 67

He smote the sledded poleaxe on the ice. 68

'Tis strange. 69

**MARCELLUS**

Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour, 70

With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch. 71

**HORATIO**

In what particular thought to work, I know not, 72

But in the gross and scope of mine opinion 73

This bodes some strange eruption to our state. 74

**MARCELLUS**

Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows, 75  
Why this same strict and most observant watch 76  
So nightly toils the subject of the land, 77  
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon 78  
And foreign mart for implements of war; 79  
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task 80  
Does not divide the Sunday from the week; 81  
What might be toward that this sweaty haste 82  
Doth make the night joint labourer with the day. 83  
Who is't that can inform me? 84

**HORATIO**

That can I.

At least the whisper goes so. Our last King,	85
Whose image even but now appeared to us,	86
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,	87
Thereto pricked on by a most emulate pride,	88
Dared to the combat, in which our valiant Hamlet	89
(For so this side of our known world esteemed him)	90
Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a sealed compact	91
Well ratified by law and heraldry	92
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands	93
Which he stood seized of to the conqueror;	94
Against the which a moiety competent	95
Was gagèd by our King, which had returned	96
To the inheritance of Fortinbras	97
Had he been vanquisher, as by the same co-mart	98
And carriage of the article designed	99
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,	100
Of unimprovèd mettle, hot and full,	101
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there	102
Sharked up a list of lawless resolute	103
For food and diet to some enterprise	104
That hath a stomach in't, which is no other,	105
As it doth well appear unto our state,	106
But to recover of us by strong hand	107
And terms compulsory those foresaid lands	108
So by his father lost. And this, I take it,	109
Is the main motive of our preparations,	110
The source of this our watch, and the chief head	111
Of this post-haste and rummage in the land.	112

**BARNARDO**

I think it be no other but e'en so.	113
Well may it sort that this portentous figure	114
Comes armèd through our watch so like the King	115
That was and is the question of these wars.	116

**HORATIO**

A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye. 117  
In the most high and palmy state of Rome, 118  
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell, 119  
The graves stood tennantless and the sheeted dead 120  
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets — 121  
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood, 122  
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star, 123  
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands, 124  
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse. 125  
And even the like precurse of fear events, 126  
As harbingers preceding still the fates 127  
And prologue to the omen coming on, 128  
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated 129  
Unto our climatures and countrymen. 130

*(Enter Ghost.)*

But soft — behold, lo, where it comes again! 131  
I'll cross it though it blast me. — Stay, illusion! 132

*(It spreads his arms.)*

If thou hast any sound or use of voice, 133  
Speak to me; 134  
If there be any good thing to be done 135  
That may to thee do ease and grace to me, 136  
Speak to me. 137  
If thou art privy to thy country's fate 138  
Which happily foreknowing may avoid, 139  
Oh, speak; 140  
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life 141  
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth 142  
(For which they say your spirits oft walk in death) 143

*(The cock crows.)*

Speak of it, stay and speak. — Stop it, Marcellus. 144

**MARCELLUS**

Shall I strike it with my partisan? 145

**HORATIO**

Do if it will not stand. 146

**BARNARDO**

'Tis here. 147

**HORATIO**

'Tis here. 148

*([Exit Ghost.]*)

**MARCELLUS**

'Tis gone. 149

We do it wrong, being so majestic, 150

To offer it the show of violence, 151

For it is as the air, invulnerable, 152

And our vain blows malicious mockery. 153

**BARNARDO**

It was about to speak when the cock crew. 154

**HORATIO**

And then it started like a guilty thing 155

Upon a fearful summons. I have heard 156

The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn, 157

Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat 158

Awake the god of day, and at his warning, 159

Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air, 160

Th'extravagant and erring spirit hies 161

To his confine; and of the truth herein 162

This present object made probation. 163

**MARCELLUS**

It faded on the crowing of the cock. 164  
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes 165  
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated, 166  
This bird of dawning singeth all night long; 167  
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad, 168  
The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike, 169  
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm, 170  
So hallowed and so gracious is that time. 171

**HORATIO**

So have I heard and do in part believe it. 172  
But look, the morn in russet mantle clad 173  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill. 174  
Break we our watch up, and by my advice 175  
Let us impart what we have seen tonight 176  
Unto young Hamlet, for upon my life 177  
This spirit dumb to us will speak to him. 178  
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it 179  
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty? 180

**MARCELLUS**

Let's do't, I pray, and I this morning know 181  
Where we shall find him most convenient. 182

*(Exeunt.)*

**[1.2]**

*(Flourish.)*

*(Enter Claudius, King of Denmark, Gertrude the Queen, Council: as Polonius, and his son Laertes, Hamlet, with others [including Cornelius and Voltemand].)*

**KING**

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death 183  
The memory be green, and that it us befitted 184  
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom 185  
To be contracted in one brow of woe, 186  
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature 187  
That we with wisest sorrow think on him 188  
Together with remembrance of ourselves. 189  
Therefore our sometime sister, now our Queen, 190  
Th'imperial jointress to this warlike state, 191  
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy, 192  
With an auspicious and a dropping eye, 193  
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage, 194  
In equal scale weighing delight and dole, 195  
Taken to wife. Nor have we herein barred 196  
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone 197  
With this affair along. For all, our thanks. 198  
Now follows that you know young Fortinbras, 199  
Holding a weak supposal of our worth 200  
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death 201  
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame, 202  
Co-leaguèd with this dream of his advantage, 203  
He hath not failed to pester us with message 204  
Importing the surrender of those lands 205  
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law, 206  
To our most valiant brother. So much for him. 207  
Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting, 208  
Thus much the business is: we have here writ 209  
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras 210  
(Who, impotent and bedrid, scarcely hears 211  
Of this his nephew's purpose) to suppress 212  
His further gait herein, in that the levies, 213  
The lists and full proportions are all made 214  
Out of his subject; and we here dispatch 215

You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltemand, 216  
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway, 217  
Giving to you no further personal power 218  
To business with the King, more than the scope 219  
Of these delated articles allow. 220  
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty. 221

**CORNELIUS, VOLTEMAND**

In that and all things will we show our duty. 222

**KING**

We doubt it nothing. Heartily, farewell. 223

*([Exeunt Voltemand and Cornelius.] )*

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you? 224  
You told us of some suit. What is't, Laertes? 225  
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane 226  
And lose your voice. What wouldst thou beg, Laertes, 227  
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking? 228  
The head is not more native to the heart, 229  
The hand more instrumental to the mouth, 230  
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father. 231  
What wouldst thou have, Laertes? 232

**LAERTES**

My dread lord,  
Your leave and favour to return to France, 233  
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark 234  
To show my duty in your coronation, 235  
Yet now I must confess, that duty done, 236  
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France 237  
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon. 238

**KING**

Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius? 239

**POLONIUS**

H'ath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave 240

By laboursome petition, and at last 241

Upon his will I sealed my hard consent. 242

I do beseech you give him leave to go. 243

**KING**

Take thy fair hour, Laertes, time be thine 244

And thy best graces spend it at thy will. — 245

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son — 246

**HAMLET**

A little more than kin, and less than kind. 247

**KING**

How is it that the clouds still hang on you? 248

**HAMLET**

Not so much, my lord; I am too much in the "son." 249

**QUEEN**

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off 250

And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark. 251

Do not forever with thy vailèd lids 252

Seek for thy noble father in the dust. 253

Thou know'st 'tis common all that lives must die, 254

Passing through nature to eternity. 255

**HAMLET**

Ay, madam, it is common. 256

**QUEEN**

If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee? 257

**HAMLET**

“Seems,” madam? nay, it is, I know not “seems,” 258  
’Tis not alone my inky cloak, cold mother, 259  
Nor customary suits of solemn black, 260  
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath, 261  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye, 262  
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage, 263  
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief 264  
That can denote me truly. These indeed “seem,” 265  
For they are actions that a man might play, 266  
But I have that within which passes show, 267  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe. 268

**KING**

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet, 269  
To give these mourning duties to your father, 270  
But you must know your father lost a father, 271  
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound 272  
In filial obligation for some term 273  
To do obsequious sorrow; but to persevere 274  
In obstinate condolment is a course 275  
Of impious stubbornness, 'tis unmanly grief, 276  
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven, 277  
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient, 278  
An understanding simple and unschooled. 279  
For what we know must be, and is as common 280  
As any the most vulgar thing to sense, 281  
Why should we in our peevish opposition 282  
Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven, 283  
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature, 284  
To reason most absurd, whose common theme 285  
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried 286  
From the first corpse till he that died today 287  
"This must be so." We pray you throw to earth 288  
This unprevailing woe, and think of us 289  
As of a father; for let the world take note 290  
You are the most immediate to our throne, 291  
And with no less nobility of love 292  
Than that which dearest father bears his son 293  
Do I impart toward you. For your intent 294  
In going back to school in Wittenberg, 295  
It is most retrograde to our desire, 296  
And we beseech you bend you to remain 297  
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye, 298  
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son. 299

**QUEEN**

Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet; 300

I pray thee stay with us, go not to Wittenberg. 301

**HAMLET**

I shall in all my best obey you, madam. 302

**KING**

Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply. 303

Be as ourself in Denmark. — Madam, come, 304

This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet 305

Sits smiling to my heart, in grace whereof 306

No jocund health that Denmark drinks today 307

But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell 308

And the King's rouse the heaven shall bruit again, 309

Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away. 310

*(Flourish.)*

*(Exeunt all but Hamlet.)*

**HAMLET**

Oh, that this too too solid flesh would melt, 311  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew, 312  
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed 313  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. O God,  <sup> F 314  
 </sup> O  <sup> F  </sup> God,  
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable 315  
Seem to me all the uses of this world! 316  
Fie on't, ah, fie,  <sup> F  </sup> fie,  <sup> F  </sup> 317  
 </sup> </span> 'tis an unweeded garden  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature 318  
Possess it merely. That it should come thus: 319  
But two months dead, nay, not so much, not two — 320  
So excellent a king, that was to this 321  
Hyperion to a satyr, so loving to my mother 322  
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven 323  
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth, 324  
Must I remember? Why, she should hang on him 325  
As if increase of appetite had grown 326  
By what it fed on. And yet within a month 327  
(Let me not think on't — Frailty, thy name is Woman), 328  
A little month, or ere those shoes were old 329  
With which she followed my poor father's body 330  
Like Niobe, all tears, why, she —  <sup> F  </sup> 331  
even she  <sup> F  </sup>  </span>  
(O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason 332  
Would have mourned longer) married with my uncle, 333  
My father's brother, but no more like my father 334  
Than I to Hercules. Within a month, 335  
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears 336  
Had left the flushing in her gallèd eyes, 337  
She married. Oh, most wicked speed — to post 338  
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets! 339  
It is not, nor it cannot come to good. 340

But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue. 341

*(Enter Horatio, Marcellus and Barnardo.)*

**HORATIO**

Hail to your lordship. 342

**HAMLET**

I am glad to see you well —  
Horatio, or I do forget myself. 343

**HORATIO**

The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever. 344

**HAMLET**

Sir, my good friend, I'll change that name with you. 345

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio? — 346

Marcellus. 347

**MARCELLUS**

My good lord. 348

**HAMLET**

I am very glad to see you. — [To Barnardo] Good even, sir. — 349

But what in faith make you from Wittenberg? 350

**HORATIO**

A truant disposition, good my lord. 351

**HAMLET**

I would not hear your enemy say so, 352

Nor shall you do my ear that violence 353

To make it truster of your own report 354

Against yourself. I know you are no truant. 355

But what is your affair in Elsinore? 356

We'll teach you for to drink ere you depart. 357

**HORATIO**

My lord, I came to see your father's funeral. 358

**HAMLET**

I prithee do not mock me, fellow student, 359

I think it was to see my mother's wedding. 360

**HORATIO**

Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon. 361

**HAMLET**

Thrift, thrift, Horatio, the funeral baked meats 362

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables. 363

Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven 364

Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio. 365

My father, methinks I see my father. 366

**HORATIO**

Where, my lord? 367

**HAMLET**

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

**HORATIO**

I saw him once; 'a was a goodly king. 368

**HAMLET**

'A was a man, take him for all in all, 369

I shall not look upon his like again. 370

**HORATIO**

My lord, I think I saw him yesternight. 371

**HAMLET**

Saw, who? 372

**HORATIO**

My lord, the King your father. 373

**HAMLET**

The King my father? 374

**HORATIO**

Season your admiration for a while 375

With an attent ear till I may deliver 376

Upon the witness of these gentlemen 377

This marvel to you. 378

**HAMLET**

For God's love, let me hear!

**HORATIO**

Two nights together had these gentlemen, 379

Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch 380

In the dead waste and middle of the night 381

Been thus encountered: a figure like your father 382

Armed at point, exactly cap-à-pie, 383

Appears before them and with solemn march 384

Goes slow and stately by them; thrice he walked 385

By their oppressed and fear-surprisèd eyes 386

Within his truncheon's length whilst they, distilled 387

Almost to jelly with the act of fear, 388

Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me 389

In dreadful secrecy impart they did, 390

And I with them the third night kept the watch, 391

Where (as they had delivered, both in time, 392

Form of the thing, each word made true and good) 393

The apparition comes. I knew your father; 394

These hands are not more like. 395

**HAMLET**

But where was this?

**MARCELLUS**

My lord, upon the platform where we watched. 396

**HAMLET**

Did you not speak to it? 397

**HORATIO**

My lord, I did,

But answer made it none. Yet once methought 398

It lifted up it head and did address 399

Itself to motion like as it would speak. 400

But even then the morning cock crew loud, 401

And at the sound it shrunk in haste away 402

And vanished from our sight. 403

**HAMLET**

'Tis very strange.

**HORATIO**

As I do live, my honoured lord, 'tis true, 404

And we did think it writ down in our duty 405

To let you know of it. 406

**HAMLET**

Indeed, F indeed, F 407  
sirs. But this troubles me.

Hold you the watch tonight? 408

**MARCELLUS, BARNARDO**

We do, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Armed, say you? 409

**MARCELLUS, BARNARDO**

Armed, my lord. 410

**HAMLET**

From top to toe? 411

**MARCELLUS, BARNARDO**

My lord, from head to foot. 412

**HAMLET**

Then saw you not his face. 413

**HORATIO**

Oh, yes, my lord, he wore his beaver up. 414

**HAMLET**

What looked he, frowningly? 415

**HORATIO**

A countenance more in sorrow than in anger. 416

**HAMLET**

Pale, or red? 417

**HORATIO**

Nay, very pale. 418

**HAMLET**

And fixed his eyes upon you? 419

**HORATIO**

Most constantly. 420

**HAMLET**

I would I had been there. 421

**HORATIO**

It would have much amazed you.

422

**HAMLET**

Very like  <sup> F </sup> , very like  <sup> F </sup>   
 </sup> </span> . Stayed it long?

423

**HORATIO**

While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

424

**MARCELLUS, BARNARDO**

Longer, longer.

425

**HORATIO**

Not when I saw't.

426

**HAMLET**

His beard was grizzled, no?

427

**HORATIO**

It was as I have seen it in his life:

428

A sable silvered.

429

**HAMLET**

I will watch tonight.

Perchance 'twill walk again.

430

**HORATIO**

I warr'nt  <sup> F </sup>  you  <sup> F </sup>   
 </sup> </span> it will.

**HAMLET**

If it assume my noble father's person, 431  
I'll speak to it though hell itself should gape 432  
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all, 433  
If you have hitherto concealed this sight, 434  
Let it be tenable in your silence still, 435  
And whatsomever else shall hap tonight 436  
Give it an understanding but no tongue. 437  
I will requite your loves. So fare you well. 438  
Upon the platform 'twixt eleven and twelve 439  
I'll visit you. 440

**HORATIO, MARCELLUS, BARNARDO**

Our duty to your honour.

**HAMLET**

Your loves, as mine to you. Farewell. 441

*(Exeunt [all but Hamlet].)*

My father's spirit — in arms! All is not well; 442  
I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come. 443  
Till then sit still my soul. Foul deeds will rise 444  
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them to men's eyes. 445

*(Exit.)*

**[1.3]**

*(Enter Laertes and Ophelia, his sister.)*

**LAERTES**

My necessaries are embarked. Farewell. 446  
And sister, as the winds give benefit 447  
And convey is assistant, do not sleep 448  
But let me hear from you. 449

**OPHELIA**

Do you doubt that?

**LAERTES**

For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour, 450

Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood, 451

A violet in the youth of primy nature, 452

Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting, 453

The perfume and suppliance of a minute, 454

No more. 455

**OPHELIA**

No more but so.

LAERTES

Think it no more.  
For nature crescent does not grow alone 456  
In thews and bulks, but as this temple waxes 457  
The inward service of the mind and soul 458  
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now, 459  
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch 460  
The virtue of his will. But you must fear: 461  
His greatness weighed, his will is not his own; 462  
<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> For he himself is subject to his 463  
birth: <sup> F </sup> </span>  
He may not, as unvalued persons do, 464  
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends 465  
The safety and health of this whole state, 466  
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed 467  
Unto the voice and yielding of that body 468  
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you, 469  
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it 470  
As he in his particular act and place 471  
May give his saying deed, which is no further 472  
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal. 473  
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain 474  
If with too credent ear you list his songs, 475  
Or loose your heart, or your chaste treasure open 476  
To his unmastered importunity. 477  
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister, 478  
And keep you in the rear of your affection 479  
Out of the shot and danger of desire. 480  
“The chariest maid is prodigal enough 481  
If she unmask her beauty to the moon. 482  
Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes. 483  
The canker galls the infants of the spring 484  
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed, 485  
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth 486

Contagious blastments are most imminent." 487  
Be wary then; best safety lies in fear. 488  
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near. 489

**OPHELIA**

I shall the effect of this good lesson keep 490  
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother, 491  
Do not as some ungracious pastors do, 492  
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven 493  
Whiles like a puffed and reckless libertine 494  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads 495  
And recks not his own rede. 496

*(Enter Polonius.)*

**LAERTES**

Oh, fear me not.  
I stay too long. But here my father comes. 497  
A double blessing is a double grace; 498  
Occasion smiles upon a second leave. 499

**POLONIUS**

Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame! 500  
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail 501  
And you are stayed for. There, my blessing with thee, 502  
And these few precepts in thy memory 503  
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue 504  
Nor any unproportioned thought his act. 505  
Be thou familiar but by no means vulgar. 506  
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried, 507  
Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel, 508  
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment 509  
Of each new-hatched, unfledged courage. Beware 510  
Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in, 511  
Bear't that th'opposèd may beware of thee. 512  
Give every man thy ear but few thy voice; 513  
Take each man's censure but reserve thy judgement. 514  
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy 515  
But not expressed in fancy; rich, not gaudy; 516  
For the apparel oft proclaims the man, 517  
And they in France of the best rank and station 518  
Are of a most select and generous chief in that. 519  
Neither a borrower nor a lender, boy, 520  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend, 521  
And borrowing dulleth edge of husbandry. 522  
This above all: to thine own self be true, 523  
And it must follow as the night the day 524  
Thou canst not then be false to any man. 525  
Farewell, my blessing season this in thee. 526

**LAERTES**

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord. 527

**POLONIUS**

The time invests you. Go, your servants tend. 528

**LAERTES**

Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well 529

What I have said to you. 530

**OPHELIA**

'Tis in my memory locked  
And you yourself shall keep the key of it. 531

**LAERTES**

Farewell. 532

*(Exit Laertes.)*

**POLONIUS**

What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you? 533

**OPHELIA**

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet. 534

**POLONIUS**

Marry, well bethought: 535

'Tis told me he hath very oft of late 536

Given private time to you, and you yourself 537

Have of your audience been most free and bounteous. 538

If it be so (as so 'tis put on me, 539

And that in way of caution), I must tell you 540

You do not understand yourself so clearly 541

As it behoves my daughter and your honour. 542

What is between you? Give me up the truth. 543

**OPHELIA**

He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders 544

Of his affection to me. 545

**POLONIUS**

Affection? Pooh, you speak like a green girl 546  
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance. 547  
Do you believe his “tenders” as you call them? 548

**OPHELIA**

I do not know, my lord, what I should think. 549

**POLONIUS**

Marry, I will teach you: think yourself a baby 550  
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay 551  
Which are not sterling; tender yourself more dearly 552  
Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase, 553  
Running it thus) you'll tender me a fool. 554

**OPHELIA**

My lord, he hath importuned me with love 555  
In honourable fashion — 556

**POLONIUS**

Ay, “fashion” you may call it. Go to, go to. 557

**OPHELIA**

And hath given countenance to his speech, 558  
My lord, with almost all the holy vows of heaven. 559

**POLONIUS**

Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know, 560  
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul 561  
Lends the tongue vows. These blazes, daughter, 562  
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both 563  
Even in their promise as it is a-making, 564  
You must not take for fire. From this time, F 565  
F daughter, F F  
Be something scanted of your maiden presence, 566  
Set your entreatments at a higher rate 567  
Than a command to parle. For Lord Hamlet, 568  
Believe so much in him that he is young 569  
And with a larger tether may he walk 570  
Than may be given you. In few, Ophelia, 571  
Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers 572  
Not of that dye which their investments show 573  
But mere implorators of unholy suits 574  
Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds 575  
The better to beguile. This is for all: 576  
I would not in plain terms from this time forth 577  
Have you so slander any moment leisure 578  
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet. 579  
Look to't, I charge you. Come your ways. 580

**OPHELIA**

I shall obey, my lord. 581

*(Exeunt.)*

**[1.4]**

*(Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.)*

**HAMLET**

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold. 582

**HORATIO**

It is a nipping and an eager air. 583

**HAMLET**

What hour now? 584

**HORATIO**

I think it lacks of twelve. 585

**MARCELLUS**

No, it is struck. 586

**HORATIO**

Indeed, I heard it not. It then draws near the season 587

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk. 588

*(A flourish of trumpets and two pieces goes off.)*

What does this mean, my lord? 589

**HAMLET**

The King doth wake tonight and takes his rouse, 590

Keeps wassail and the swagg'ring upspring reels, 591

And as he drains his draughts of Rennish down 592

The kettledrum and trumpet thus bray out 593

The triumph of his pledge. 594

**HORATIO**

Is it a custom? 595

**HAMLET**

Ay, marry, is't, 596  
But to my mind, though I am native here 597  
And to the manner born, it is a custom 598  
More honoured in the breach than the observance. 599  
This heavy-headed revel east and west 600  
Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations: 601  
They clepe us drunkards and with swinish phrase 602  
Soil our addition, and indeed it takes 603  
From our achievements, though performed at height, 604  
The pith and marrow of our attribute. 605  
So oft it chances in particular men 606  
That, for some vicious mole of nature in them, 607  
As in their birth wherein they are not guilty 608  
(Since nature cannot choose his origin), 609  
By their o'ergrowth of some complexion 610  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason, 611  
Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens 612  
The form of plausible manners — that these men 613  
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect 614  
(Being Nature's livery or Fortune's star), 615  
His virtues else, be they as pure as grace, 616  
As infinite as man may undergo, 617  
Shall in the general censure take corruption 618  
From that particular fault: the dram of evil 619  
Doth all the noble substance often dout 620  
To his own scandal. 621

*(Enter Ghost.)*

**HORATIO**

Look, my lord, it comes.

**HAMLET**

Angels and ministers of grace defend us! — 622  
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned, 623  
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell, 624  
Be thy intents wicked or charitable, 625  
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape 626  
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet, 627  
King, father, royal Dane. Oh, F oh, 628  
F answer me, 629  
Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell 629  
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death, 630  
Have burst their cerements, why the sepulchre 631  
Wherein we saw thee quietly interred 632  
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws 633  
To cast thee up again. What may this mean 634  
That thou, dead corpse, again in complete steel 635  
Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon, 636  
Making night hideous, and we fools of nature 637  
So horribly to shake our disposition 638  
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls? 639  
Say why is this? Wherefore? What should we do? 640

*([Ghost] beckons.)*

**HORATIO**

It beckons you to go away with it 641  
As if it some impartment did desire 642  
To you alone. 643

**MARCELLUS**

Look with what courteous action  
It waves you to a more removed ground, 644  
But do not go with it. 645

**HORATIO**

No, by no means.

**HAMLET**

It will not speak, then I will follow it. 646

**HORATIO**

Do not, my lord. 647

**HAMLET**

Why, what should be the fear?

I do not set my life at a pin's fee, 648

And for my soul, what can it do to that 649

Being a thing immortal as itself? 650

It waves me forth again. I'll follow it. 651

**HORATIO**

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord, 652

Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff 653

That beetles o'er his base into the sea, 654

And there assume some other horrible form 655

Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason 656

And draw you into madness? Think of it. 657

The very place puts toys of desperation 658

Without more motive into every brain 659

That looks so many fathoms to the sea 660

And hears it roar beneath. 661

**HAMLET**

It waves me still. 662

Go on, I'll follow thee. 663

**MARCELLUS**

You shall not go, my lord. 664

**HAMLET**

Hold off your hands.

**HORATIO**

Be ruled, you shall not go. 665

**HAMLET**

My fate cries out  
And makes each petty artery in this body 666  
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve. 667  
Still am I called. Unhand me, gentlemen, 668  
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me! 669  
I say away! — Go on, I'll follow thee. 670

*(Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.)*

**HORATIO**

He waxes desperate with imagination. 671

**MARCELLUS**

Let's follow. 'Tis not fit thus to obey him. 672

**HORATIO**

Have after. To what issue will this come? 673

**MARCELLUS**

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark. 674

**HORATIO**

Heaven will direct it. 675

**MARCELLUS**

Nay, let's follow him.

*(Exeunt.)*

**[1.5]**

*(Enter Ghost and Hamlet.)*

**HAMLET**

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

676

**GHOST**

Mark me.

677

**HAMLET**

I will.

**GHOST**

My hour is almost come  
When I to sulph'rous and tormenting flames  
Must render up myself.

678

679

**HAMLET**

Alas, poor ghost.

**GHOST**

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

680

681

**HAMLET**

Speak, I am bound to hear.

**GHOST**

So art thou to revenge when thou shalt hear.

682

**HAMLET**

What?

683

**GHOST**

I am thy father's spirit, 684  
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night 685  
And for the day confined to fast in fires 686  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature 687  
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid 688  
To tell the secrets of my prison-house, 689  
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word 690  
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood, 691  
Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres, 692  
Thy knotted and combinèd locks to part, 693  
And each particular hair to stand on end 694  
Like quills upon the fearful porpentine. 695  
But this eternal blazon must not be 696  
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, oh, list: 697  
If thou didst ever thy dear father love — 698

**HAMLET**

O God! 699

**GHOST**

— Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder. 700

**HAMLET**

Murder? 701

**GHOST**

Murder most foul, as in the best it is, 702  
But this most foul, strange and unnatural. 703

**HAMLET**

Haste me to know't, that I with wings as swift 704  
As meditation or the thoughts of love 705  
May sweep to my revenge. 706

**GHOST**

I find thee apt. 707  
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed 708  
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf, 708  
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear: 709  
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard, 710  
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark 711  
Is by a forgèd process of my death 712  
Rankly abused. But know, thou noble youth, 713  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life 714  
Now wears his crown. 715

**HAMLET**

O my prophetic soul! My uncle! 716

**GHOST**

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast, 717  
With witchcraft of his wits, with traitorous gifts — 718  
O wicked wit and gifts that have the power 719  
So to seduce! — won to his shameful lust 720  
The will of my most seeming-virtuous Queen. 721  
O Hamlet, what falling off was there, 722  
From me whose love was of that dignity 723  
That it went hand in hand even with the vow 724  
I made to her in marriage, and to decline 725  
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor 726  
To those of mine. 727  
But virtue, as it never will be moved, 728  
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven, 729  
So lust, though to a radiant angel linked, 730  
Will sate itself in a celestial bed 731  
And prey on garbage. 732  
But soft, methinks I scent the morning air. 733  
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard, 734  
My custom always of the afternoon, 735  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole 736  
With juice of cursèd hebona in a vial, 737  
And in the porches of my ears did pour 738  
The leperous distilment, whose effect 739  
Holds such an enmity with blood of man 740  
That swift as quicksilver it courses through 741  
The natural gates and alleys of the body 742  
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset 743  
And curd like eager droppings into milk 744  
The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine, 745  
And a most instant tetter barked about 746  
Most Lazar-like with vile and loathsome crust 747  
All my smooth body. 748  
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand 749

Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched, 750  
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin, 751  
Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled, 752  
No reck'ning made, but sent to my account 753  
With all my imperfections on my head. 754  
Oh, horrible! Oh, horrible, most horrible! 755  
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not, 756  
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be 757  
A couch for luxury and damnèd incest. 758  
But howsomever thou pursues this act, 759  
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive 760  
Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven 761  
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge 762  
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once: 763  
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near 764  
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire. 765  
Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me. 766

*([Exit.] )*

**HAMLET**

O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else? 767  
And shall I couple hell? Oh, fie! Hold, hold, my heart, 768  
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old 769  
But bear me swiftly up. Remember thee? 770  
Ay, thou poor ghost, whiles memory holds a seat 771  
In this distracted globe. Remember thee, 772  
Yea, from the table of my memory 773  
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records, 774  
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past 775  
That youth and observation copied there, 776  
And thy commandment all alone shall live 777  
Within the book and volume of my brain 778  
Unmixed with baser matter. Yes, F <sup>F</sup> 779  
yes, <sup>F</sup> F by heaven.  
O most pernicious woman! 780  
O villain, villain, smiling damnèd villain! 781  
My tables, F <sup>F</sup> my tables, <sup>F</sup> F 782  
F meet it is I set it down  
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain; 783  
At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark. 784  
So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word: 785  
It is "Adieu, adieu. Remember me." 786  
I have sworn't. 787

*(Enter Horatio and Marcellus.)*

**HORATIO**

My lord, my lord! 788

**MARCELLUS**

Lord Hamlet! 789

**HORATIO**

Heavens secure him. 790

<b>HAMLET</b>		
	So be it.	791
<b>MARCELLUS</b>		
	Illo, ho, ho, my lord!	792
<b>HAMLET</b>		
	Hillo, ho, ho, boy, come, bird, come!	793
<b>MARCELLUS</b>		
	How is't, my noble lord?	794
<b>HORATIO</b>		
	What news, my lord?	795
<b>HAMLET</b>		
	Oh, wonderful.	796
<b>HORATIO</b>		
	Good my lord, tell it.	797
<b>HAMLET</b>		
	No, you will reveal it.	798
<b>HORATIO</b>		
	Not I, my lord, by heaven.	799
<b>MARCELLUS</b>		
	Nor I, my lord.	800
<b>HAMLET</b>		
	How say you then, would heart of man once think it —	801
	But you'll be secret?	802
<b>HORATIO, MARCELLUS</b>		
	Ay, by heaven <span class="folio">F</span> <sup>F</sup> , my lord <sup>F</sup> <span class="folio">F</span> <sup>F</sup> .	803

**HAMLET**

There's never a villain dwelling in all Denmark 804  
But he's an arrant knave. 805

**HORATIO**

There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave 806  
To tell us this. 807

**HAMLET**

Why, right, you are in the right,  
And so without more circumstance at all 808  
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part. 809  
You, as your business and desire shall point you 810  
(For every man hath business and desire 811  
Such as it is), and for my own poor part 812  
<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> Look you, <sup> F </sup> 813  
</span> I will go pray.

**HORATIO**

These are but wild and whirling words, my lord. 814

**HAMLET**

I am sorry they offend you — heartily, 815  
Yes, faith, heartily. 816

**HORATIO**

There's no offence, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio, 817  
And much offence too. Touching this vision here, 818  
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you. 819  
For your desire to know what is between us 820  
O'ermaster't as you may. And now, good friends, 821  
As you are friends, scholars and soldiers, 822  
Give me one poor request. 823

**HORATIO**

What is't, my lord? We will. 824

**HAMLET**

Never make known what you have seen tonight. 825

**HORATIO, MARCELLUS**

My lord, we will not. 826

**HAMLET**

Nay, but swear't. 827

**HORATIO**

In faith, my lord, not I. 828

**MARCELLUS**

Nor I, my lord, in faith. 829

**HAMLET**

Upon my sword. 830

**MARCELLUS**

We have sworn, my lord, already. 831

**HAMLET**

Indeed, upon my sword, indeed. 832

*(Ghost cries under the stage.)*

**GHOST**

Swear. 833

**HAMLET**

Ha, ha, boy, say'st thou so? Art thou there, truepenny? 834

Come on, you hear this fellow in the cellarage, 835

Consent to swear. 836

**HORATIO**

Propose the oath, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Never to speak of this that you have seen, 837

Swear by my sword. 838

**GHOST**

[under the stage] Swear. 839

**HAMLET**

Hic et ubique? Then we'll shift our ground. 840

Come hither, gentlemen, 841

And lay your hands again upon my sword. 842

Swear by my sword 843

Never to speak of this that you have heard. 844

**GHOST**

[under the stage] Swear by his sword. 845

**HAMLET**

Well said, old mole. Canst work i'th'earth so fast? 846

A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends. 847

**HORATIO**

Oh, day and night, but this is wondrous strange. 848

**HAMLET**

And therefore as a stranger give it welcome. 849  
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, 850  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come, 851  
Here as before: never, so help you mercy 852  
(How strange or odd some'er I bear myself, 853  
As I perchance hereafter shall think meet 854  
To put an antic disposition on), 855  
That you at such times seeing me, never shall 856  
(With arms encumbered thus, or this headshake, 857  
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase 858  
As "Well, well, we know," or "We could an if we would," 859  
Or "If we list to speak," or "There be an if they might," 860  
Or such ambiguous giving out) to note 861  
That you know aught of me. This do swear, 862  
So grace and mercy at your most need help you. 863

**GHOST**

[under the stage] Swear. 864

*([They swear.])*

**HAMLET**

Rest, rest, perturbèd spirit. — So, gentlemen, 865  
With all my love I do commend me to you, 866  
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is 867  
May do t'express his love and friending to you, 868  
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together, 869  
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray. 870  
The time is out of joint. O cursèd spite, 871  
That ever I was born to set it right! — 872  
Nay, come, let's go together. 873

*(Exeunt.)*

## Act II

### [2.1]

*(Enter old Polonius with his man [Reynaldo] or two.)*

**POLONIUS**

Give him this money, and these notes, Reynaldo. 874

**REYNALDO**

I will, my lord. 875

**POLONIUS**

You shall do marv'llous wisely, good Reynaldo, 876

Before you visit him, to make inquire 877

Of his behaviour. 878

**REYNALDO**

My lord, I did intend it.

**POLONIUS**

Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir, 879

Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris, 880

And how, and who, what means, and where they keep, 881

What company, at what expense, and finding 882

By this encompassment and drift of question 883

That they do know my son, come you more nearer 884

Than your particular demands will touch it. 885

Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him, 886

As thus: "I know his father, and his friends, 887

And in part him" — do you mark this, Reynaldo? 888

**REYNALDO**

Ay, very well, my lord. 889

**POLONIUS**

“And in part him, but,” you may say, “not well; 890  
But if’t be he I mean, he’s very wild, 891  
Addicted so and so,” and there put on him 892  
What forgeries you please — marry, none so rank 893  
As may dishonour him; take heed of that — 894  
But, sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips 895  
As are companions noted and most known 896  
To youth and liberty. 897

**REYNALDO**

As gaming, my lord? 898

**POLONIUS**

Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, 899  
Quarrelling, drabbing — you may go so far. 900

**REYNALDO**

My lord, that would dishonour him. 901

**POLONIUS**

Faith,  <sup> F </sup> no, <sup> F </sup> 902  
</span> as you may season it in the charge.  
You must not put another scandal on him, 903  
That he is open to incontinency, 904  
That’s not my meaning, but breathe his faults so quaintly 905  
That they may seem the taints of liberty, 906  
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind, 907  
A savageness in unreclaimèd blood 908  
Of general assault. 909

**REYNALDO**

But my good lord — 910

**POLONIUS**

Wherefore should you do this? 911

**REYNALDO**

Ay, my lord, I would know that. 912

**POLONIUS**

Marry, sir, here's my drift, 913

And I believe it is a fetch of wit: 914

You laying these slight sullies on my son 915

As 'twere a thing a little soiled wi'th' working, 916

Mark you, your party in converse, him you would sound 917

Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes 918

The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured 919

He closes with you in this consequence: 920

"Good sir," or so, or "friend," or "gentleman," 921

According to the phrase or the addition 922

Of man and country. 923

**REYNALDO**

Very good, my lord.

**POLONIUS**

And then, sir, does 'a this — 'a 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" — 924

<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> At "friend, or so", and "gentleman." 925

<sup> F </sup> </span>

**POLONIUS**

At "closes in the consequence," ay, marry. 926  
He closes <span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> with you <sup> F 927  
</sup> </span> thus: "I know the gentleman,  
I saw him yesterday, or th'other day, 928  
Or then or then, with such or such, and as you say, 929  
There was 'a gaming, there o'ertook in's rouse, 930  
There falling out at tennis," or perchance 931  
"I saw him enter such a house of sale," 932  
Videlicet, a brothel, or so forth. See you now: 933  
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth; 934  
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach, 935  
With windlasses, and with assays of bias, 936  
By indirections find directions out. 937  
So by my former lecture and advice 938  
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not? 939

**REYNALDO**

My lord, I have. 940

**POLONIUS**

God b'wi'ye, fare ye well.

**REYNALDO**

Good my lord. 941

**POLONIUS**

Observe his inclination in yourself. 942

**REYNALDO**

I shall, my lord. 943

**POLONIUS**

And let him ply his music. 944

**REYNALDO**

Well, my lord.

945

*(Exit Reynaldo.)*

*(Enter Ophelia.)*

**POLONIUS**

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

946

**OPHELIA**

Oh, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted —

947

**POLONIUS**

With what, i'th' name of God?

948

**OPHELIA**

My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,

949

Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,

950

No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,

951

Ungartered, and down-gyvèd to his ankle,

952

Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,

953

And with a look so piteous in purport

954

As if he had been loosed out of hell

955

To speak of horrors, he comes before me.

956

**POLONIUS**

Mad for thy love?

957

**OPHELIA**

My lord, I do not know,

But truly I do fear it.

958

**POLONIUS**

What said he?

**OPHELIA**

He took me by the wrist and held me hard, 959  
Then goes he to the length of all his arm, 960  
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow 961  
He falls to such perusal of my face 962  
As 'a would draw it. Long stayed he so. 963  
At last, a little shaking of mine arm, 964  
And thrice his head thus waving up and down, 965  
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound 966  
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk 967  
And end his being. That done, he lets me go, 968  
And, with his head over his shoulder turned, 969  
He seemed to find his way without his eyes, 970  
For out o'doors he went without their helps, 971  
And to the last bended their light on me. 972

**POLONIUS**

Come, go with me. I will go seek the King. 973  
This is the very ecstasy of love, 974  
Whose violent property fordoes itself 975  
And leads the will to desperate undertakings 976  
As oft as any passions under heaven 977  
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry. 978  
What, have you given him any hard words of late? 979

**OPHELIA**

No, my good lord, but as you did command 980  
I did repel his letters and denied 981  
His access to me. 982

**POLONIUS**

That hath made him mad.  
I am sorry that with better heed and judgement 983  
I had not quoted him. I feared he did but trifle 984  
And meant to wrack thee. But beshrew my jealousy. 985  
By heaven, it is as proper to our age 986  
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions 987  
As it is common for the younger sort 988  
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the King. 989  
This must be known, which, being kept close, might move 990  
More grief to hide than hate to utter love. 991  
Come. 992

*(Exeunt.)*

**[2.2]**

*(Flourish.)*

*(Enter King and Queen, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern [with Attendants].)*

**KING**

Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. 993  
Moreover that we much did long to see you, 994  
The need we have to use you did provoke 995  
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard 996  
Of Hamlet's transformation, so F I 997  
F call it,  
Sith nor th'exterior nor the inward man 998  
Resembles that it was. What it should be 999  
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him 1000  
So much from th'understanding of himself 1001  
I cannot dream of. I entreat you both 1002  
That, being of so young days brought up with him 1003  
And sith so neighboured to his youth and haviour, 1004  
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court 1005  
Some little time, so by your companies 1006  
To draw him on to pleasures and to gather 1007  
So much as from occasion you may glean, 1008  
Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus, 1009  
That opened lies within our remedy. 1010

**QUEEN**

Good gentlemen, he hath much talked of you, 1011  
And sure I am two men there is not living 1012  
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you 1013  
To show us so much gentry and good will 1014  
As to expend your time with us a while 1015  
For the supply and profit of our hope, 1016  
Your visitation shall receive such thanks 1017  
As fits a king's remembrance. 1018

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Both your majesties  
Might by the sovereign power you have of us 1019  
Put your dread pleasures more into command 1020  
Than to entreaty. 1021

**GUILDENSTERN**

But we both obey  
And here give up ourselves in the full bent 1022  
To lay our service freely at your feet 1023  
To be commanded. 1024

**KING**

Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern. 1025

**QUEEN**

Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz. 1026  
And I beseech you instantly to visit 1027  
My too much changèd son. — Go some of you 1028  
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is. 1029

**GUILDENSTERN**

Heavens make our presence and our practices 1030  
Pleasant and helpful to him. 1031

**QUEEN**

Ay, amen.

*(Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern [and one or more Attendants].)*

*(Enter Polonius.)*

**POLONIUS**

Th'ambassadors from Norway, my good lord, 1032  
Are joyfully returned. 1033

**KING**

Thou still hast been the father of good news. 1034

**POLONIUS**

Have I, my lord? I assure my good liege 1035

I hold my duty as I hold my soul, 1036

Both to my God, and to my gracious King; 1037

And I do think, or else this brain of mine 1038

Hunts not the trail of policy so sure 1039

As it hath used to do, that I have found 1040

The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy. 1041

**KING**

Oh, speak of that, that do I long to hear. 1042

**POLONIUS**

Give first admittance to th'ambassadors. 1043

My news shall be the fruit to that great feast. 1044

**KING**

Thyself do grace to them and bring them in. 1045

*([Polonius goes to the door.])*

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found 1046

The head and source of all your son's distemper. 1047

**QUEEN**

I doubt it is no other but the main: 1048

His father's death and our hasty marriage. 1049

*(Enter Ambassadors [Voltemand and Cornelius].)*

**KING**

Well, we shall sift him. — Welcome, my good friends. 1050

Say, Voltemand, what from our brother Norway? 1051

**VOLTEMAND**

Most fair return of greetings and desires. 1052  
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress 1053  
His nephew's levies, which to him appeared 1054  
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack; 1055  
But, better looked into, he truly found 1056  
It was against your highness. Whereat, grieved 1057  
That so his sickness, age and impotence 1058  
Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests 1059  
On Fortinbras, which he in brief obeys, 1060  
Receives rebuke from Norway and, in fine, 1061  
Makes vow before his uncle never more 1062  
To give th'assay of arms against your majesty. 1063  
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy, 1064  
Gives him threescore thousand crowns in anual fee 1065  
And his commission to employ those soldiers 1066  
So levied (as before) against the Polack, 1067  
With an entreaty, herein further shown, 1068  
That it might please you to give quiet pass 1069  
Through your dominions for this enterprise 1070  
On such regards of safety and allowance 1071  
As therein are set down. 1072

**KING**

It likes us well,  
And at our more considered time we'll read, 1073  
Answer and think upon this business. 1074  
Meantime, we thank you for your well-took labour. 1075  
Go to your rest, at night we'll feast together. 1076  
Most welcome home. 1077

*(Exeunt Ambassadors [Voltemand and Cornelius].)*

**POLONIUS**

This business is <sup>F</sup> very <sup>F</sup> well ended. 1078  
My liege and madam, to expostulate 1079  
What majesty should be, what duty is, 1080  
Why day is day, night night, and time is time, 1081  
Were nothing but to waste night, day and time. 1082  
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit 1083  
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes. 1084  
I will be brief: your noble son is mad. 1085  
Mad call I it, for to define true madness, 1086  
What is't but to be nothing else but mad? 1087  
But let that go. 1088

**QUEEN**

More matter with less art.

**POLONIUS**

Madam, I swear I use no art at all. 1089  
That he is mad 'tis true, 'tis true 'tis pity, 1090  
And pity 'tis 'tis true — a foolish figure, 1091  
But farewell it, for I will use no art. 1092  
Mad let us grant him then, and now remains 1093  
That we find out the cause of this effect, 1094  
Or rather say the cause of this defect, 1095  
For this effect defective comes by cause. 1096  
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus. 1097  
Perpend. 1098  
I have a daughter — have while she is mine — 1099  
Who in her duty and obedience, mark, 1100  
Hath given me this. Now gather and surmise. 1101

*([Reads the letter.])*

“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 —” etc.

**QUEEN**

Came this from Hamlet to her? 1102

**POLONIUS**

Good madam, stay awhile. I will be faithful. 1103

*([Reads the] letter.)*

“Doubt thou the stars are fire, 1104

Doubt that the sun doth move, 1105

Doubt truth to be a liar, 1106

But never doubt I love. 1107

O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers. I have not art to reckon my groans,  
but that I love thee best — oh, 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; 1108

And more above hath his solicitings, 1109

As they fell out, by time, by means, and place, 1110

All given to mine ear. 1111

**KING**

But how hath she received his love? 1112

**POLONIUS**

What do you think of me? 1113

**KING**

As of a man faithful and honourable. 1114

**POLONIUS**

I would fain prove so. But what might you think 1115  
When I had seen this hot love on the wing 1116  
(As I perceived it, I must tell you that, 1117  
Before my daughter told me), what might you, 1118  
Or my dear majesty your Queen here, think 1119  
If I had played the desk or table-book, 1120  
Or given my heart a working mute and dumb, 1121  
Or looked upon this love with idle sight, 1122  
What might you think? No, I went round to work 1123  
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak: 1124  
“Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy star. 1125  
This must not be.” And then I prescripts gave her 1126  
That she should lock herself from his resort, 1127  
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens; 1128  
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice, 1129  
And he, repellèd, a short tale to make, 1130  
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast, 1131  
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness, 1132  
Thence to a lightness, and by this declension 1133  
Into the madness wherein now he raves 1134  
And all we mourn for. 1135

**KING**

Do you think 'tis this? 1136

**QUEEN**

It may be, very like. 1137

**POLONIUS**

Hath there been such a time — I would fain know that — 1138  
That I have positively said 'tis so 1139  
When it proved otherwise? 1140

**KING**

Not that I know.

**POLONIUS**

Take this from this if this be otherwise. 1141  
If circumstances lead me, I will find 1142  
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed 1143  
Within the centre. 1144

**KING**

How may we try it further?

**POLONIUS**

You know sometimes he walks four hours together 1145  
Here in the lobby. 1146

**QUEEN**

So he does, indeed.

**POLONIUS**

At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him. 1147  
Be you and I behind an arras then, 1148  
Mark the encounter: if he love her not 1149  
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon, 1150  
Let me be no assistant for a state 1151  
But keep a farm and carters. 1152

**KING**

We will try it.

*(Enter Hamlet [reading on a book].)*

**QUEEN**

But look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading. 1153

**POLONIUS**

Away, I do beseech you both, away.

1154

I'll board him presently. Oh, give me leave.

1155

*(Exeunt King and Queen [and Attendants].)*

How does my good lord Hamlet?

1156

**HAMLET**

Well, God-a-mercy.

**POLONIUS**

Do you know me, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Excellent F , excellent F  
well, you are a fishmonger.

**POLONIUS**

Not I, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Then I would you were so honest a man.

**POLONIUS**

Honest, my lord?

**HAMLET**

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

**POLONIUS**

That's very true, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**POLONIUS**

I have, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**POLONIUS**

How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter. Yet he knew me not at first, 'a said I was a fishmonger. 'A is far gone, F far gone, F and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love, very near this. I'll speak to him again.

**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 plumtree 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 F you F 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.

**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.

**HAMLET**

You cannot F , sir, F take from me anything that I will not more willingly part withal, except my life, except my life, except my life.

**POLONIUS**

Fare you well, my lord.

**HAMLET**

These tedious old fools.

*(Enter Guildenstern and Rosencrantz.)*

**POLONIUS**

You go to seek the Lord Hamlet? There he is.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

[To Polonius] God save you, sir.

*([Exit Polonius.]*)

**GUILDENSTERN**

My honoured 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 favours.

**GUILDENSTERN**

Faith, her privates we.

**HAMLET**

In the secret parts of Fortune — Oh, most true, she is a strumpet. What news?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

Then is doomsday near. But your news is not true. F <sup><sup></sup> 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? </sup>

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> GUILDENSTERN </SPAN>**

<span class="folio"> Prison, my lord? </span>

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> HAMLET </SPAN>**

**<span class="folio"> Denmark's a prison. </span>**

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> ROSENCRANTZ </SPAN>**

**<span class="folio"> Then is the world one. </span>**

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> HAMLET </SPAN>**

**<span class="folio"> A goodly one, in which there are many confines, wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o'th'worst. </span>**

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> ROSENCRANTZ </SPAN>**

**<span class="folio"> We think not so, my lord. </span>**

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> HAMLET </SPAN>**

**<span class="folio"> 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. </span>**

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> ROSENCRANTZ </SPAN>**

**<span class="folio"> Why, then your ambition makes it one: 'tis too narrow for your mind. </span>**

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> HAMLET </SPAN>**

**<span class="folio"> O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams. </span>**

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> GUILDENSTERN </SPAN>**

**<span class="folio"> Which dreams indeed are ambition: for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream. </span>**

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> HAMLET </SPAN>**

**<span class="folio"> A dream itself is but a shadow. </span>**

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> ROSENCRANTZ </SPAN>**

**<span class="folio"> Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow. </span>**

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> HAMLET </SPAN>**

**<span class="folio">** Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to th'court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason. **</span>**

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN </SPAN>**

**<span class="folio">** We'll wait upon you. **</span>**

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> HAMLET </SPAN>**

**<span class="folio">** 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. **<sup> F </sup> </span>** 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, 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 colour. I know the good King and Queen have sent for you.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

To what end, my lord?

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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 moult 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 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, F no, F 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 ye 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, <sup> F </sup> the Clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o'th'sear, <sup> F </sup> 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.

<sup> F </sup> **HAMLET**

<sup> F </sup> How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> ROSENCRANTZ </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> Nay, their endeavour 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 clapped for't. These are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages (so they call them) that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills and dare scarce come thither. </span>

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> HAMLET </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> What, are they children? Who maintains 'em? How are they escotted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? Will they not say afterwards if they should grow themselves to common players (as it is most like if their means are no better) their writers do them wrong to make them exclaim against their own succession? </span>

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> ROSENCRANTZ </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> Faith, there has been much to-do on both sides, and the nation holds it no sin to tar them to controversy. There was for a while no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question. </span>

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> HAMLET </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> Is't possible? </span>

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> GUILDENSTERN </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> Oh, there has been much throwing about of brains. </span>

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> HAMLET </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> Do the boys carry it away? </span>

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> ROSENCRANTZ </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> Ay, that they do, my lord, Hercules and his load too. <sup> F </sup> </span>

**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.)*

**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, o'Monday morning, 'twas then indeed.

**POLONIUS**

My lord, I have news to tell you.

**HAMLET**

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

**POLONIUS**

The actors are come hither, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Buzz, buzz.

**POLONIUS**

Upon my honour.

**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, F tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, F scene individable, or poem unlimited; Seneca cannot be too heavy nor Plautus too light for the law of writ and the liberty: these are the only men.

**HAMLET**

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

**POLONIUS**

What a treasure had he, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Why,

“One fair daughter and no more,

1157

The which he loved passing well.”

1158

**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”, 1159

and then, you know, 1160

“It came to pass, 1161

as most like it was.” 1162

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

*(Enter the Players.)*

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

**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 caviary to the general. But it was (as I received it, and others whose judgements 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 sallies in the lines to make the matter savory, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affection, but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much, more handsome than fine. One speech in't I chiefly loved: 'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido, and there about of it especially when he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line — let me see, let me see:

“The rugged Pyrrhus, like th’Hyrcanian beast —” 1163

'Tis not so, it begins with Pyrrhus:

“The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms, 1164

Black as his purpose, did the night resemble 1165

When he lay couchèd in th’ominous horse, 1166

Hath now this dread and black complexion smeared 1167

With heraldry more dismal: head to foot 1168

Now is he total gules, horridly tricked 1169

With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons, 1170

Baked and impasted with the parching streets 1171

That lend a tyrannous and a damnèd light 1172

To their lord’s murder; roasted in wrath and fire, 1173

And thus o’ersizèd with coagulate gore, 1174

With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus 1175

Old grandsire Priam seeks.” — 1176

So proceed you.

**POLONIUS**

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

**1 PLAYER**

“Anon he finds him, 1177  
Striking too short at Greeks. His antique sword, 1178  
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls, 1179  
Repugnant to command. Unequal matched, 1180  
Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide, 1181  
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword 1182  
Th’unnervèd father falls. Then senseless Ilium, 1183  
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top 1184  
Stoops to his base and with a hideous crash 1185  
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus’ ear. For, lo, his sword, 1186  
Which was declining on the milky head 1187  
Of reverend Priam, seemed i’t’h’air to stick. 1188  
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood 1189  
And, like a neutral to his will and matter, 1190  
Did nothing. 1191  
But as we often see against some storm 1192  
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still, 1193  
The bold winds speechless and the orb below 1194  
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder 1195  
Doth rend the region, so after Pyrrhus’ pause 1196  
A rousèd vengeance sets him new a-work, 1197  
And never did the Cyclops’ hammers fall 1198  
On Mars’s armour, forged for proof eterne, 1199  
With less remorse than Pyrrhus’ bleeding sword 1200  
Now falls on Priam. 1201  
Out, out, thou strumpet Fortune! All you gods 1202  
In general synod take away her power, 1203  
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel 1204  
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven 1205  
As low as to the fiends.” 1206

**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 — ah, woe — had seen the moblèd queen" — 1207

**HAMLET**

"The moblèd queen."

**POLONIUS**

That's good. F "Moblèd queen" is good.  
F

**1 PLAYER**

— "Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames 1208  
With bisson rheum, a clout upon that head 1209  
Where late the diadem stood and, for a robe, 1210  
About her lank and all-o'erteemèd loins, 1211  
A blanket in the alarm of fear caught up. 1212  
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steeped, 1213  
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced. 1214  
But if the gods themselves did see her then, 1215  
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport 1216  
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs, 1217  
The instant burst of clamour that she made 1218  
(Unless things mortal move them not at all) 1219  
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven 1220  
And passion in the gods." 1221

**POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

God's bodkin, man, much better. Use every man after his desert, and who shall scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less they deserve the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

**POLONIUS**

Come, sirs.

**HAMLET**

Follow him, friends. We'll hear a play tomorrow. — Dost thou hear me, old friend? Can you play The Murder of Gonzago ?

**1 PLAYER**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

We'll ha't tomorrow night. You could for 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**

Ay, 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 [all but Hamlet].)*

**HAMLET**

Ay, so, God-bye to you. Now I am alone. 1222  
Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I! 1223  
Is it not monstrous that this player here, 1224  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion, 1225  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit 1226  
That from her working, all the visage wanned, 1227  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect, 1228  
A broken voice, an' his whole function suiting 1229  
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing. 1230  
For Hecuba. 1231  
What's Hecuba to him, or he to her, 1232  
That he should weep for her? What would he do 1233  
Had he the motive and the cue for passion 1234  
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears 1235  
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech, 1236  
Make mad the guilty and appal the free, 1237  
Confound the ignorant and amaze indeed 1238  
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I, 1239  
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak 1240  
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause, 1241  
And can say nothing — no, not for a king, 1242  
Upon whose property and most dear life 1243  
A damned defeat was made. Am I a coward? 1244  
Who calls me villain, breaks my pate across, 1245  
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face, 1246  
Tweaks me by the nose, gives me the lie i'th'throat 1247  
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this? 1248  
Ha! 'Swounds, I should take it; for it cannot be 1249  
But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall 1250  
To make oppression bitter, or ere this 1251  
I should 'a' fatted all the region kites 1252  
With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain — 1253  
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain! 1254

<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> Oh, vengeance! <sup> F </sup> 1255  
</span>  
Why, what an ass am I: <span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> ay, sure, 1256  
<sup> F </sup> </span> this is most brave,  
That I, the son of a dear murderèd, 1257  
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell, 1258  
Must like a whore unpack my heart with words 1259  
And fall a-cursing like a very drab, 1260  
A stallion. Fie upon't, foh! 1261  
About, my brains! Hum, I have heard, 1262  
That guilty creatures sitting at a play 1263  
Have by the very cunning of the scene 1264  
Been struck so to the soul that presently 1265  
They have proclaimed their malefactions. 1266  
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak 1267  
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players 1268  
Play something like the murder of my father 1269  
Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks. 1270  
I'll tent him to the quick. If 'a do blench, 1271  
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen 1272  
May be a devil, and the devil hath power 1273  
T'assume a pleasing shape, yea, and perhaps 1274  
Out of my weakness and my melancholy, 1275  
As he is very potent with such spirits, 1276  
Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds 1277  
More relative than this. The play's the thing 1278  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King. 1279

*(Exit.)*

## Act III

### [3.1]

*(Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, [and] Lords.)*

#### KING

And can you by no drift of conference 1280  
Get from him why he puts on this confusion, 1281  
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet 1282  
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy? 1283

#### ROSENCRANTZ

He does confess he feels himself distracted, 1284  
But from what cause 'a will by no means speak. 1285

#### GUILDENSTERN

Nor do we find him forward to be sounded, 1286  
But with a crafty madness keeps aloof 1287  
When we would bring him on to some confession 1288  
Of his true state. 1289

#### QUEEN

Did he receive you well? 1290

#### ROSENCRANTZ

Most like a gentleman. 1291

#### GUILDENSTERN

But with much forcing of his disposition. 1292

#### ROSENCRANTZ

Niggard of question, but of our demands 1293  
Most free in his reply. 1294

**QUEEN**

Did you assay him to any pastime? 1295

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Madam, it so fell out that certain players 1296

We o'erraught on the way. Of these we told him 1297

And there did seem in him a kind of joy 1298

To hear of it. They are here about the court 1299

And, as I think, they have already order 1300

This night to play before him. 1301

**POLONIUS**

'Tis most true,

And he beseeched me to entreat your majesties 1302

To hear and see the matter. 1303

**KING**

With all my heart, and it doth much content me 1304

To hear him so inclined. 1305

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge, 1306

And drive his purpose into these delights. 1307

**ROSENCRANTZ**

We shall, my lord. 1308

*(Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern [and Lords].)*

**KING**

Sweet Gertrude, leave us too, 1309  
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither, 1310  
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here 1311  
Affront Ophelia. Her father and myself F 1312  
(lawful espials) F F  
We'll so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen, 1313  
We may of their encounter frankly judge 1314  
And gather by him as he is behaved, 1315  
If't be th'affliction of his love or no 1316  
That thus he suffers for. 1317

**QUEEN**

I shall obey you.  
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish 1318  
That your good beauties be the happy cause 1319  
Of Hamlet's wildness. So shall I hope your virtues 1320  
Will bring him to his wonted way again 1321  
To both your honours. 1322

**OPHELIA**

Madam, I wish it may.

*([Exit Queen.] )*

**POLONIUS**

Ophelia, walk you here. — Gracious, so please you, 1323  
We will bestow ourselves. — Read on this book, 1324  
That show of such an exercise may colour 1325  
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this, 1326  
( 'Tis too much proved) that with devotion's visage 1327  
And pious action we do sugar o'er 1328  
The devil himself. 1329

**KING**

Oh, 'tis too true.

How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!

1330

The harlot's cheek beautied with plastering art

1331

Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it

1332

Than is my deed to my most painted word.

1333

Oh, heavy burden!

1334

*(Enter Hamlet.)*

**POLONIUS**

I hear him coming: F let's F  
withdraw, my lord.

1335

*([Exeunt King and Polonius.])*

**HAMLET**

To be, or not to be, that is the question: 1336  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer 1337  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, 1338  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles 1339  
And by opposing, end them. To die — to sleep, 1340  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end 1341  
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks 1342  
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consumation 1343  
Devoutly to be wished: to die to sleep; 1344  
To sleep, perchance to dream — ay, there's the rub, 1345  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come 1346  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil 1347  
Must give us pause. There's the respect 1348  
That makes calamity of so long life: 1349  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, 1350  
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, 1351  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay, 1352  
The insolence of office and the spurns 1353  
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes, 1354  
When he himself might his quietus make 1355  
With a bare bodkin? Who would F <sup>F</sup> 1356  
these <sup>F</sup> F fardels bear  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life 1357  
But that the dread of something after death 1358  
(The undiscovered country from whose bourn 1359  
No traveller returns) puzzles the will 1360  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have 1361  
Than fly to others that we know not of? 1362  
Thus conscience does make cowards F <sup>F</sup> 1363  
<sup>F</sup> of us all <sup>F</sup> F ,  
And thus the native hue of resolution 1364  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought, 1365  
And enterprises of great pitch and moment 1366

With this regard their currents turn awry 1367  
And lose the name of action. Soft you now, 1368  
The fair Ophelia. Nymph, in thy orisons 1369  
Be all my sins remembered. 1370

**OPHELIA**

Good my lord,  
How does your honour for this many a day? 1371

**HAMLET**

I humbly thank you, F well, well, 1372  
F well.

**OPHELIA**

My lord, I have remembrances of yours 1373  
That I have longèd long to redeliver. 1374  
I pray you now receive them. 1375

**HAMLET**

No, not I, I never gave you aught. 1376

**OPHELIA**

My honoured lord, you know right well you did, 1377  
And with them words of so sweet breath composed 1378  
As made these things more rich. Their perfume lost, 1379  
Take these again, for to the noble mind 1380  
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind. 1381  
There, my lord. 1382

**HAMLET**

Ha, ha, are you honest? 1383

**OPHELIA**

My lord? 1384

**HAMLET**

Are you fair?

1385

**OPHELIA**

What means your lordship?

1386

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

**HAMLET**

You should not have believed me. For virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it. I loved you not.

**OPHELIA**

I was the more deceived.

**HAMLET**

Get thee to a nunn'ry. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more 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 F <sup>F</sup> all <sup>F</sup> F , believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunn'ry. 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**

Oh, 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 nunn'ry. F Go. F Farewell. Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool, for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunn'ry, go, and quickly too. Farewell.

**OPHELIA**

Heavenly powers, restore him.

**HAMLET**

I have heard of your paintings F too F well enough. God hath given you one face and you make yourselves another. You jig and amble, and you lisp, you nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't, it hath made me mad. I say we will have no mo marriage. Those that are married already, all but one, shall live. The rest shall keep as they are. To a nunn'ry, go.

*(Exit.)*

**OPHELIA**

Oh, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown! 1387  
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword, 1388  
Th'expectation and rose of the fair state, 1389  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form, 1390  
Th'observed of all observers, quite quite down. 1391  
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched, 1392  
That sucked the honey of his music vows, 1393  
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason 1394  
Like sweet bells jangled out of time and harsh; 1395  
That unmatched form and stature of blown youth 1396  
Blasted with ecstasy. Oh, woe is me 1397  
T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see. 1398

*(Enter King and Polonius.)*

**KING**

Love — his affections do not that way tend, 1399  
Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little, 1400  
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul 1401  
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood, 1402  
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose 1403  
Will be some danger; which for to prevent, 1404  
I have in quick determination 1405  
Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England 1406  
For the demand of our neglected tribute. 1407  
Haply the seas and countries different, 1408  
With variable objects, shall expel 1409  
This something-settled matter in his heart 1410  
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus 1411  
From fashion of himself. What think you on't? 1412

**POLONIUS**

It shall do well. But yet do I believe 1413  
The origin and commencement of his grief 1414  
Sprung from neglected love. — How now, Ophelia? 1415  
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said, 1416  
We heard it all. — My lord, do as you please, 1417  
But if you hold it fit, after the play, 1418  
Let his Queen-mother all alone entreat him 1419  
To show his grief, let her be round with him, 1420  
And I'll be placed (so please you) in the ear 1421  
Of all their conference. If she find him not, 1422  
To England send him, or confine him where 1423  
Your wisdom best shall think. 1424

**KING**

It shall be so.  
Madness in great ones must not unwatched go. 1425

*(Exeunt.)*

**[3.2]**

*(Enter Hamlet and three of the Players.)*

**HAMLET**

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

**PLAYER**

I warrant your 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 anything so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her F <sup>F</sup> feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it makes the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. Oh, there be players that I have seen play and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither having th'accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of Nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so "abominably."

**PLAYER**

I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us.

**HAMLET**

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

*([Exeunt Players.] )*

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

*(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?

1426

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Ay, my lord.

*(Exeunt they two.)*

**HAMLET**

What ho, Horatio!

1427

*(Enter Horatio.)*

**HORATIO**

Here, sweet lord, at your service.

**HAMLET**

Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man

1428

As e'er my conversation coped withal.

1429

**HORATIO**

Oh, my dear lord —

1430

HAMLET

Nay, do not think I flatter,  
For what advancement may I hope from thee 1431  
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits 1432  
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flattered? 1433  
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp 1434  
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee 1435  
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear? 1436  
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice 1437  
And could of men distinguish her election, 1438  
Sh'hath sealed thee for herself, for thou hast been 1439  
As one in suff'ring all that suffers nothing, 1440  
A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards 1441  
Hast ta'en with equal thanks. And blest are those 1442  
Whose blood and judgement are so well co-meddled 1443  
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger 1444  
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man 1445  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him 1446  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart, 1447  
As I do thee. Something too much of this. 1448  
There is a play tonight before the King. 1449  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance 1450  
Which I have told thee of my father's death. 1451  
I prithee, when thou see'st that act afoot, 1452  
Even with the very comment of thy soul, 1453  
Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt 1454  
Do not itself unkennel in one speech, 1455  
It is a damnèd ghost that we have seen, 1456  
And my imaginations are as foul 1457  
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note, 1458  
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face, 1459  
And after, we will both our judgements join 1460  
In censure of his seeming. 1461

**HORATIO**

Well, my lord.

If 'a steal aught the whilst this play is playing

1462

And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

1463

*(Enter Trumpets and Kettledrums, King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia,  
[Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and other Lords attendant.]* <span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> with his Guard carrying torches. Danish  
march. Sound a Flourish. <sup> F </sup> </span>)

**HAMLET**

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

**KING**

How fares our cousin Hamlet?

**HAMLET**

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

**KING**

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

**HAMLET**

No, nor mine now. [To Polonius] My lord, you played once i'th'university, you say?

**POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

What did you enact?

**POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Ay, my lord, they stay upon your patience.

**QUEEN**

Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

**HAMLET**

No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

**POLONIUS**

[To the King] Oh ho, do you mark that?

**HAMLET**

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

**OPHELIA**

No, my lord.

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> <SUP> F </SUP> HAMLET </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> I mean, my head upon your lap? </span>

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> OPHELIA </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> Ay, my lord. <sup> F </sup> </span>

**HAMLET**

Do you think I meant country matters?

**OPHELIA**

I think nothing, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

What is, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Nothing.

OPHELIA

You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET

Who, I?

OPHELIA

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

HAMLET

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

*(The Trumpets sounds. Dumb-show follows. Enter a king and a queen, <span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> very lovingly, <sup> F </sup> </span> the queen embracing him and he her. <span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> She kneels and makes show of protestation unto him. <sup> F </sup> </span> 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 come in another man, takes off his crown, kisses it, pours poison in the sleeper's ears, and leaves him. The queen returns, finds the king dead, makes passionate action. The poisoner with some three or four come in again, seem to condole with her. The dead body is carried away. The poisoner woos the queen with gifts. She seems harsh awhile, but in the end accepts love.)*

*([Exeunt Players].)*

**OPHELIA**

What means this, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Marry, this is miching malicho. It means mischief.

**OPHELIA**

Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

*(Enter Prologue.)*

**HAMLET**

We shall know by this fellow. The players cannot keep counsel, they'll tell all.

**OPHELIA**

Will 'a tell us what this show meant?

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

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

**PROLOGUE**

For us and for our tragedy, 1464

Here stooping to your clemency 1465

We beg your hearing patiently. 1466

*([Exit.] )*

**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 1467  
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbèd ground, 1468  
And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen 1469  
About the world have times twelve thirties been 1470  
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands 1471  
Unite commutual in most sacred bands. 1472

**PLAYER QUEEN**

So many journeys may the sun and moon 1473  
Make us again count o'er ere love be done. 1474  
But woe is me, you are so sick of late, 1475  
So far from cheer and from your former state, 1476  
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust, 1477  
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must. 1478  
For women fear too much, even as they love, 1479  
And women's fear and love hold quantity, 1480  
In neither ought, or in extremity. 1481  
Now what my love is proof hath made you know, 1482  
And, as my love is sized, my fear is so. 1483  
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear; 1484  
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there. 1485

**PLAYER KING**

Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too: 1486  
My operant powers their functions leave to do; 1487  
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind, 1488  
honoured, beloved, and haply one as kind 1489  
For husband shalt thou — 1490

**PLAYER QUEEN**

Oh, confound the rest!

Such love must needs be treason in my breast.

1491

In second husband let me be accursed.

1492

None wed the second but who killed the first.

1493

**HAMLET**

That's wormwood.

**PLAYER QUEEN**

The instances that second marriage move

1494

Are base respects of thrift, but none of love.

1495

A second time I kill my husband dead

1496

When second husband kisses me in bed.

1497

**PLAYER KING**

I do believe you think what now you speak. 1498  
But what we do determine oft we break. 1499  
Purpose is but the slave to memory, 1500  
Of violent birth but poor validity, 1501  
Which now, the fruit unripe, sticks on the tree, 1502  
But fall unshaken when they mellow be. 1503  
Most necessary 'tis that we forget 1504  
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt. 1505  
What to ourselves in passion we propose, 1506  
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose. 1507  
The violence of either grief or joy 1508  
Their own enactures with themselves destroy. 1509  
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament; 1510  
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident. 1511  
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange 1512  
That even our loves should with our fortunes change, 1513  
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove 1514  
Whether Love lead Fortune, or else Fortune Love. 1515  
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies; 1516  
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies; 1517  
And hitherto doth Love on Fortune tend: 1518  
For who not needs shall never lack a friend, 1519  
And who in want a hollow friend doth try 1520  
Directly seasons him his enemy. 1521  
But orderly to end where I begun, 1522  
Our wills and fates do so contrary run 1523  
That our devices still are overthrown: 1524  
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own. 1525  
So think thou wilt no second husband wed, 1526  
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead. 1527

**PLAYER QUEEN**

Nor earth to me give food nor heaven light, 1528  
Sport and repose lock from me day and night, 1529  
To desperation turn my trust and hope, 1530  
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope, 1531  
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy 1532  
Meet what I would have well and it destroy, 1533  
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife, 1534  
If once a widow ever I be a wife. 1535

**HAMLET**

If she should break it now.

**PLAYER KING**

'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile. 1536  
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile 1537  
The tedious day with sleep. 1538

**PLAYER QUEEN**

Sleep rock thy brain,

*([He sleeps.]*)

And never come mischance between us twain. 1539

*(Exit.)*

**HAMLET**

Madam, how like you this play?

**QUEEN**

The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

**HAMLET**

Oh, but she'll keep her word.

**KING**

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.

**KING**

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.

*(Enter Lucianus.)*

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

**OPHELIA**

You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

**HAMLET**

I could interpret between you and your love if I could see the puppets dallying.

**OPHELIA**

You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

Still better and worse.

**HAMLET**

So you mis-take your husbands. — Begin, murderer. >  
<sup> F </sup> Pox! <sup> F </sup> </span> Leave thy damnable faces and  
begin. Come: "the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge."

**LUCIANUS**

Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing, 1540  
Confederate season, else no creature seeing, 1541  
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected, 1542  
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected, 1543  
Thy natural magic and dire property 1544  
On wholesome life usurps immediately. 1545

*([Pours the poison in his ears.]*

**HAMLET**

'A 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.

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> <SUP> F </SUP> HAMLET </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> What, frightened with false fire? <sup> F </sup> </span>

**QUEEN**

How fares my lord?

**POLONIUS**

Give o'er the play.

**KING**

Give me some light. Away!

**POLONIUS**

Lights, lights, lights!

*(Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio.)*

**HAMLET**

Why, let the stricken deer go weep, 1546

The hart ungalled play, 1547

For some must watch while some must sleep. 1548

Thus runs the world away. 1549

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

**HORATIO**

Half a share.

**HAMLET**

A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear, 1550

This realm dismantled was 1551

Of Jove himself, and now reigns here 1552

A very, very — pajock. 1553

**HORATIO**

You might have rhymed.

**HAMLET**

O good Horatio, I'll take the Ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

**HORATIO**

Very well, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Upon the talk of the poisoning?

**HORATIO**

I did very well note him.

**HAMLET**

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

For, if the King like not the comedy,

1554

Why then belike he likes it not, perdie.

1555

Come, some music!

*(Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.)*

**GUILDENSTERN**

Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

**HAMLET**

Sir, a whole history.

**GUILDENSTERN**

The King, sir —

**HAMLET**

Ay, sir, what of him?

**GUILDENSTERN**

— is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

**HAMLET**

With drink, sir?

**GUILDENSTERN**

No, my lord, F rather F with choler —

**HAMLET**

Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to the doctor, for, for me to put him to his purgation, would perhaps plunge him into F far F 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 F my F business.

**HAMLET**

Sir, I cannot.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

What, my lord?

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

Oh, 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**

Ay, sir, but while the grass grows — the proverb is something musty. Oh, 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 thumbs, 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 utterance 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 fret me you cannot play upon me.

*(Enter Polonius.)*

God bless you, sir.

**POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

Methinks it is like a weasel.

**POLONIUS**

It is backed like a weasel.

**HAMLET**

Or like a whale.

**POLONIUS**

Very like a whale.

**HAMLET**

Then I will come to my mother by and by.

They fool me to the top of my bent.

**POLONIUS**

I will say so.

*([Exit.] )*

**HAMLET**

“By and by” is easily said. — Leave me, friends.

*([Exeunt all but Hamlet.]*)

'Tis now the very witching time of night 1556  
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out 1557  
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood 1558  
And do such bitter business as the day 1559  
Would quake to look on. Soft, now to my mother. 1560  
O heart, lose not thy nature. Let not ever 1561  
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom; 1562  
Let me be cruel, not unnatural. 1563  
I will speak daggers to her, but use none. 1564  
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites. 1565  
How in my words somever she be shent 1566  
To give them seals never my soul consent. 1567

*(Exit.)*

**[3.3]**

*(Enter King, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.)*

**KING**

I like him not, nor stands it safe with us 1568  
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you: 1569  
I your commission will forthwith dispatch, 1570  
And he to England shall along with you. 1571  
The terms of our estate may not endure 1572  
Hazard so near's as doth hourly grow 1573  
Out of his brows. 1574

**GULDENSTERN**

We will ourselves provide. 1575  
Most holy and religious fear it is 1576  
To keep those many many bodies safe 1576  
That live and feed upon your majesty. 1577

**ROSENCRANTZ**

The single and peculiar life is bound 1578  
With all the strength and armour of the mind 1579  
To keep itself from noyance, but much more 1580  
That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests 1581  
The lives of many. The cess of majesty 1582  
Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw 1583  
What's near it with it; or it is a massy wheel 1584  
Fixed on the summit of the highest mount 1585  
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things 1586  
Are mortised and adjoined, which, when it falls, 1587  
Each small annexment, petty consequence, 1588  
Attends the boist'rous ruin. Never alone 1589  
Did the King sigh but with a general groan. 1590

**KING**

Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage, 1591  
For we will fetters put about this fear 1592  
Which now goes too free-footed. 1593

**ROSENCRANTZ**

We will haste us.

*(Exeunt Gentlemen [Rosencrantz and Guildenstern].)*

*(Enter Polonius.)*

**POLONIUS**

My lord, he's going to his mother's closet. 1594  
Behind the arras I'll convey myself 1595  
To hear the process. I'll warrant she'll tax him home, 1596  
And, as you said (and wisely was it said), 1597  
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother, 1598  
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear 1599  
The speech of vantage. Fare you well, my liege, 1600  
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed 1601  
And tell you what I know. 1602

KING

Thanks, dear my lord. —

*(Exit [Polonius].)*

Oh, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven, 1603  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't, 1604  
A brother's murder. Pray can I not, 1605  
Though inclination be as sharp as will; 1606  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent, 1607  
And, like a man to double business bound, 1608  
I stand in pause where I shall first begin 1609  
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand 1610  
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood? 1611  
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens 1612  
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy 1613  
But to confront the visage of offence? 1614  
And what's in prayer but this twofold force, 1615  
To be forestallèd ere we come to fall 1616  
Or pardoned being down? Then I'll look up. 1617  
My fault is past, but oh, what form of prayer 1618  
Can serve my turn? "Forgive me my foul murder?" 1619  
That cannot be since I am still possessed 1620  
Of those effects for which I did the murder: 1621  
My crown, mine own ambition and my Queen. 1622  
May one be pardoned and retain th'offence? 1623  
In the corrupted currents of this world 1624  
Offence's guildd hand may shove by justice, 1625  
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself 1626  
Buys out the law; but 'tis not so above, 1627  
There is no shuffling, there the action lies 1628  
In his true nature, and we ourselves compelled 1629  
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults 1630  
To give in evidence. What then? What rests? 1631  
Try what repentance can. What can it not? 1632

Yet what can it, when one cannot repent? 1633  
O wretched state, O bosom black as death, 1634  
O limèd soul, that, struggling to be free, 1635  
Art more engaged! Help, angels, make assay. 1636  
Bow, stubborn knees, and heart with strings of steel 1637

*([Kneels?])*

Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe. 1638  
All may be well. 1639

*(Enter Hamlet.)*

**HAMLET**

Now might I do it pat, now 'a is a-praying. 1640  
And now I'll do't [Draws his sword.] — and so 'a goes to heaven, 1641  
And so am I revenged. That would be scanned: 1642  
A villain kills my father, and for that 1643  
I, his sole son, do this same villain send 1644  
To heaven. 1645  
Why, this is base and silly, not revenge. 1646  
'A took my father grossly, full of bread, 1647  
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May, 1648  
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven, 1649  
But in our circumstance and course of thought 1650  
'Tis heavy with him. And am I then revenged 1651  
To take him in the purging of his soul 1652  
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage? 1653  
No. 1654  
Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent: 1655  
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage, 1656  
Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed, 1657  
At game a-swearing, or about some act 1658  
That has no relish of salvation in't, 1659  
Then trip him that his heels may kick at heaven 1660  
And that his soul may be as damned and black 1661  
As hell whereto it goes. My mother stays. 1662  
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. 1663

*(Exit.)*

**KING**

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below. 1664  
Words without thoughts never to heaven go. 1665

*(Exit.)*

*(Enter [Queen] Gertrude and Polonius.)*

**POLONIUS**

'A will come straight. Look you lay home to him. 1666  
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with, 1667  
And that your grace hath screened and stood between 1668  
Much heat and him. I'll silence me even here. 1669  
Pray you be round F with him F . 1670

**<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> F </SPAN> HAMLET </SPAN>**

Within Mother, 1671  
mother, mother. F </span>

**QUEEN**

I'll warrant you, fear me not. 1672  
Withdraw, I hear him coming. 1673

*([Polonius hides behind the arras.])*

*(Enter Hamlet.)*

**HAMLET**

Now, mother, what's the matter? 1674

**QUEEN**

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended. 1675

**HAMLET**

Mother, you have my father much offended. 1676

**QUEEN**

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue. 1677

**HAMLET**

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue. 1678

**QUEEN**

Why, how now, Hamlet?

1679

**HAMLET**

What's the matter now?

**QUEEN**

Have you forgot me?

1680

**HAMLET**

No, by the rood, not so,

You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife,

1681

And, would it were not so, you are my mother.

1682

**QUEEN**

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

1683

**HAMLET**

Come, come, and sit you down, you shall not budge.

1684

You go not till I set you up a glass

1685

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

1686

**QUEEN**

What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?

1687

Help, F help, F

1688

ho!

**POLONIUS**

[Behind the arras.] What ho! Help! F

Help, help! F

**HAMLET**

How now, a rat! Dead for a ducat, dead!

1689

*([Kills Polonius.]*)

**POLONIUS**

[Behind the arras.] Oh, I am slain.

1690

**QUEEN**

O me, what hast thou done?

**HAMLET**

Nay, I know not. Is it the King?

1691

**QUEEN**

Oh, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

1692

**HAMLET**

A bloody deed — almost as bad, good mother,

1693

As kill a king and marry with his brother.

1694

**QUEEN**

As kill a king?

1695

**HAMLET**

Ay, lady, it was my word. —

*([Discovers Polonius.] )*

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell.

1696

I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune.

1697

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

1698

Leave wringing of your hands. Peace, sit you down

1699

And let me wring your heart, for so I shall,

1700

If it be made of penetrable stuff,

1701

If damnèd custom have not brazed it so

1702

That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

1703

**QUEEN**

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

1704

In noise so rude against me?

1705

**HAMLET**

Such an act 1706  
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty, 1707  
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose 1708  
From the fair forehead of an innocent love 1709  
And sets a blister there, makes marriage vows 1710  
As false as dicers' oaths — oh, such a deed 1711  
As from the body of contraction plucks 1712  
The very soul, and sweet religion makes 1713  
A rhapsody of words. Heaven's face does glow 1714  
O'er this solidity and compound mass 1715  
With heated visage, as against the doom 1716  
Is thought-sick at the act. 1717

**QUEEN**

Ay me, what act  
That roars so loud and thunders in the index? 1718

**HAMLET**

Look here upon this picture, and on this, 1719  
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers. 1720  
See what a grace was seated on his brow, 1721  
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself, 1722  
An eye like Mars to threaten and command, 1723  
A station like the herald Mercury, 1724  
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill, 1725  
A combination and a form indeed 1726  
Where every god did seem to set his seal 1727  
To give the world assurance of a man. 1728  
This was your husband. Look you now what follows: 1729  
Here is your husband like a mildewed ear 1730  
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes? 1731  
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed 1732  
And batten on this moor? Ha, have you eyes? 1733  
You cannot call it love, for at your age 1734  
The heyday in the blood is tame, it's humble 1735  
And waits upon the judgement, and what judgement 1736  
Would step from this to this? Sense sure you have, 1737  
Else could you not have motion, but sure that sense 1738  
Is apoplex'd, for madness would not err 1739  
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd 1740  
But it reserved some quantity of choice 1741  
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't 1742  
That thus hath cozened you at hoodman-blind? 1743  
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight, 1744  
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all, 1745  
Or but a sickly part of one true sense 1746  
Could not so mope. O shame, where is thy blush? 1747  
Rebellious hell, 1748  
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones, 1749  
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax 1750  
And melt in her own fire. Proclaim no shame 1751

When the compulsive ardour gives the charge, 1752  
Since frost itself as actively doth burn 1753  
And reason panders will. 1754

**QUEEN**

O Hamlet, speak no more!  
Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul, 1755  
And there I see such black and grainèd spots 1756  
As will leave there their tinct. 1757

**HAMLET**

Nay, but to live  
In the rank sweat of an enseamèd bed 1758  
Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love 1759  
Over the nasty sty — 1760

**QUEEN**

Oh, speak to me no more, 1761  
These words like daggers enter in my ears. 1762  
No more, sweet Hamlet. 1763

**HAMLET**

A murderer and a villain,  
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe 1764  
Of your precedent lord, a vice of kings, 1765  
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule, 1766  
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole 1767  
And put it in his pocket — 1768

**QUEEN**

No more. 1769

*(Enter Ghost.)*

**HAMLET**

A king of shreds and patches — 1770  
Save me and hover o'er me with your wings, 1771  
You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure? 1772

**QUEEN**

Alas, he's mad. 1773

**HAMLET**

Do you not come your tardy son to chide, 1774  
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by 1775  
Th'important acting of your dread command? Oh, say! 1776

**GHOST**

Do not forget. This visitation 1777  
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose. 1778  
But look, amazement on thy mother sits. 1779  
Oh, step between her and her fighting soul. 1780  
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works. 1781  
Speak to her, Hamlet. 1782

**HAMLET**

How is it with you, lady? 1783

**QUEEN**

Alas, how is't with you,  
That you do bend your eye on vacancy 1784  
And with th'incorporal air do hold discourse? 1785  
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep, 1786  
And, as the sleeping soldiers in th'alarm, 1787  
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements, 1788  
Start up and stand on end. O gentle son, 1789  
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper 1790  
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look? 1791

**HAMLET**

On him, on him. Look you how pale he glares. 1792  
His form and cause conjoined preaching to stones 1793  
Would make them capable. — Do not look upon me, 1794  
Lest with this piteous action you convert 1795  
My stern effects. Then what I have to do 1796  
Will want true colour, tears perchance for blood. 1797

**QUEEN**

To whom do you speak this? 1798

**HAMLET**

Do you see nothing there? 1799

**QUEEN**

Nothing at all, yet all that is I see. 1800

**HAMLET**

Nor did you nothing hear? 1801

**QUEEN**

No, nothing but ourselves. 1802

**HAMLET**

Why, look you there, look how it steals away, 1803  
My father in his habit as he lived, 1804  
Look where he goes, even now out at the portal. 1805

*(Exit Ghost.)*

**QUEEN**

This is the very coinage of your brain. 1806  
This bodiless creation ecstasy 1807  
Is very cunning in. 1808

**HAMLET**

<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> Ecstasy? <sup> F </sup> </span> 1809  
My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time 1810  
And makes as healthful music. It is not madness 1811  
That I have uttered. Bring me to the test, 1812  
And I the matter will reword, which madness 1813  
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace, 1814  
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul 1815  
That not your trespass but my madness speaks. 1816  
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place 1817  
Whiles rank corruption mining all within 1818  
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven, 1819  
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come, 1820  
And do not spread the compost on the weeds 1821  
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue, 1822  
For in the fatness of these pury times 1823  
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg, 1824  
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good. 1825

**QUEEN**

O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain. 1826

**HAMLET**

Oh, throw away the worser part of it, 1827  
And live the purer with the other half. 1828  
Good night, but go not to my uncle's bed. 1829  
Assume a virtue if you have it not. 1830  
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat 1831  
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this, 1832  
That to the use of actions fair and good 1833  
He likewise gives a frock or livery 1834  
That aptly is put on. Refrain tonight, 1835  
And that shall lend a kind of easiness 1836  
To the next abstinence. The next more easy; 1837  
For use almost can change the stamp of nature, 1838  
And either shame the devil or throw him out 1839  
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night. 1840  
And when you are desirous to be blessed 1841  
I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord 1842  
I do repent, but heaven hath pleased it so 1843  
To punish me with this, and this with me, 1844  
That I must be their scourge and minister. 1845  
I will bestow him and will answer well 1846  
The death I gave him. So again, good night. 1847  
I must be cruel only to be kind. 1848  
This bad begins and worse remains behind. 1849  
One word more, good lady. 1850

**QUEEN**

What shall I do?

**HAMLET**

Not this, by no means, that I bid you do: 1851  
Let the bloat King tempt you again to bed, 1852  
Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse, 1853  
And let him for a pair of reechy kisses, 1854  
Or paddling in your neck with his damned fingers, 1855  
Make you to ravel all this matter out 1856  
That I essentially am not in madness 1857  
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know, 1858  
For who that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise, 1859  
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib, 1860  
Such dear concernings hide? Who would do so? 1861  
No, in despite of sense and secrecy 1862  
Unpeg the basket on the house's top, 1863  
Let the birds fly and, like the famous ape, 1864  
To try conclusions in the basket creep 1865  
And break your own neck down. 1866

**QUEEN**

Be thou assured, if words be made of breath 1867  
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe 1868  
What thou hast said to me. 1869

**HAMLET**

I must to England, you know that? 1870

**QUEEN**

Alack, I had forgot. 'Tis so concluded on. 1871

HAMLET

There's letters sealed, and my two schoolfellows, 1872  
Whom I will trust as I will adders fanged, 1873  
They bear the mandate, they must sweep my way 1874  
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work, 1875  
For 'tis the sport to have the engineer 1876  
Hoist with his own petard, and't shall go hard 1877  
But I will delve one yard below their mines 1878  
And blow them at the moon. Oh, 'tis most sweet 1879  
When in one line two crafts directly meet. 1880  
This man shall set me packing; 1881  
I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room. 1882  
Mother, good night indeed. This counsellor 1883  
Is now most still, most secret and most grave, 1884  
Who was in life a foolish prating knave. 1885  
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you. 1886  
Good night, mother. 1887

*(Exit [Hamlet tugging in Polonius].)*

## Act IV

### [4.1]

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

**KING**

There's matter in these sighs. These profound heaves 1888

You must translate; 'tis fit we understand them. 1889

Where is your son? 1890

**QUEEN**

Bestow this place on us a little while. 1891

*([Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.])*

Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen tonight! 1892

**KING**

What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet? 1893

**QUEEN**

Mad as the sea and wind when both contend 1894

Which is the mightier. In his lawless fit, 1895

Behind the arras hearing something stir, 1896

Whips out his rapier, cries "A rat, a rat!" 1897

And in this brainish apprehension kills 1898

The unseen good old man. 1899

**KING**

Oh, heavy deed!

It had been so with us had we been there.	1900
His liberty is full of threats to all,	1901
To you yourself, to us, to everyone.	1902
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answered?	1903
It will be laid to us, whose providence	1904
Should have kept short, restrained and out of haunt	1905
This mad young man. But so much was our love,	1906
We would not understand what was most fit,	1907
But, like the owner of a foul disease,	1908
To keep it from divulging, let it feed	1909
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?	1910

**QUEEN**

To draw apart the body he hath killed,	1911
O'er whom — his very madness like some ore	1912
Among a mineral of metals base	1913
Shows itself pure — 'a weeps for what is done.	1914

**KING**

O Gertrude, come away. 1915  
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch 1916  
But we will ship him hence and this vile deed 1917  
We must with all our majesty and skill 1918  
Both countenance and excuse. — Ho, Guildenstern! 1919

*(Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.)*

Friends both, go join you with some further aid: 1920  
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain 1921  
And from his mother's closet hath he dragged him. 1922  
Go seek him out, speak fair and bring the body 1923  
Into the chapel. I pray you haste in this. 1924

*([Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]*

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends 1925  
And let them know both what we mean to do 1926  
And what's untimely done. So envious slander 1927  
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter, 1928  
As level as the cannon to his blank, 1929  
Transports his poisoned shot, may miss our name 1930  
And hit the woundless air. Oh, come away, 1931  
My soul is full of discord and dismay. 1932

*(Exeunt.)*

**[4.2]**

*(Enter Hamlet.)*

**HAMLET**

Safely stowed.

[Calling within] But soft. What noise? Who calls on Hamlet? Oh, here they come.

*(Enter Rosencrantz[, Guildenstern] and others.)*

**ROSENCRANTZ**

What have you done, my lord, with the dead body? 1933

**HAMLET**

Compound it with dust whereto 'tis kin. 1934

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Tell us where 'tis that we may take it thence 1935

And bear it to the chapel. 1936

**HAMLET**

Do not believe it. 1937

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Believe what? 1938

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Ay, sir, that soaks up the King's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the King best service in the end: he keeps them like an ape an apple in the corner of his jaw, first mouthed to be last swallowed. When he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

I understand you not, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**GUILDENSTERN**

A thing, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Of nothing. Bring me to him. F Hide fox  
and all after. F

*(Exeunt.)*

**[4.3]**

*(Enter King, and two or three.)*

**KING**

I have sent to seek him and to find the body.	1939
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!	1940
Yet must not we put the strong law on him:	1941
He's loved of the distracted multitude,	1942
Who like not in their judgement but their eyes,	1943
And where 'tis so, th'offender's scourge is weighed	1944
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,	1945
This sudden sending him away must seem	1946
Deliberate pause. Diseases desperate grown	1947
By desperate appliance are relieved,	1948
Or not at all.	1949

*(Enter Rosencrantz, [Guildenstern] and all the rest.)*

How now, what hath befall'n?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord,

1950

We cannot get from him.

1951

**KING**

But where is he?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

1952

**KING**

Bring him before us.

1953

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Ho! Bring in the lord.

*(They [Hamlet and Guards] enter.)*

**KING**

Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

**HAMLET**

At supper.

**KING**

At supper, where?

**HAMLET**

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

**KING**

Alas, alas.

**HAMLET**

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

**KING**

What dost thou mean by this?

**HAMLET**

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

**KING**

Where is Polonius?

**HAMLET**

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

**KING**

Go seek him there.

**HAMLET**

'A will stay till you come.

*([Exeunt Guards.] )*

**KING**

Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety	1954
(Which we do tender as we dearly grieve	1955
For that which thou hast done) must send thee hence.	1956
<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> With fiery quickness. <sup> F	1957
</sup> </span> Therefore prepare thyself.	
The bark is ready and the wind at help,	1958
Th'associates tend, and every thing is bent	1959
For England.	1960

**HAMLET**

For England?

**KING**

Ay, Hamlet.

**HAMLET**

Good.

**KING**

So is it if thou knew'st our purposes.

1961

**HAMLET**

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

1962

Farewell, dear mother.

1963

**KING**

Thy loving father, Hamlet.

**HAMLET**

My mother: father and mother is man and wife;

1964

Man and wife is one flesh; so, my mother.

1965

Come, for England.

1966

*(Exit.)*

**KING**

Follow him at foot,  
Tempt him with speed aboard, 1967  
Delay it not, I'll have him hence tonight. 1968  
Away, for everything is sealed and done 1969  
That else leans on th'affair. Pray you make haste. 1970

*([Exeunt all but the King.] )*

And England, if my love thou hold'st at aught 1971  
As my great power thereof may give thee sense, 1972  
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red 1973  
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe 1974  
Pays homage to us, thou mayst not coldly set 1975  
Our sovereign process, which imports at full 1976  
By letters congruing to that effect 1977  
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England, 1978  
For like the hectic in my blood he rages, 1979  
And thou must cure me. Till I know 'tis done, 1980  
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne're begun. 1981

*(Exit.)*

**[4.4]**

*(Enter Fortinbras with his army [including a Captain] over the stage.)*

**FORTINBRAS**

Go, Captain, from me greet the Danish King. 1982  
Tell him that by his licence Fortinbras 1983  
Craves the conveyance of a promised march 1984  
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous. 1985  
If that his majesty would aught with us, 1986  
We shall express our duty in his eye, 1987  
And let him know so. 1988

**CAPTAIN**

I will do't, my lord.

**FORTINBRAS**

Go softly on.

1989

*([Exeunt all but the Captain].)*

*(Enter Hamlet, Rosencrantz, [Guildenstern,] etc.)*

**HAMLET**

Good sir, whose powers are these?

**CAPTAIN**

They are of Norway, sir.

1990

**HAMLET**

How purposed, sir, I pray you?

1991

**CAPTAIN**

Against some part of Poland.

1992

**HAMLET**

Who commands them, sir?

1993

**CAPTAIN**

The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

1994

**HAMLET**

Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,

1995

Or for some frontier?

1996

**CAPTAIN**

Truly to speak, and with no addition, 1997  
We go to gain a little patch of ground 1998  
That hath in it no profit but the name. 1999  
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it; 2000  
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole 2001  
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee. 2002

**HAMLET**

Why, then the Polack never will defend it. 2003

**CAPTAIN**

Yes, it is already garrisoned. 2004

**HAMLET**

Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats 2005  
Will not debate the question of this straw. 2006  
This is th'impostume of much wealth and peace 2007  
That inward breaks and shows no cause without 2008  
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir. 2009

**CAPTAIN**

God b'wi' you, sir. 2010

*([Exit.]*)

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Will't please you go, my lord?

HAMLET

I'll be with you straight. Go a little before. 2011

*([Exeunt all but Hamlet.]*

How all occasions do inform against me 2012

And spur my dull revenge. What is a man 2013

If his chief good and market of his time 2014

Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more. 2015

Sure he that made us with such large discourse 2016

Looking before and after, gave us not 2017

That capability and god-like reason 2018

To fust in us unused. Now whether it be 2019

Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple 2020

Of thinking too precisely on th'event 2021

(A thought which quartered hath but one part wisdom 2022

And ever three parts coward) I do not know 2023

Why yet I live to say this thing's to do, 2024

Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means 2025

To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me: 2026

Witness this army of such mass and charge, 2027

Led by a delicate and tender prince 2028

Whose spirit with divine ambition puffed 2029

Makes mouths at the invisible event, 2030

Exposing what is mortal and unsure 2031

To all that fortune, death and danger dare, 2032

Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great 2033

Is not to stir without great argument 2034

But greatly to find quarrel in a straw 2035

When honour's at the stake. How stand I then 2036

That have a father killed, a mother stained, 2037

Excitements of my reason and my blood, 2038

And let all sleep, while to my shame I see 2039

The imminent death of twenty thousand men 2040

That for a fantasy and trick of fame 2041

Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot 2042  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause, 2043  
Which is not tomb enough and continent 2044  
To hide the slain. Oh, from this time forth 2045  
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth. 2046

*(Exit.)*

**[4.5]**

*(Enter Horatio, [Queen] Gertrude, and a Gentleman.)*

**QUEEN**

I will not speak with her. 2047

**GENTLEMAN**

She is importunate,  
Indeed distract. Her mood will needs be pitied. 2048

**QUEEN**

What would she have? 2049

**GENTLEMAN**

She speaks much of her father, says she hears 2050  
There's tricks i'th'world, and hems, and beats her heart, 2051  
Spurns enviously at straws, speaks things in doubt 2052  
That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing, 2053  
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move 2054  
The hearers to collection; they yawn at it 2055  
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts, 2056  
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them, 2057  
Indeed would make one think there might be thought, 2058  
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily. 2059

**HORATIO**

'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may strew 2060  
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds. 2061  
Let her come in. 2062

*([Exit Gentleman.] )*

**QUEEN**

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is, 2063  
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss. 2064  
So full of artless jealousy is guilt, 2065  
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt. 2066

*(Enter Ophelia [distracted]. )*

**OPHELIA**

Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark? 2067

**QUEEN**

How now, Ophelia? 2068

**OPHELIA**

She sings. How should I your true love know 2069  
From another one, 2070  
By his cockle hat and staff, 2071  
And his sandal shoon. 2072

**QUEEN**

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song? 2073

**OPHELIA**

Say you? Nay, pray you, mark.

*(Song.)*

He is dead and gone, lady,

2074

He is dead and gone.

2075

At his head a grass-green turf,

2076

At his heels a stone.

2077

Oh, ho!

**QUEEN**

Nay, but Ophelia —

2078

**OPHELIA**

Pray you, mark.

[She sings.] White his shroud as the mountain snow —

2079

*(Enter King.)*

**QUEEN**

Alas, look here, my lord.

2080

**OPHELIA**

Song. Larded all with sweet flowers

2081

Which bewept to the ground did not go

2082

With true-love showers.

2083

**KING**

How do you, pretty lady?

2084

**OPHELIA**

Well, good dild you. They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table.

**KING**

Conceit upon her father.

2085

**OPHELIA**

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

*(Song.)*

Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's Day, 2086  
All in the morning betime, 2087  
And I a maid at your window 2088  
To be your Valentine. 2089  
Then up he rose, and donned his clo'es, 2090  
And dupp'd the chamber door, 2091  
Let in the maid that out a maid 2092  
Never departed more. 2093

**KING**

Pretty Ophelia. 2094

**OPHELIA**

Indeed,  <sup> F </sup> la!, <sup> F </sup> </span>  
without an oath I'll make an end on't.

*([Song.]*

By Gis and by Saint Charity, 2095  
Alack and fie for shame, 2096  
Young men will do't if they come to't, 2097  
By Cock they are to blame. 2098  
Quoth she, "Before you tumbled me 2099  
You promised me to wed." 2100  
He answers:  
"So would I ha' done by yonder sun 2101  
An thou hadst not come to my bed." 2102

**KING**

How long hath she been thus? 2103

**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.])*

**KING**

Follow her close. Give her good watch, I pray you. 2104

*([Exit Horatio.])*

Oh, this is the poison of deep grief. It springs 2105

All from her father's death, and now behold. 2106

O Gertrude, Gertrude, 2107

When sorrows come, they come not single spies 2108

But in battalions: first, her father slain; 2109

Next, your son gone, and he most violent author 2110

Of his own just remove; the people muddied, 2111

Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers 2112

For good Polonius' death, and we have done but greenly 2113

In hugger-mugger to inter him; poor Ophelia 2114

Divided from herself and her fair judgement, 2115

Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts; 2116

Last, and as much containing as all these, 2117

Her brother is in secret come from France, 2118

Feeds on this wonder, keeps himself in clouds 2119

And wants not buzzers to infect his ear 2120

With pestilent speeches of his father's death, 2121

Wherein necessity, of matter beggared, 2122

Will nothing stick our person to arraign 2123

In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this 2124

Like to a murd'ring-piece in many places 2125

Gives me superfluous death. 2126

*(A noise within.)*

*(Enter a Messenger.)*

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> <SUP> F </SUP> QUEEN </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> Alack, what noise is this? <sup> F </sup> </span> 2127

**KING**

Attend! Where is my Switzers? Let them guard the door. 2128

What is the matter? 2129

**MESSENGER**

Save yourself, my lord.

The ocean overpeering of his list 2130

Eats not the flats with more impiteous haste 2131

Than young Laertes in a riotous head 2132

O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord, 2133

And, as the world were now but to begin, 2134

Antiquity forgot, custom not known, 2135

The ratifiers and props of every word, 2136

They cry "Choose we! Laertes shall be king!" 2137

Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds: 2138

"Laertes shall be king! Laertes king!" 2139

**QUEEN**

How cheerfully on the false trail they cry! 2140

*(A noise within.)*

*([Exit Messenger.]*

Oh, this is counter, you false Danish dogs! 2141

*(Enter Laertes with others[, his Followers, at the door].)*

**KING**

The doors are broke. 2142

**LAERTES**

Where is this King? — Sirs, stand you all without. 2143

**FOLLOWERS**

No, let's come in. 2144

**LAERTES**

I pray you give me leave. 2145

**FOLLOWERS**

We will, we will. 2146

**LAERTES**

I thank you. Keep the door. — 2147

*([Exeunt his Followers.]*

O thou vile King,  
Give me my father. 2148

**QUEEN**

Calmly, good Laertes.

**LAERTES**

That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard, 2149

Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot 2150

Even here between the chaste unsmirchèd brow 2151

Of my true mother. 2152

**KING**

What is the cause, Laertes,  
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like? — 2153  
Let him go, Gertrude, do not fear our person: 2154  
There's such divinity doth hedge a king 2155  
That treason can but peep to what it would, 2156  
Acts little of his will. — Tell me, Laertes, 2157  
Why thou art thus incensed. — Let him go, Gertrude. — 2158  
Speak, man. 2159

**LAERTES**

Where is my father? 2160

**KING**

Dead. 2161

**QUEEN**

But not by him. 2162

**KING**

Let him demand his fill. 2163

**LAERTES**

How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with. 2164  
To hell allegiance, vows to the blackest devil, 2165  
Conscience and grace to the profoundest pit! 2166  
I dare damnation. To this point I stand, 2167  
That both the worlds I give to negligence. 2168  
Let come what comes, only I'll be revenged 2169  
Most throughly for my father. 2170

**KING**

Who shall stay you? 2171

**LAERTES**

My will, not all the world's; 2172  
And for my means I'll husband them so well 2173  
They shall go far with little. 2174

**KING**

                    Good Laertes,  
If you desire to know the certainty 2175  
Of your dear father, is't writ in your revenge 2176  
That swoopstake you will draw both friend and foe, 2177  
Winner and loser? 2178

**LAERTES**

None but his enemies — 2179

**KING**

Will you know them then? 2180

**LAERTES**

To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms 2181  
And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican, 2182  
Repast them with my blood. 2183

**KING**

                    Why, now you speak  
Like a good child and a true gentleman. 2184  
That I am guiltless of your father's death, 2185  
And am most sensibly in grief for it, 2186  
It shall as level to your judgement 'pear 2187  
As day does to your eye. 2188

*(A noise within.)*

**VOICES**

Within Let her come in! 2189

**LAERTES**

How now, what noise is that? 2190

*(Enter Ophelia.)*

O heat, dry up my brains. Tears seven times salt 2191

Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye. 2192

By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight 2193

Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May, 2194

Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia! 2195

O heavens, is't possible a young maid's wits 2196

Should be as mortal as a poor man's life? 2197

<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis 2198  
fine </span>

<span class="folio"> It sends some precious instance of itself </span> 2199

<span class="folio"> After the thing it loves. <sup> F </sup> </span> 2200

**OPHELIA**

Song. They bore him bare-faced on the bier, 2201

<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny, 2202  
<sup> F </sup> </span>

And in his grave rained many a tear. 2203

Fare you well, my dove.

**LAERTES**

Hadst thou thy wits and didst persuade revenge, 2204

It could not move thus. 2205

**OPHELIA**

You must sing "a-down a-down", an you call him "a-down-a." Oh, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward that stole his master's daughter.

**LAERTES**

This nothing's more than matter. 2206

**OPHELIA**

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

**LAERTES**

A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

**OPHELIA**

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

*([Sings.]*

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy. 2207

**LAERTES**

Thought and afflictions, passion, hell itself 2208

She turns to favour and to prettiness. 2209

**OPHELIA**

Song. And will 'a not come again? 2210

And will 'a not come again? 2211

No, no, he is dead — 2212

Go to thy death-bed — 2213

He never will come again. 2214

His beard was as white as snow, 2215

Flaxen was his poll. 2216

He is gone, he is gone, 2217

And we cast away moan. 2218

God 'a' mercy on his soul. 2219

And of all Christians' souls. F I pray God.

F God b'wi'you.

*([Exit.]*

**LAERTES**

Do you see this, O God? 2220

**KING**

Laertes, I must commune with your grief, 2221  
Or you deny me right. Go but apart, 2222  
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will, 2223  
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me. 2224  
If by direct, or by collateral hand, 2225  
They find us touched, we will our kingdom give, 2226  
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours, 2227  
To you in satisfaction; but, if not, 2228  
Be you content to lend your patience to us, 2229  
And we shall jointly labour with your soul 2230  
To give it due content. 2231

**LAERTES**

Let this be so.  
His means of death, his obscure funeral 2232  
(No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones, 2233  
No noble rite, nor formal ostentation) 2234  
Cry to be heard as 'twere from heaven to earth 2235  
That I must call't in question. 2236

**KING**

So you shall,  
And, where th'offence is, let the great axe fall. 2237  
I pray you go with me. 2238

*(Exeunt.)*

**[4.6]**

*(Enter Horatio and others [including a Gentleman].)*

**HORATIO**

What are they that would speak with me?

**GENTLEMAN**

Sea-faring men, sir. They say they have letters for you.

**HORATIO**

Let them come in.

*([Gentleman goes to the door.]*

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**

'A shall, sir, an 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**

[Reads the letter.] "Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the King: they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour, 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 turn for them. Let the King have the letters I have sent, and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldest fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England. Of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

He that thou knowest thine, Hamlet."

Come, I will give you way for these your letters. 2239

And do't the speedier that you may direct me 2240

To him from whom you brought them. 2241

*(Exeunt.)*

**[4.7]**

*(Enter King and Laertes.)*

**KING**

Now must your conscience my acquittance seal, 2242

And you must put me in your heart for friend, 2243

Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear, 2244

That he which hath your noble father slain 2245

Pursued my life. 2246

**LAERTES**

It well appears. But tell me  
Why you proceeded not against these feats 2247  
So criminal and so capital in nature, 2248  
As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things else, 2249  
You mainly were stirred up. 2250

**KING**

Oh, for two special reasons 2251  
Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinewed, 2252  
But yet to me they're strong. The Queen his mother 2253  
Lives almost by his looks, and for myself, 2254  
My virtue or my plague, be it either which, 2255  
She is so conjunct to my life and soul 2256  
That as the star moves not but in his sphere 2257  
I could not but by her. The other motive 2258  
Why to a public count I might not go 2259  
Is the great love the general gender bear him, 2260  
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection, 2261  
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone, 2262  
Convert his gyves to graces, so that my arrows, 2263  
Too slightly timbered for so loud a wind, 2264  
Would have reverted to my bow again, 2265  
But not where I have aimed them. 2266

**LAERTES**

And so have I a noble father lost, 2267  
A sister driven into desp'rate terms, 2268  
Whose worth, if praises may go back again, 2269  
Stood challenger, on mount, of all the age 2270  
For her perfections. But my revenge will come. 2271

**KING**

Break not your sleeps for that. You must not think 2272  
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull 2273  
That we can let our beard be shook with danger 2274  
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more. 2275  
I loved your father, and we love ourself, 2276  
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine — 2277

*(Enter a Messenger with letters.)*

<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> How now? What news? <sup> F 2278  
</sup> </span>

**MESSENGER**

<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> Letters, my lord, from 2279  
Hamlet. <sup> F </sup> </span>  
These to your majesty, this to the Queen.

**KING**

From Hamlet? Who brought them? 2280

**MESSENGER**

Sailors, my lord, they say. I saw them not. 2281  
They were given me by Claudio. He received them 2282  
Of him that brought them. 2283

**KING**

Laertes, you shall hear them. — 2284

Leave us. 2285

*([Exit Messenger.]*

*([Reads.]*

“High and mighty, you shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. Tomorrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes, when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden F and more strange F return. F Hamlet. F ”

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back? 2286

Or is it some abuse, and no such thing? 2287

**LAERTES**

Know you the hand? 2288

**KING**

’Tis Hamlet’s character. “Naked,”

And in a postscript here he says “alone.” 2289

Can you devise me? 2290

**LAERTES**

I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come: 2291

It warms the very sickness in my heart 2292

That I shall live and tell him to his teeth 2293

“Thus diest thou.” 2294

**KING**

If it be so, Laertes —

As how should it be so, how otherwise? — 2295

Will you be ruled by me? 2296

**LAERTES**

Ay, my lord,  
So you will not o'errule me to a peace. 2297

**KING**

To thine own peace. If he be now returned 2298  
As checking at his voyage, and that he means 2299  
No more to undertake it, I will work him 2300  
To an exploit, now ripe in my device, 2301  
Under the which he shall not choose but fall; 2302  
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe, 2303  
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice 2304  
And call it accident. 2305

**LAERTES**

My Lord, I will be ruled,  
The rather if you could devise it so 2306  
That I might be the organ. 2307

**KING**

It falls right.  
You have been talked of since your travel much, 2308  
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality 2309  
Wherein they say you shine. Your sum of parts 2310  
Did not together pluck such envy from him 2311  
As did that one, and that in my regard 2312  
Of the unworthiest siege. 2313

**LAERTES**

What part is that, my lord? 2314

**KING**

A very ribbon in the cap of youth, 2315  
Yet needful too, for youth no less becomes 2316  
The light and careless livery that it wears 2317  
Than settled age his sables and his weeds 2318  
Importing health and graveness. Two months since 2319  
Here was a gentleman of Normandy. 2320  
I have seen myself and served against the French, 2321  
And they can well on horseback, but this gallant 2322  
Had witchcraft in't: he grew unto his seat 2323  
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse 2324  
As had he been incorpsed and demi-natured 2325  
With the brave beast. So far he topped my thought 2326  
That I in forgery of shapes and tricks 2327  
Come short of what he did. 2328

**LAERTES**

A Norman was't?

**KING**

A Norman. 2329

**LAERTES**

Upon my life, Lamord. 2330

**KING**

The very same.

**LAERTES**

I know him well, he is the brooch indeed 2331  
And gem of all the nation. 2332

**KING**

He made confession of you	2333
And gave you such a masterly report	2334
For art and exercise in your defence,	2335
And for your rapier most especial,	2336
That he cried out 'twould be a sight indeed	2337
If one could match you. The 'scrimers of their nation	2338
He swore had neither motion, guard, nor eye,	2339
If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his	2340
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy	2341
That he could nothing do but wish and beg	2342
Your sudden coming o'er to play with you.	2343
Now out of this —	2344

**LAERTES**

What out of this, my lord?

**KING**

Laertes, was your father dear to you?	2345
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,	2346
A face without a heart?	2347

**LAERTES**

Why ask you this?

**KING**

Not that I think you did not love your father, 2348  
But that I know love is begun by time, 2349  
And that I see in passages of proof 2350  
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it. 2351  
There lives within the very flame of love 2352  
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it, 2353  
And nothing is at a like goodness still, 2354  
For goodness growing to a pleurisy 2355  
Dies in his own too much. That we would do 2356  
We should do when we would, for this “would” changes 2357  
And hath abatements and delays as many 2358  
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents, 2359  
And then this “should” is like a spendthrift’s sigh 2360  
That hurts by easing. But to the quick of th’ulcer: 2361  
Hamlet comes back; what would you undertake 2362  
To show yourself in deed your father’s son 2363  
More than in words? 2364

**LAERTES**

To cut his throat i’t’h’church.

**KING**

No place indeed should murder sanctuarize; 2365  
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes, 2366  
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber; 2367  
Hamlet, returned, shall know you are come home; 2368  
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence 2369  
And set a double varnish on the fame 2370  
The Frenchman gave you, bring you in fine together 2371  
And wager o'er your heads. He, being remiss, 2372  
Most generous and free from all contriving, 2373  
Will not peruse the foils, so that with ease, 2374  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose 2375  
A sword unbated, and, in a pass of practice, 2376  
Requite him for your father. 2377

**LAERTES**

I will do't.  
And for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword. 2378  
I bought an unction of a mountebank 2379  
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it, 2380  
Where it draws blood, no cataplasm so rare, 2381  
Collected from all simples that have virtue 2382  
Under the moon, can save the thing from death 2383  
That is but scratched withal. I'll touch my point 2384  
With this contagion, that if I gall him slightly 2385  
It may be death. 2386

**KING**

Let's further think of this, 2387  
Weigh what convenience both of time and means 2387  
May fit us to our shape. If this should fail 2388  
And that our drift look through our bad performance, 2389  
'Twere better not essayed. Therefore this project 2390  
Should have a back or second that might hold 2391  
If this did blast in proof. Soft, let me see — 2392  
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunning — 2393  
I ha't! When in your motion you are hot and dry 2394  
(As make your bouts more violent to that end) 2395  
And that he calls for drink, I'll have preferred him 2396  
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping, 2397  
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck, 2398  
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise? 2399

*(Enter Queen.)*

<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> How now, sweet Queen? <sup> F 2400  
</sup> </span>

**QUEEN**

One woe doth tread upon another's heel, 2401  
So fast they follow. Your sister's drowned, Laertes. 2402

**LAERTES**

Drowned! Oh, where? 2403

**QUEEN**

There is a willow grows askant the brook 2404  
That shows his hoary leaves in the glassy stream. 2405  
Therewith fantastic garlands did she make 2406  
Of crowflowers, nettles, daisies and long purples 2407  
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name, 2408  
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them. 2409  
There on the pendant boughs her crownet weeds 2410  
Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliver broke, 2411  
When down her weedy trophies and herself 2412  
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide 2413  
And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up, 2414  
Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds 2415  
As one incapable of her own distress, 2416  
Or like a creature native and endued 2417  
Unto that element. But long it could not be 2418  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink, 2419  
Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay 2420  
To muddy death. 2421

**LAERTES**

Alas, then is she drowned.

**QUEEN**

Drowned, drowned. 2422

**LAERTES**

Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia, 2423  
And therefore I forbid my tears; but yet 2424  
It is our trick, nature her custom holds. 2425  
Let shame say what it will; [Weeps.] when these are gone, 2426  
The woman will be out. — Adieu, my lord, 2427  
I have a speech o' fire that fain would blaze 2428  
But that this folly drowns it. 2429

*(Exit.)*

**KING**

Let's follow, Gertrude.

How much I had to do to calm his rage.

2430

Now fear I this will give it start again,

2431

Therefore let's follow.

2432

*(Exeunt.)*

## Act V

### [5.1]

*(Enter two Clowns.)*

**1 CLOWN**

Is she to be buried in Christian burial, when she wilfully 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 defence?

**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 drowned 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

Ay, marry is't, crowner's 'quest law.

2 CLOWN

Will you ha' the truth an't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o'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-Christen. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gard'ners, ditchers and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

2 CLOWN

Was he a gentleman?

1 CLOWN

'A was the first that ever bore arms.

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> <SUP> F </SUP> 2 CLOWN </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> Why, he had none. </span>

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> 1 CLOWN </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says Adam digged. Could he dig without arms? <sup> F </sup> </span> 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 F 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**

Ay, tell me that and unyoke.

**2 CLOWN**

Marry, now I can tell.

**1 CLOWN**

To't.

**2 CLOWN**

Mass, I cannot tell.

**1 CLOWN**

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

*([Exit 2 Clown.]*)

*(Song.)*

In youth when I did love, did love,	2433
Methought it was very sweet	2434
To contract —oh— the time for —a— my behove,	2435
Oh, methought there —a— was nothing —a— meet.	2436

*(Enter Hamlet and Horatio.)*

**HAMLET**

Has this fellow no feeling of his business? 'A sings in grave-making.

**HORATIO**

Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

**HAMLET**

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

**1 CLOWN**

Song. But age with his stealing steps	2437
But age with his stealing steps	2438
Hath clawed me in his clutch	2439
And hath shipped me into the land,	2440
As if I had never been such.	2441

*([Throws up a skull.]*)

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

It might, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Or of a courtier, which could say "Good morrow, sweet lord, how dost thou, sweet lord?" This might be my Lord Such-a-one, that praised my Lord Such-a-One's horse when 'a went to beg it, might it not?

**HORATIO**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Why, e'en so. And now my Lady Worm's: chopless and knocked about the mazard with a sexton's spade. Here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding but to play at loggets with them? Mine ache to think on't.

**1 CLOWN**

Song. A pickaxe and a spade, a spade,	2442
A pickaxe and a spade, a spade,	2443
For and a shrouding-sheet,	2444
Oh, a pit of clay for to be made	2445
For such a guest is meet.	2446

*([Throws up another skull.] )*

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

Not a jot more, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**1 CLOWN**

Mine, sir.

*([Sings.]*

Oh, a pit of clay for to be made —

2447

<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> For such a guest is meet. <sup> F

2448

</sup> </span>

**HAMLET**

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

**1 CLOWN**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**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 took note of it, the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier he galls his kibe. — How long hast thou been grave-maker?

**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**

Ay, marry. Why was he sent into England?

**1 CLOWN**

Why, because 'a was mad: 'a shall recover his wits there, or if 'a do not, 'tis no great matter there.

**HAMLET**

Why?

**1 CLOWN**

'Twill 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 'a be not rotten before 'a die (as we have many pocky corpses that will scarce hold the laying in), 'a 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 'a will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now hath lien you i'th'earth three and twenty years.

**HAMLET**

Whose was it?

**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 poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was, sir, Yorick's skull, the King's jester.

**HAMLET**

This?

**1 CLOWN**

E'en that.

**HAMLET**

<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> Let me see. <sup> F </sup> </span>  
Alas, poor Yorick. I knew him, Horatio. A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath bore me on his back a thousand times, and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your jibes 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 chop-fall'n? Now get you to my lady's table and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come. Make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

**HORATIO**

What's that, my lord?

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

E'en so.

**HAMLET**

And smelt so? Pah!

**HORATIO**

E'en so, my lord.

**HAMLET**

To what base uses we may return, Horatio? Why, may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till 'a 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 F as thus F : Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust, the dust is earth, of earth we make loam, and why of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay, 2449

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away. 2450

Oh, that that earth which kept the world in awe 2451

Should patch a wall t'expel the winter's flaw. 2452

But soft, but soft awhile, here comes the King. 2453

*(Enter King, Queen, Laertes, and [a Doctor of Divinity, after] the corpse,  
[with Lords Attendant].)*

The Queen, the courtiers — who is this they follow? 2454

And with such maimèd rites? This doth betoken 2455

The corpse they follow did with desp'rate hand 2456

Fordo it own life. 'Twas of some estate. 2457

Couch we awhile and mark. 2458

*([Hamlet and Horatio stand aside.])*

**LAERTES**

What ceremony else? 2459

**HAMLET**

That is Laertes, a very noble youth. Mark. 2460

**LAERTES**

What ceremony else? 2461

**DOCTOR**

Her obsequies have been as far enlarged 2462  
As we have warranty. Her death was doubtful, 2463  
And but that great command o'ersways the order, 2464  
She should in ground unsanctified been lodged 2465  
Till the last trumpet: for charitable prayers, 2466  
Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her; 2467  
Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants, 2468  
Her maiden strewments and the bringing home 2469  
Of bell and burial. 2470

**LAERTES**

Must there no more be done? 2471

**DOCTOR**

No more be done.  
We should profane the service of the dead 2472  
To sing a requiem and such rest to her 2473  
As to peace-parted souls. 2474

**LAERTES**

Lay her i'th'earth,  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh 2475  
May violets spring. — I tell thee, churlish priest, 2476  
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be 2477  
When thou liest howling. 2478

**HAMLET**

What, the fair Ophelia?

**QUEEN**

Sweets to the sweet. Farewell. 2479  
I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife. 2480  
I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid, 2481  
And not have strewed thy grave. 2482

**LAERTES**

Oh, treble woe  
Fall ten times double on that cursèd head 2483  
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense 2484  
Deprived thee of! — Hold off the earth awhile, 2485  
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms. 2486

*([Leaps in the grave.])*

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead 2487  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made 2488  
T'o' retop old Pelion or the skyish head 2489  
Of blue Olympus. 2490

**HAMLET**

[Coming forward] What is he whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis, whose phrase of sorrow 2491  
Conjures the wand'ring stars and makes them stand 2492  
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I, 2493  
Hamlet the Dane. 2494

**LAERTES**

The devil take thy soul!

*([Grapples with Hamlet.])*

**HAMLET**

Thou pray'st not well. 2495  
I prithee take thy fingers from my throat, 2496  
For, though I am not splenative and rash, 2497  
Yet have I in me something dangerous 2498  
Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand — 2499

**KING**

Pluck them asunder. 2500

**QUEEN**

Hamlet! Hamlet! 2501

**LORDS**

Gentlemen! 2502

**HORATIO**

Good my lord, be quiet. 2503

*([Hamlet and Laertes are separated.]*)

**HAMLET**

Why, I will fight with him upon this theme 2504

Until my eyelids will no longer wag. 2505

**QUEEN**

O my son, what theme? 2506

**HAMLET**

I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers 2507

Could not with all their quantity of love 2508

Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her? 2509

**KING**

Oh, he is mad, Laertes. 2510

**QUEEN**

For love of God, forbear him. 2511

**HAMLET**

'Swounds, show me what thou't do: 2512  
Woul't weep, woul't fight, woul't fast, woul't tear thyself, 2513  
Woul't drink up eisel, eat a crocodile? 2514  
I'll do't. Dost come here to whine? 2515  
To outface me with leaping in her grave? 2516  
Be buried quick with her, and so will I. 2517  
And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw 2518  
Millions of acres on us, till our ground, 2519  
Singeing his pate against the burning zone, 2520  
Make Ossa like a wart. Nay, an thou'lt mouth, 2521  
I'll rant as well as thou. 2522

**QUEEN**

                  This is mere madness,  
And thus awhile the fit will work on him. 2523  
Anon, as patient as the female dove 2524  
When that her golden couplets are disclosed, 2525  
His silence will sit drooping. 2526

**HAMLET**

                  Hear you, sir,  
What is the reason that you use me thus? 2527  
I loved you ever — but it is no matter. 2528  
Let Hercules himself do what he may, 2529  
The cat will mew and dog will have his day. 2530

*(Exit.)*

**KING**

I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him. 2531

*(Exit Horatio.)*

[To Laertes] Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech, 2532

We'll put the matter to the present push. — 2533

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son. 2534

This grave shall have a living monument. 2535

An hour of quiet shortly shall we see; 2536

Till then in patience our proceeding be. 2537

*(Exeunt.)*

**[5.2]**

*(Enter Hamlet and Horatio.)*

**HAMLET**

So much for this, sir. Now shall you see the other. 2538

You do remember all the circumstance? 2539

**HORATIO**

Remember it, my lord? 2540

**HAMLET**

Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting 2541

That would not let me sleep. Methought I lay 2542

Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly — 2543

And praised be rashness for it (let us know 2544

Our indiscretion sometime serves us well 2545

When our deep plots do pall, and that should learn us 2546

There's a divinity that shapes our ends, 2547

Rough-hew them how we will) — 2548

**HORATIO**

That is most certain.

**HAMLET**

Up from my cabin, 2549  
My sea-gown scarfed about me, in the dark 2550  
Groped I to find out them, had my desire, 2551  
Fingered their packet, and in fine withdrew 2552  
To mine own room again, making so bold, 2553  
My fears forgetting manners, to unfold 2554  
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio, 2555  
— Ah, royal knavery! — an exact command 2556  
Larded with many several sorts of reasons 2557  
Importing Denmark's health, and England's too, 2558  
With — ho! — such bugs and goblins in my life 2559  
That on the supervise, no leisure bated 2560  
(No, not to stay the grinding of the axe), 2561  
My head should be struck off. 2562

**HORATIO**

Is't possible?

**HAMLET**

Here's the commission; read it at more leisure. 2563  
But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed? 2564

**HORATIO**

I beseech you. 2565

**HAMLET**

Being thus benetted round with villains, 2566  
(Or I could make a prologue to my brains, 2567  
They had begun the play) I sat me down, 2568  
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair — 2569  
I once did hold it, as our statisticians do, 2570  
A baseness to write fair, and laboured much 2571  
How to forget that learning, but, sir, now 2572  
It did me yeoman's service. Wilt thou know 2573  
Th'effect of what I wrote? 2574

**HORATIO**

Ay, good my lord.

**HAMLET**

An earnest conjuration from the King, 2575  
As England was his faithful tributary, 2576  
As love between them like the palm might flourish, 2577  
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear 2578  
And stand a comma 'tween their amities, 2579  
And many such-like "as," sir, of great charge, 2580  
That on the view and knowing of these contents 2581  
Without debatement further more or less 2582  
He should those bearers put to sudden death, 2583  
Not shriving time allowed. 2584

**HORATIO**

How was this sealed?

**HAMLET**

Why, even in that was heaven ordinant: 2585  
I had my father's signet in my purse 2586  
(Which was the model of that Danish seal), 2587  
Folded the writ up in the form of th'other, 2588  
Subscribed it, gave't th'impression, placed it safely, 2589  
The changeling never known. Now the next day 2590  
Was our sea-fight, and what to this was sequent 2591  
Thou knowest already. 2592

**HORATIO**

So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't. 2593

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> <SUP> F </SUP> HAMLET </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> Why man, they did make love to this employment. 2594  
<sup> F </sup> </span>

**HAMLET**

They are not near my conscience. Their defeat 2595  
Does by their own insinuation grow. 2596  
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes 2597  
Between the pass and fell incensèd points 2598  
Of mighty opposites. 2599

**HORATIO**

Why, what a king is this!

**HAMLET**

Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon? 2600  
He that hath killed my King and whored my mother, 2601  
Popped in between th'election and my hopes, 2602  
Thrown out his angle for my proper life, 2603  
And with such coz'nage — is't not perfect conscience? 2604  
<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> To quit him with this arm? And is't 2605  
not to be damned </span>  
<span class="folio"> To let this canker of our nature come </span> 2606  
<span class="folio"> In further evil? </span> 2607

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> HORATIO </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> It must be shortly known to him from England 2608  
</span>  
<span class="folio"> What is the issue of the business there. </span> 2609

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> HAMLET </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> It will be short. The interim's mine, </span> 2610  
<span class="folio"> And a man's life's no more than to say one. </span> 2611  
<span class="folio"> But I am very sorry, good Horatio, </span> 2612  
<span class="folio"> That to Laertes I forgot myself, </span> 2613  
<span class="folio"> For by the image of my cause I see </span> 2614  
<span class="folio"> The portraiture of his. I'll count his favours; </span> 2615  
<span class="folio"> But sure the bravery of his grief did put me </span> 2616  
<span class="folio"> Into a tow'ring passion. </span> 2617

<SPAN CLASS="FOLIO"> HORATIO </SPAN>

<span class="folio"> Peace, who comes here? <sup> F </sup> </span> 2618

*(Enter [Osric,] a Courtier.)*

**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 — F put F 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 'a 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 th'arithmetical of memory, and yet but yaw 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**

F Sir, F You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is — F at his weapon. F

**HAMLET**

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

**OSRIC**

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

**HAMLET**

What's his weapon?

**OSRIC**

Rapier and dagger.

**HAMLET**

That's two of his weapons — but well.

**OSRIC**

The King, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses, against the which he has impawned, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hanger 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 margin ere you had done.

**OSRIC**

The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

**HAMLET**

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

**OSRIC**

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

**HAMLET**

How if I answer no?

**OSRIC**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**OSRIC**

Shall I deliver you so?

**HAMLET**

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

**OSRIC**

I commend my duty to your lordship.

*([Exit.])*

**HAMLET**

Yours. 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**

'A did so, sir, with his dug before 'a sucked it. Thus has he, and many more of the same breed that I know the drossy age dotes on, only got the tune of the time and, out of an habit of encounter, a kind of yeasty collection, which carries them through and through the most profane and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

*(Enter a Lord.)*

**LORD**

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

**HAMLET**

I am constant to my purposes. They follow the King's pleasure. If his fitness speaks, mine is ready: now or 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 F this wager F , 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. Thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart — but it is no matter.

**HORATIO**

Nay, good my lord —

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

Not a whit. We defy augury. There is 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 of aught he leaves knows, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.

*(A table prepared. Trumpets, Drums and Officers with cushions, [flagons of wine and cups].)*

*([Enter] King, Queen, [Osric,] and all the state, [with other Attendants with] foils, daggers, and Laertes.)*

**KING**

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

*([Puts Laertes' hands into Hamlet's.]*)

**HAMLET**

Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong. 2620  
But pardon't as you are a gentleman. This presence knows, 2621  
And you must needs have heard, how I am punished 2622  
With a sore distraction. What I have done 2623  
That might your nature, honour and exception 2624  
Roughly awake, I hear proclaim was madness. 2625  
Was't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet. 2626  
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away 2627  
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes, 2628  
Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it. 2629  
Who does it then? His madness. If't be so, 2630  
Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged: 2631  
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy. 2632  
<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> Sir, in this audience, <sup> F 2633  
</sup> </span>  
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil 2634  
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts 2635  
That I have shot my arrow o'er the house 2636  
And hurt my brother. 2637

**LAERTES**

I am satisfied in nature,  
Whose motive in this case should stir me most 2638  
To my revenge, but in my terms of honour 2639  
I stand aloof and will no reconciliation 2640  
Till by some elder masters of known honour 2641  
I have a voice and precedent of peace 2642  
To keep my name ungored. But till that time 2643  
I do receive your offered love like love 2644  
And will not wrong it. 2645

**HAMLET**

I embrace it freely  
And will this brother's wager frankly play. — 2646  
Give us the foils. F Come on. F  
F

**LAERTES**

Come, one for me.

**HAMLET**

I'll be your foil, Laertes. In mine ignorance 2648  
Your skill shall like a star i'th'darkest night 2649  
Stick fiery off indeed. 2650

**LAERTES**

You mock me, sir. 2651

**HAMLET**

No, by this hand. 2652

**KING**

Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet, 2653  
You know the wager? 2654

**HAMLET**

Very well, my lord.  
Your grace has laid the odds o'th'weaker side. 2655

**KING**

I do not fear it. I have seen you both, 2656  
But since he is bettered, we have therefore odds. 2657

**LAERTES**

This is too heavy. Let me see another. 2658

**HAMLET**

This likes me well. These foils have all a length? 2659

**OSRIC**

Ay, my good lord. 2660

**KING**

Set me the stoups of wine upon that table. 2661

If Hamlet give the first or second hit, 2662

Or quit in answer of the third exchange, 2663

Let all the battlements their ordnance fire. 2664

The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath 2665

And in the cup an onyx shall he throw 2666

Richer than that which four successive kings 2667

In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups, 2668

And let the kettle to the trumpet speak, 2669

The trumpet to the cannoneer without, 2670

The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth. 2671

*(Trumpets the while.)*

Now the King drinks to Hamlet. Come, begin, 2672

And you, the judges, bear a wary eye. 2673

**HAMLET**

Come on, sir.

**LAERTES**

Come, my lord.

*([They play.]*)

**HAMLET**

One.

**LAERTES**

No.

**HAMLET**

Judgement.

**OSRIC**

A hit, a very palpable hit.

*(Drum, trumpets and shot.)*

**LAERTES**

Well, again.

*(Flourish, a piece goes off.)*

**KING**

Stay, give me drink. — Hamlet this pearl is thine. 2674

Here's to thy health. — Give him the cup. 2675

**HAMLET**

I'll play this bout first. Set it by awhile. 2676

Come. 2677

*([They play again.]*

Another hit. — What say you?

**LAERTES**

<span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> A touch, a touch, <sup> F </sup> 2678  
</span> I do confess't.

**KING**

Our son shall win. 2679

**QUEEN**

He's fat and scant of breath.

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows. 2680

The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet. 2681

**HAMLET**

Good madam. 2682

**KING**

Gertrude, do not drink.

2683

**QUEEN**

I will, my lord. I pray you pardon me.

2684

**KING**

It is the poisoned cup. It is too late.

2685

**HAMLET**

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

2686

**QUEEN**

Come, let me wipe thy face.

2687

**LAERTES**

My lord, I'll hit him now.

2688

**KING**

I do not think't.

**LAERTES**

And yet it is almost against my conscience.

2689

**HAMLET**

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

2690

I pray you pass with your best violence.

2691

I am sure you make a wanton of me.

2692

**LAERTES**

Say you so? Come on.

2693

*([They play.]*

**OSRIC**

Nothing neither way.

**LAERTES**

Have at you now.

2694

*([In scuffling they change rapiers.]*

**KING**

Part them, they are incensed.

**HAMLET**

Nay, come again.

2695

**OSRIC**

Look to the Queen there, ho!

**HORATIO**

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

2696

**OSRIC**

How is't, Laertes?

2697

**LAERTES**

Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric:

2698

I am justly killed with mine own treachery.

2699

**HAMLET**

How does the Queen?

2700

**KING**

She swoons to see them bleed.

**QUEEN**

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

2701

The drink, the drink. I am poisoned.

2702

*([Dies.]*

**HAMLET**

Oh, villainy! Ho! Let the door be locked. 2703

Treachery! Seek it out! 2704

*([Exeunt Osric and some Lords.])*

**LAERTES**

It is here, F Hamlet. F Hamlet, thou art slain. 2705

No med'cine in the world can do thee good; 2706

In thee there is not half an hour's life. 2707

The treacherous instrument is in thy hand 2708

Unbated and envenomed. The foul practice 2709

Hath turned itself on me. Lo, here I lie 2710

Never to rise again. Thy mother's poisoned. 2711

I can no more — the King, the King's to blame. 2712

**HAMLET**

The point envenomed too — then, venom, to thy work! 2713

*([Hurts the King.])*

**LORDS**

Treason, treason! 2714

**KING**

Oh, yet defend me, friends, I am but hurt. 2715

**HAMLET**

Here, thou incestuous, F murd'rous, 2716  
F damnè Dane,

Drink off this potion. Is the onyx here? 2717

Follow my mother. 2718

*([King dies.])*

**LAERTES**

He is justly served,  
It is a poison tempered by himself. 2719  
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet, 2720  
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee, 2721  
Nor thine on me. 2722

*([Dies.])*

**HAMLET**

Heaven make thee free of it. I follow thee. 2723  
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched Queen, adieu. 2724  
You that look pale and tremble at this chance, 2725  
That are but mutes or audience to this act, 2726  
Had I but time (as this fell sergeant, Death, 2727  
Is strict in his arrest), oh, I could tell you — 2728  
But let it be. — Horatio, I am dead. 2729  
Thou livest. Report me and my cause aright 2730  
To the unsatisfied. 2731

**HORATIO**

Never believe it.  
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane. 2732  
Here's yet some liquor left. 2733

**HAMLET**

As thou'rt a man  
Give me the cup. Let go! By heaven, I'll ha't! 2734  
O God, Horatio, what a wounded name, 2735  
Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind me? 2736  
If thou did'st ever hold me in thy heart, 2737  
Absent thee from felicity awhile, 2738  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain 2739  
To tell my story. 2740

*(A march afar off <span class="folio"> <sup> F </sup> and shout within  
<sup> F </sup> </span>)*

What warlike noise is this?

*(Enter Osric.)*

**OSRIC**

Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland, 2741  
To th'ambassadors of England gives this warlike volley. 2742

**HAMLET**

Oh, I die, Horatio. 2743  
The potent poison quite o'ercrows my spirit. 2744  
I cannot live to hear the news from England, 2745  
But I do prophesy th'election lights 2746  
On Fortinbras. He has my dying voice. 2747  
So tell him, with th'occurents more and less 2748  
Which have solicited. The rest is silence. <span class="folio"> <sup> F 2749  
</sup> Oh, oh, oh, oh. <sup> F </sup> </span>

*([Dies.])*

**HORATIO**

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet Prince, 2750  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest. 2751  
Why does the drum come hither? 2752

*(Enter Fortinbras with the Ambassadors <sup>F</sup> with Drum, Colours, <sup>F</sup> [and Attendants].)*

**FORTINBRAS**

Where is this sight? 2753

**HORATIO**

What is it you would see?  
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search. 2754

**FORTINBRAS**

This quarry cries on havock. O proud Death, 2755  
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell 2756  
That thou so many princes at a shot 2757  
So bloodily hast struck? 2758

**AMBASSADOR**

The sight is dismal,  
And our affairs from England come too late. 2759  
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing 2760  
To tell him his commandment is fulfilled: 2761  
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead. 2762  
Where should we have our thanks? 2763

**HORATIO**

Not from his mouth,  
Had it th'ability of life to thank you; 2764  
He never gave commandment for their death. 2765  
But since so jump upon this bloody question 2766  
You from the Polack wars and you from England, 2767  
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies 2768  
High on a stage be placèd to the view, 2769  
And let me speak to th'yet unknowing world 2770  
How these things came about. So shall you hear 2771  
Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts, 2772  
Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters, 2773  
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause, 2774  
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook 2775  
Fall'n on th'inventors' heads. All this can I 2776  
Truly deliver. 2777

**FORTINBRAS**

Let us haste to hear it  
And call the noblest to the audience. 2778  
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune. 2779  
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom 2780  
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me. 2781

**HORATIO**

Of that I shall have also cause to speak, 2782  
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more. 2783  
But let this same be presently performed 2784  
Even while men's minds are wild, lest more mischance 2785  
On plots and errors happen. 2786

**FORTINBRAS**

Let four captains  
Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage, 2787  
For he was likely, had he been put on, 2788  
To have proved most royal; and for his passage, 2789  
The soldiers' music and the rite of war 2790  
Speak loudly for him. 2791  
Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this 2792  
Becomes the field but here shows much amiss. 2793  
Go bid the soldiers shoot. 2794

*(Exeunt F marching, after the which  
a peal of ordnance are shot off F .)*