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| ROGERS STATE UNIVERSITY dEPT. OF ENGLISH AND HUMANITIES |
| The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark |
| By William Shakespeare |
|  |
| **Edited by Dr. Gregory J. Thompson and Colter Sharon 2010-2011** |
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**DRAMATIS PERSONAE**

* **Marcellus** -----------------------------------------------------------Hannah Harris
* [**Horatio**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horatio_(character)) -------------------------------------------------------------Kristin Anderson
* [**Claudius**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Claudius) -------------------------------------------------------------Annette Lopez
* **Leartes**---------------------------------------------------------------Hannah Harris
* [**Polonius**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polonius) ------------------------------------------------------------Nikki Forehand
* [**Ophelia**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ophelia) ----------------------------------------------------------Charity Emmanuel
* [**Hamlet**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_Hamlet) ------------------------------------------------------------Hannah Westlund
* [**Gertrude**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gertrude_(Hamlet)) -----------------------------------------------------Amanda MacFarland
* [**Ghost of Hamlet's Father**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_(Hamlet))-----------------------------------------Annette Lopez
* [**Rosencrantz**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosencrantz_and_Guildenstern)--------------------------------------------------------- Kaitlyn Wert
* [**Guildenstern**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosencrantz_and_Guildenstern) ------------------------------------------------------ Janene Hendrix
* **Player King,**-------------------------------------------------------- Hannah Harris
* **Player Queen,** ------------------------------------------------------ Anna Kissinger
* **Player Prologue and Lucianus**----------------------------------- Hannah Harris
* **Captain from Fortinbras’ Army** ------------------------------Nikki Forehand
* [**Osric**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Characters_in_Hamlet#Osric) ------------------------------------------------------------ Charity Emmanuel
* **Gravedigger** ------------------------------------------------------ Nikki Forehand
* **The Puppet Master** --------------------------------------------- Anna Kissinger

**Preshow entrances**

**Rosencrantz**

**Polonius**

**Guildenstern**

**Queen**

**Horatio**

**King**

**Laertes**

**Ophelia**

**Hamlet**

**ACT I**

**SCENE 1. Elsinore. A platform before the castle.**

*Blackout.* **DRUM: Boom Boom Boom Boom Boom. 2 mallets**

*Rumbling and perhaps alarms sound. A ghost appears upstage center.*

*Enter to HORATIO and MARCELLUS with flashlights*

**BERNARDO**

Who's there? (repeat 3X)

*(Overlapping)*

**HORATIO**

Friends to this ground.

**MARCELLUS**

And liegemen to the Dane.

*Enter Ghost*

**MARCELLUS**

Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!

**HORATIO**

Stop it, Marcellus.

**MARCELLUS**

Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

**HORATIO**

Do, if it will not stand.

**BERNARDO**

'Tis here!

**HORATIO**

'Tis here!

**MARCELLUS**

‘Tis here!

**BERNARDO**

'Tis here!

**HORATIO**

'Tis here!

**MARCELLUS**

'Tis gone! (pause – flashlights off)

**DRUM**

**SCENE 2. A room of state in the castle.**

*Lights up on KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, Lords, and Attendants*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

**LAERTES**

My dread lord,  
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France  
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,  
And thy best graces spend it at thy will!  
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,--

**HAMLET**

[Aside] A little more than kin, and less than kind.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,  
To give these mourning duties to your father:  
But, you must know, your father lost a father;  
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound  
In filial obligation for some term  
To do obsequious sorrow: but to persever  
In obstinate condolement is a course  
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief;  
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,  
For your intent  
In going back to school in Wittenberg,  
It is most retrograde to our desire:  
And we beseech you, bend you to remain  
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,  
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**HAMLET**

Ay, madam, it is common.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

If it be,  
Why seems it so particular with thee?

**HAMLET**

Seems, madam! nay it is; I know not 'seems.'  
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,  
That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,  
For they are actions that a man might play:  
But I have that within which passeth show;  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:  
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

**HAMLET**

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

*Exeunt all but HAMLET*

**HAMLET**

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

*Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO*

**HORATIO**

Hail to your lordship!

**HAMLET**

I am glad to see you well:  
Horatio,--or I do forget myself.

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

A truant disposition, good my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

Where, my lord?

**HAMLET**

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

**HORATIO**

I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

**HAMLET**

Saw? who?

**HORATIO**

My lord, the king your father.

**HAMLET**

The king my father?

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

For God's love, let me hear.

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

But where was this?

**MARCELLUS**

My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

**HAMLET**

Did you not speak to it?

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

'Tis very strange.

**HORATIO**

As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true;  
And we did think it writ down in our duty  
To let you know of it.

**HAMLET**

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

**MARCELLUS** **BERNARDO**

We do, my lord.

**HAMLET**

What, look'd he frowningly?

**HORATIO**

A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

**HAMLET**

Perchance ‘twill walk again.

**HORATIO**

I warrant it will.

**HAMLET**

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

**All**

Our duty to your honor.

**HAMLET**

Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

*Exeunt all but HAMLET*

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;  
I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!  
Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,  
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

*Exit*

**SCENE 3. A room in Polonius' house.**

*Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA*

**LAERTES**

My necessaries are embark'd: farewell.  
And, sister, for Hamlet and the trifling of his favor,  
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,  
No more.

**OPHELIA**

No more but so?

**LAERTES**

Think it no more but you must fear,  
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;  
For he himself is subject to his birth:  
He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends  
The safety and health of this whole state;  
Then weigh what loss your honor may sustain,  
If with too credent ear you list his songs,  
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open  
To his unmaster'd importunity.  
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,  
**OPHELIA**

I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,  
As watchman to my heart.

**LAERTES**   
I stay too long: but here my father comes.

*Enter POLONIUS*

A double blessing is a double grace,  
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**LAERTES**

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

**LORD POLONIUS**

The time invites you; go; your servants tend.

**LAERTES**

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

**OPHELIA**

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

**LAERTES**

Farewell.

*Exit*

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**OPHELIA**

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Marry, well bethought:  
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late  
Given private time to you.

**OPHELIA**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**OPHELIA**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

Marry, I'll teach you.

**OPHELIA**

My lord, he hath importuned me with love  
In honourable fashion.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

**OPHELIA**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**OPHELIA**

I shall obey, my lord.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE 4. The platform.**

*Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS*

**HAMLET**

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

**HORATIO**

It is a nipping and an eager air.

**HAMLET**

What hour now?

**HORATIO**

I think it lacks of twelve.

**HAMLET**

No, it is struck.

**HORATIO**

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

*DRUM Boom Ba Boom*

What does this mean, my lord?

**HAMLET**

The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,  
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;  
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,  
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out  
The triumph of his pledge.

**HORATIO**

Is it a custom?

**HAMLET**

Ay, marry, is't:  
But to my mind, though I am native here  
And to the manner born, it is a custom  
More honor'd in the breach than the observance.  
This heavy-headed revel east and west  
Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations:  
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase  
Soil our addition; and indeed it takes  
From our achievements, though perform'd at height,  
The pith and marrow of our attribute.  
The dram of evil  
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt  
To his own scandal.

**HORATIO**

Look, my lord, it comes!

*Enter Ghost*

**HAMLET**

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!  
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,  
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
Thou comest in such a questionable shape  
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,  
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me!

*Ghost beckons HAMLET*

**HAMLET**

It will not speak; then I will follow it.

**HORATIO**

Do not, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,  
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff  
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,  
And there assume some other horrible form,  
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason  
And draw you into madness? think of it.

**MARCELLUS**

You shall not go, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Hold off your hands.

**HORATIO**

Be ruled; you shall not go.

**HAMLET**

My fate cries out,  
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!  
I say, away! Go on; I'll follow thee.

*Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET*

**HORATIO**

He waxes desperate with imagination.

**MARCELLUS**

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

**HORATIO**

Have after. To what issue will this come?

*Exit HORATIO, following*

**MARCELLUS**

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE 5. Another part of the platform.**

*Enter GHOST and HAMLET*

**Ghost**

(Recorded) *I am thy father's spirit,**Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,**And for the day confined to fast in fires,**Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature**Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid**To tell the secrets of my prison-house,**I could a tale unfold whose lightest word**Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,**List, list, O, list!* *If thou didst ever thy dear father love--*

**HAMLET**

O God!

**Ghost**

*Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.*

**HAMLET**

Murder?

**Ghost**

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

**Ghost**

*Now, Hamlet, hear:**'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,**A serpent stung me;* *but know, thou noble youth,**The serpent that did sting thy father's life**Now wears his crown.*

**HAMLET**

O my prophetic soul! My uncle!

**Ghost**

*Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,**With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,--**O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power**So to seduce!--won to his shameful lust**The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen:**But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;**Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,**My custom always of the afternoon,**Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,**With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,**And in the porches of my ears did pour**The leperous distilment**.**Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand**Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd:**Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,**No reckoning made, but sent to my account**With all my imperfections on my head:**O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!**If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;**Let not the royal bed of Denmark be**A couch for luxury and damned incest.**But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,**Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive**Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven**And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,**To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!**The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,**And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:**Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.*

*Exit*

**HAMLET**

Remember thee!  
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat  
In this distracted globe. Remember thee!  
Yea, from the table of my memory  
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records;  
And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain,  
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!  
O most pernicious woman!  
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!  
My tables,--meet it is I set it down,  
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain:

*Writing*

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;  
It is 'Adieu, adieu! remember me.'  
I have sworn 't.

**HAMLET**

So be it!

**HORATIO**

[Within] Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!

**HAMLET**

Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.

*Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS*

**HORATIO**

What news, my lord?

**HAMLET**

No; you'll reveal it.

**HORATIO**

Not I, my lord, by heaven.

**MARCELLUS**

Nor I, my lord.

**HAMLET**

There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark  
But he's an arrant knave.

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

Why, right; you are i' the right;  
**HORATIO**

These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

**HAMLET**

I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;  
Yes, 'faith heartily.

**HORATIO**

There's no offense, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Yes, but there is, Horatio,  
And much offense too. It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:

And now, good friends,  
Give me one poor request.

**HORATIO**

What is't, my lord? we will.

**HAMLET**

Never make known what you have seen to-night.

**HORATIO---** **MARCELLUS**

My lord, we will not.

**HAMLET**

Upon my sword. **Drum BOOM**

**Ghost**

*[Recorded] Swear.*

**HAMLET**

Consent to swear.

**HORATIO**

Propose the oath, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**Ghost**

*Swear.*

**HAMLET**

Lay your hands again upon my sword:  
Never to speak of this that you have heard,  
Swear by my sword. **Drum BOOM**

**Ghost**

*Swear.*

**HORATIO**

O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

**HAMLET**

And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.  
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come;  
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,  
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,  
As I perchance hereafter shall think meet  
To put an antic disposition on,  
That you, at such times seeing me, never

to note  
That you know aught of me: this do swear,  
So grace and mercy at your most need help you, Swear.

**Ghost**

*Swear.* **Drum BOOM**

**HAMLET**

Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!

**ALL: So swear**

The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right!

*Exeunt*

**SCENE 6. A room in POLONIUS' house.**

*Enter POLONIUS and OPHELIA*

**LORD POLONIUS**

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

**OPHELIA**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

With what, i' the name of God?

**OPHELIA**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

Mad for thy love?

**OPHELIA**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

What said he?

**OPHELIA**

He took me by the wrist and held me hard;  
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;  
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
He falls to such perusal of my face  
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;  
At last, a little shaking of mine arm  
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound  
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
And end his being: that done, he lets me go:  
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,  
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;  
For out o' doors he went without their helps,  
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Come, go with me: I will go seek the king.  
This is the very ecstasy of love.  
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

**OPHELIA**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

That hath made him mad.  
Come, go we to the king:  
This must be known.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE 7. A room in the castle.**

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and Attendants*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**GUILDENSTERN**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**GUILDENSTERN**

Heavens make our presence and our practises  
Pleasant and helpful to him!

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Ay, amen!

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and some Attendants*

*Enter POLONIUS*

**LORD POLONIUS**

The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,  
Are joyfully return'd.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Thou still hast been the father of good news.

**LORD POLONIUS**

I assure my good liege,  
I do think, or else this brain of mine  
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure  
As it hath used to do, that I have found  
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

More matter, with less art.

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

*Reads*

'To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most  
beautified Ophelia,'--  
That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is  
a vile phrase: but you shall hear. Thus:

*Reads*

'In her excellent white bosom, these, & c.'

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Came this from Hamlet to her?

**LORD POLONIUS**

Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.

*Reads*

'Doubt thou the stars are fire;  
Doubt that the sun doth move;  
Doubt truth to be a liar;  
But never doubt I love.  
'O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers;  
I have not art to reckon my groans: but that  
I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.  
'Thine evermore most dear lady, whilst  
this machine is to him, HAMLET.'  
This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me,  
And more above, hath his solicitings,  
As they fell out by time, by means and place,  
All given to mine ear.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

But how hath she  
Received his love?

**LORD POLONIUS**

What do you think of me?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

As of a man faithful and honorable.

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Do you think 'tis this?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

It may be, very likely.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Hath there been such a time--I'd fain know that--  
That I have positively said 'Tis so,'  
When it proved otherwise?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Not that I know.

**LORD POLONIUS**

[Pointing to his head and shoulder]  
Take this from this, if this be otherwise:  
If circumstances lead me, I will find  
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed  
Within the centre.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

How may we try it further?

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

So he does indeed.

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

We will try it.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

Away, I do beseech you, both away:  
I'll board him presently.

*Exeunt KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, and Attendants*

*Enter HAMLET, reading*

O, give me leave:  
How does my good Lord Hamlet?

**HAMLET**

Well, God-a-mercy.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Do you know me, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Not I, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Then I would you were so honest a man.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Honest, my lord!

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

That's very true, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

I have, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

Words, words, words.

**LORD POLONIUS**

What is the matter, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Between who?

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

[Aside] Though this be madness, yet there is method  
in 't. Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Into my grave.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Indeed, that is out o' the air.

*Aside*

How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness  
that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity  
could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will  
leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of  
meeting between him and my daughter.--My honorable  
lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

Fare you well, my lord.

**HAMLET**

These tedious old fools!

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

**LORD POLONIUS**

You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

[To POLONIUS] God save you, sir!

*Exit POLONIUS*

**GUILDENSTERN**

My honored lord!

**ROSENCRANTZ**

My most dear lord!

**HAMLET**

My excellent good friends! How dost thou,  
Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

As the indifferent children of the earth.

**GUILDENSTERN**

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

**HAMLET**

Nor the soles of her shoe?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Neither, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**GUILDENSTERN**

'Faith, her privates we.

**HAMLET**

In the secret parts of fortune? O, most true; she  
is a strumpet. What's the news?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true.  
Let me question more in particular: what have you,  
my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune,  
that she sends you to prison hither?

**GUILDENSTERN**

Prison, my lord!

**HAMLET**

Denmark's a prison.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Then is the world one.

**HAMLET**

A goodly one; in which there are many confines,  
wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

We think not so, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Why then, your ambition makes it one; 'tis too  
narrow for your mind.

**HAMLET**

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

**GUILDENSTERN**

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

**HAMLET**

Were you not sent for? Is it  
your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come,  
deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

**GUILDENSTERN**

What should we say, my lord?

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

To what end, my lord?

**HAMLET**

That you must teach me.

**GUILDENSTERN**

My lord, we were sent for.

**HAMLET**

I will tell you why. 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 appears no other thing to  
me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.  
What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason!  
how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how  
express and admirable! in action how like an angel!  
in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the  
world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me,  
what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not  
me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling  
you seem to say so.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what  
lenten entertainment the players shall receive from  
you: we passed them on the way; and hither are they  
coming, to offer you service.

**HAMLET**

What players are they?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**Drum BOOM**

**GUILDENSTERN**

There are the players.

**HAMLET**

Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore.

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*

**LORD 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's 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.

**LORD 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,--

**LORD POLONIUS**

The actors are come hither, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

What a treasure had he, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Why,  
'One fair daughter and no more,  
The which he loved passing well.'

**LORD POLONIUS**

[Aside] Still on my daughter.

**HAMLET**

Buz, buz!

**LORD POLONIUS**

Upon mine honour,--

**HAMLET**

Then came each actor on his ass,--

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

*Enter four or five Players*

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad  
to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old  
friend! thy face is valenced since I saw thee last:  
give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

**First Player**

What speech, my 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  
caviare to the general: but it was--as I received  
it, and others, whose judgments in such matters  
cried in the top of mine--an excellent play, well  
digested in the scenes, set down with as much  
modesty as cunning. One speech in it I  
chiefly loved: 'twas Aeneas' tale to the widow Dido; and  
thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of  
Priam's slaughter: if it live in your memory, begin  
at this line: let me see, let me see--  
'The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,'--  
it is not so:--it begins with Pyrrhus:--  
'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,  
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble  
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,  
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd  
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot  
Now is he total gules; horridly trick'd  
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,  
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,  
That lend a tyrannous and damned light  
To their lord's murder: roasted in wrath and fire,  
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,  
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus  
Old grandsire Priam seeks.'  
So, proceed you.

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**First Player**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

This is too long.

**HAMLET**

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

**First Player**

'But who, O, who had seen the mobled queen--'

**HAMLET**

'The mobled queen?'

**LORD POLONIUS**

That's good; 'mobled queen' is good.

**First Player**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

Look, whether he has not turned his colour and has  
tears in's eyes. Pray you, no more.

**HAMLET**

'Tis well: I'll have thee speak out the rest soon.  
Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed.

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

God's bodykins, man, much better: use every man  
after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?  
Take them in.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Come, sirs.

**HAMLET**

Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow.

*Exit POLONIUS with all the Players but the First*

Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the  
Murder of Gonzago?

**First Player**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**First Player**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him  
not.

*Exit First Player*

My good friends, I'll leave you till night: you are  
welcome to Elsinore.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Good my lord!

**HAMLET**

Ay, so, God be wi' ye;

*Exit ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

**HAMLET**

Now I am alone.  
O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!  
Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
That from her working all his visage wann'd,  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!  
For Hecuba!  
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,  
That he should weep for her? What would he do,  
Had he the motive and the cue for passion  
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears  
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,  
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,  
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed  
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,  
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,  
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,  
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,  
Upon whose property and most dear life  
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?  
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?  
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?  
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,  
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?  
Ha!  
'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be  
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall  
To make oppression bitter, or ere this  
I should have fatted all the region kites  
With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!  
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!  
O, vengeance!  
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,  
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,  
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,  
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,  
A scullion!  
Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain! I have heard  
That guilty creatures sitting at a play  
Have by the very cunning of the scene  
Been struck so to the soul that presently  
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;  
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players  
Play something like the murder of my father  
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;  
I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,  
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen  
May be the devil: and the devil hath power  
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps  
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,  
As he is very potent with such spirits,  
Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds  
More relative than this: the play 's the thing  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE 8. A room in the castle.**

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**GUILDENSTERN**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Did he receive you well?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Most like a gentleman.

**GUILDENSTERN**

But with much forcing of his disposition.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Did you assay him?  
To any pastime?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

We shall, my lord.

**Scene 9 (this scene is a continuation of the previous scene)**

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**OPHELIA**

Madam, I wish it may.

*Exit QUEEN GERTRUDE*

**LORD POLONIUS**

Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,  
We will bestow ourselves.

*To OPHELIA*

Read on this book;  
That show of such an exercise may colour  
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,--  
'Tis too much proved--that with devotion's visage  
And pious action we do sugar o'er  
The devil himself.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

*Exeunt KING CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS*

*Enter HAMLET*

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

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

**HAMLET**

I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

**OPHELIA**

My lord, I have remembrances of yours,  
That I have longed long to re-deliver;  
I pray you, now receive them.

**HAMLET**

No, not I;  
I never gave you aught.

**OPHELIA**

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

**HAMLET**

Ha, ha! are you honest?

**OPHELIA**

My lord?

**HAMLET**

Are you fair?

**OPHELIA**

What means your lordship?

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

I was the more deceived.

**HAMLET**

Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a  
breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest;  
but yet I could accuse me of such things that it  
were better my mother had not borne me: I am very  
proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more 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,  
all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery.  
Where's your father?

**OPHELIA**

At home, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the  
fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

**OPHELIA**

O, help him, you sweet heavens!

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

O heavenly powers, restore him!

**HAMLET**

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

*Exit*

**OPHELIA**

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!  
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword;  
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,  
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!  
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,  
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,  
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,  
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;  
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth  
Blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me,  
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

*Re-enter KING CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

It shall be so:  
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.

*Exeunt*

**INTERMISSION**

**SCENE 10. A hall in the castle.**

**Drum BOOM Ba BOOM BaBoom Ba Boom**

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

**First 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 o'erstep not  
the modesty of nature: for anything so overdone is  
from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the  
first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the  
mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature,  
scorn her own image, and the very age and body of  
the time his form and pressure.

**First Player**

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

**HAMLET**

O, reform it altogether. And let those that play  
your clowns speak no more than is set down for them.

Go, make you ready.

*Exeunt Players*

*Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN*

How now, my lord! I will the king hear this piece of work?

**LORD POLONIUS**

And the queen too, and that presently.

**HAMLET**

Bid the players make haste.

*Exit POLONIUS*

Will you two help to hasten them?

**ROSENCRANTZ** **GUILDENSTERN**

We will, my lord.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

**HAMLET**

What ho! Horatio!

*Enter HORATIO*

**HORATIO**

Here, sweet lord, at your service.

**HAMLET**

There is a play to-night before the king;  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
Which I have told thee of my father's death:  
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,  
Even with the very comment of thy soul  
Observe mine uncle: if his occulted guilt  
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,  
It is a damned ghost that we have seen.

Give him heedful note;  
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,  
And after we will both our judgments join  
In censure of his seeming.

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

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

*Danish march. A flourish. Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and others*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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 CLAUDIUS**

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' the university, you say?

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

What did you enact?

**LORD POLONIUS**

I did enact Julius Caesar: I was killed i' the  
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 GERTRUDE**

Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

[To KING CLAUDIUS] O, ho! do you mark that?

**HAMLET**

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

*Lying down at OPHELIA's feet*

**OPHELIA**

No, my lord.

**HAMLET**

I mean, my head upon your lap?

**OPHELIA**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Do you think I meant country matters?

**OPHELIA**

I think nothing, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

What is, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Nothing.

**OPHELIA**

You are merry, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Who, I?

**OPHELIA**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

**HAMLET**

So long? 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.

*Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters*

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

*Exeunt*

**OPHELIA**

What means this, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Marry, this is *miching mallecho*; it means mischief.

**OPHELIA**

Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

*Enter Prologue*

**HAMLET**

We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot  
keep counsel; they'll tell all.

**OPHELIA**

Will he tell us what this show meant?

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

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

**Prologue**

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

*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, King and Queen*

***(RECORDED) Player King***

*Full thirty years hath Phoebus' cart gone round**Since Hymen did our hands**Unite commutual in most sacred bands.*

***Player Queen***

*So many journeys may the sun and moon**Make us again count o'er ere love be done!****Player King***

*But should I die, before the new shine*

*You might another husband soon entwine*

***Player Queen***

*Nay, confound the rest!**Such love must needs be treason in my breast:**In second husband let me be accurst!**None wed the second but who kill'd the first.*

***HAMLET***

*[Aside] Wormwood, wormwood.*

***Player Queen***

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

***Player King***

*I do believe you think what now you speak;**But what we do determine oft we break;**This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange**That even our loves should with our fortunes change.**So think thou wilt no second husband wed;**But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.*

***Player Queen***

*Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,**If, once a widow, ever I be wife!*

***HAMLET***

*If she should break it now!*

***Player King***

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

*Sleeps*

*Exit Player Queen.*

**HAMLET**

Madam, how like you this play?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

The lady protests too much, methinks.

**HAMLET**

O, but she'll keep her word.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence  
i' the world.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

What do you call the play?

**HAMLET**

The Mouse-trap. 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 o'  
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 my edge.

**OPHELIA**

Still better, and worse.

**HAMLET**

Begin, murderer;  
pox, leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come:  
'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.'

*Lucianus pours the poison into the sleeper's ears*

**HAMLET**

He poisons him i' the garden for's estate. His  
name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and writ in  
choice Italian: you shall see anon how the murderer  
gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

**OPHELIA**

The king rises.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

How fares my lord?

**LORD POLONIUS**

Give o'er the play.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Give me some light: away!

**All**

Lights, lights, lights!

**HAMLET**

What, frighted with false fire!

*Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO*

**HAMLET**

Why, let the stricken deer go weep,  
The hart ungalled play;  
For some must watch, while some must sleep:  
So runs the world away.  
O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a  
thousand pound. Didst perceive?

**HORATIO**

Very well, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Upon the talk of the poisoning?

**HORATIO**

I did very well note him.

**HAMLET**

Ah, ha! Come, some music! come, the recorders!  
For if the king like not the comedy,  
Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.  
Come, some music!

*Re-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, rather with choler.

**HAMLET**

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

**GUILDENSTERN**

Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame and  
**HAMLET**

Sir, I cannot.

**GUILDENSTERN**

What, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: but,  
sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command;  
or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no  
more, but to the matter: my mother, you say,--

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother.

**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**

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**

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**

'Tis as easy as lying.

**GUILDENSTERN**

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 pluck out the heart of my  
mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to  
the top of my compass: God’s blood, do you think I am  
easier to be played on than a pipe?

*Enter POLONIUS*

God bless you, sir!

**LORD 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?

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

Methinks it is like a weasel.

**LORD POLONIUS**

It is backed like a weasel.

**HAMLET**

Or like a whale?

**LORD POLONIUS**

Very like a whale.

**HAMLET**

Then I will come to my mother by and by. They fool  
me to the top of my bent. I will come by and by.

**LORD POLONIUS**

I will say so.

**HAMLET**

By and by is easily said.

*Exit POLONIUS*

Leave me, friends.

*Exeunt all but HAMLET*

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

*Exit*

**SCENE 11. A room in the castle.**

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ** **GUILDENSTERN**

We will haste us.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

*Enter POLONIUS*

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Thanks, dear my lord.

*Exit POLONIUS*

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

*Retires and kneels*

*Enter HAMLET*

**HAMLET**

Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;  
And now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven;  
And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd:  
A villain kills my father; and for that,  
I, his sole son, do this same villain send  
To heaven.  
O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.  
He took my father grossly, full of bread;  
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;  
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?  
But in our circumstance and course of thought,  
'Tis heavy with him: and am I then revenged,  
To take him in the purging of his soul,  
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?  
No!  
Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:  
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,  
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;  
At gaming, swearing, or about some act  
That has no relish of salvation in't;  
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,  
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black  
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays:  
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

*Exit*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

[Rising] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:  
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

*Exit*

**SCENE 12. The Queen's closet.**

*Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE and POLONIUS*

**LORD POLONIUS**

He will come straight. Look you lay home to him:  
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,  
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between  
Much heat and him. I'll sconce me even here.  
Pray you, be round with him.

**HAMLET**

[Within] Mother, mother, mother!

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

I'll warrant you,  
Fear me not: withdraw, I hear him coming.

*POLONIUS hides behind the arras*

*Enter HAMLET*

**HAMLET**

Now, mother, what's the matter?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

**HAMLET**

Mother, you have my father much offended.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

**HAMLET**

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Why, how now, Hamlet!

**HAMLET**

What's the matter now?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Have you forgot me?

**HAMLET**

No, by the rood, not so:  
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;  
And--would it were not so!--you are my mother.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?  
Help, help, ho!

**LORD POLONIUS**

[Behind] What, ho! help, help, help!

**HAMLET**

[Drawing] How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!

*Makes a pass through the arras*

**LORD POLONIUS**

[Behind] O, I am slain!

*Falls and dies*

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

O me, what hast thou done?

**HAMLET**

Nay, I know not:  
Is it the king?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

**HAMLET**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

As kill a king!

**HAMLET**

Ay, lady, 'twas my word.

*Lifts up the array and discovers POLONIUS*

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!  
I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;  
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.  
Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you down,  
And let me wring your heart; for so I shall,  
If it be made of penetrable stuff,  
If damned custom have not brass'd it so  
That it is proof and bulwark against sense.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

What have I done, that thou darest wag thy tongue  
In noise so rude against me?

**HAMLET**

Such an act  
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,  
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose  
From the fair forehead of an innocent love  
And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows  
As false as dicers' oaths.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Ay me, what act?

**HAMLET**

Look here, upon this picture, and on this,  
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
See, what a grace was seated on this brow;  
A combination and a form indeed,  
Where every god did seem to set his seal,  
To give the world assurance of a man:  
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:  
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,  
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?  
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,  
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?  
You cannot call it love; for at your age  
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,  
And waits upon the judgment: and what judgment  
Would step from this to this?   
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,  
O shame! where is thy blush?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

O Hamlet, speak no more:  
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;  
And there I see such black and grained spots  
As will not leave their tinct.

**HAMLET**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

O, speak to me no more;  
These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears;  
No more, sweet Hamlet!

**HAMLET**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

No more!

**HAMLET**

A king of shreds and patches,--

*Enter Ghost*

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alas, he's mad!

**HAMLET**

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

**Ghost**

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

**HAMLET**

How is it with you, lady?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alas, how is't with you,  
That you do bend your eye on vacancy  
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?

O gentle son, upon the heat and flame of thy distemper  
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

**HAMLET**

On him, on him! Look you, how pale he glares!  
**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

To whom do you speak this?

**HAMLET**

Do you see nothing there?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

**HAMLET**

Nor did you nothing hear?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

No, nothing but ourselves.

**HAMLET**

Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!  
My father, in his habit as he lived!

*Exit Ghost*

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

This the very coinage of your brain:  
**HAMLET**

It is not madness  
That I have utter'd! Mother, for love of grace,  
Lay not that mattering unction to your soul,  
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks:  
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,  
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,  
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;  
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;  
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,  
To make them ranker.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

**HAMLET**

O, throw away the worser part of it,  
And live the purer with the other half.  
Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed;  
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.  
Refrain to-night,  
And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
To the next abstinence: the next more easy;  
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,  
Once more, good night:  
And when you are desirous to be bless'd,  
I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,

*Pointing to POLONIUS*

I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,  
To punish me with this and this with me,  
I will bestow him, and will answer well  
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.  
I must be cruel, only to be kind:  
Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.  
**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

What shall I do?

**HAMLET**

Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed;  
Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse;  
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,  
Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,  
Make you to ravel all this matter out,  
That I essentially am not in madness,  
But mad in craft.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**HAMLET**

I must to England; you know that?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alack,  
I had forgot: 'tis so concluded on.

**HAMLET**

There's letters seal'd: and my two schoolfellows,  
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,  
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,  
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;  
For 'tis the sport to have the engineer  
Hoist with his own petard: and 't shall go hard  
But I will delve one yard below their mines,  
And blow them at the moon: O, 'tis most sweet,  
When in one line two crafts directly meet.  
This man shall set me packing:  
I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.  
Mother, good night. Indeed this counsellor  
Is now most still, most secret and most grave,  
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.  
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.  
Good night, mother.

*Exeunt severally; HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS*

**SCENE 13. (this scene is a continuation of the previous scene no light change)**

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Bestow this place on us a little while.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night!

**KING CLAUDIUS**

What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

O heavy deed!  
It had been so with us, had we been there:  
His liberty is full of threats to all;  
To you yourself, to us, to everyone.  
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?  
Where is he gone?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

To draw apart the body he hath kill'd.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

O, come away!  
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE 14. (This scene is a continuation of the previous scene)**

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ*

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

But where is he?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Bring him before us.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

*Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

**HAMLET**

At supper.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

At supper! where?

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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 CLAUDIUS**

What do you mean by this?

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Where is Polonius?

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

We will seek him there.

**HAMLET**

He will stay till ye come.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,--  
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve  
For that which thou hast done,--must send thee hence  
With fiery quickness: therefore prepare thyself;  
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,  
The associates tend, and every thing is bent  
For England.

**HAMLET**

For England!

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Ay, Hamlet.

**HAMLET**

Good.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Thy loving father, Hamlet.

**HAMLET**

My mother: father and mother is man and wife; man  
and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother. Come, for England!

*Exit*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard;  
Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night:  
Away! for every thing is seal'd and done  
That else leans on the affair: pray you, make haste.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

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

*Exit*

**SCENE 15. A plain in Denmark.**

*Sounds of soldiers marching in distance. Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and others*

**HAMLET**

Good sir, whose powers are these?

**Captain**

They are of Norway, sir.

**HAMLET**

How purposed, sir, I pray you?

**Captain**

Against some part of Poland.

**HAMLET**

Who commands them, sir?

**Captain**

The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

**HAMLET**

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

**Captain**

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

**HAMLET**

Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

**Captain**

Yes, it is already garrison'd.

**HAMLET**

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

**Captain**

God be wi' you, sir.

*Exit*

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Wilt please you go, my lord?

**HAMLET**

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

*Exeunt all except HAMLET*

How all occasions do inform against me,  
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.  
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,  
Looking before and after, gave us not  
That capability and god-like reason  
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be  
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple  
Of thinking too precisely on the event,  
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom  
And ever three parts coward, I do not know  
Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do;'  
Sith I have cause and will and strength and means  
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me:  
Witness this army of such mass and charge  
Led by a delicate and tender prince,  
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd  
Makes mouths at the invisible event,  
Exposing what is mortal and unsure  
To all that fortune, death and danger dare,  
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great  
Is not to stir without great argument,  
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw  
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,  
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,  
Excitements of my reason and my blood,  
And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see  
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,  
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,  
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,  
Which is not tomb enough and continent  
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,  
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

*Exit*

**SCENE 16 . Elsinore. A room in the castle.**

*Lights up on QUEEN GERTRUDE*

*Enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA*

**OPHELIA**

Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

How now, Ophelia!

**OPHELIA**

[Sings]  
How should I your true love know  
From another one?  
By his cockle hat and staff,  
And his sandal shoon.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

**OPHELIA**

Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

*Sings*

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Nay, but, Ophelia,--

**OPHELIA**

Pray you, mark.

*Sings*

White his shroud as the mountain snow,--

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS*

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alas, look here, my lord.

**OPHELIA**

[Sings]  
Larded with sweet flowers  
Which bewept to the grave did go  
With true-love showers.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

How do you, pretty lady?

**OPHELIA**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Conceit upon her father.

**OPHELIA**

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

*Sings*

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Pretty Ophelia!

**OPHELIA**

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

*Sings*

By Gis and by Saint Charity,  
Alack, and fie for shame!  
Young men will do't, if they come to't;  
By cock, they are to blame.  
Quoth she, before you tumbled me,  
You promised me to wed.  
So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,  
An thou hadst not come to my bed.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

How long hath she been thus?

**OPHELIA**

I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I  
cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him  
i' the 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 CLAUDIUS**

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

*Exit HORATIO*

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs  
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,  
When sorrows come, they come not single spies  
But in battalions. First, her father slain:  
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author  
Of his own just remove: the people muddied,  
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,  
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly,  
In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia  
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,  
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts:

*A noise within (All shout “Where’s the King?” it is a mob)* **Drum BOOM Boom repeat**

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alack, what noise is this?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

What is the matter?

*Noise within*

*Enter LAERTES, armed; Danes following*

**LAERTES**

Where is this king?

O thou vile king,  
Give me my father!

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Calmly, good Laertes.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

What is the cause, Laertes,  
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?  
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person:  
Tell me, Laertes, why thou art thus incensed.

Let him go, Gertrude.  
Speak, man.

**LAERTES**

Where is my father?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Dead.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

But not by him.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Let him demand his fill.

**LAERTES**

How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:  
I'll be revenged  
Most thoroughly for my father.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**LAERTES**

None but his enemies.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Will you know them then?

**LAERTES**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**LAERTES**

How now! what noise is that?

*Re-enter OPHELIA*

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

**OPHELIA**

[Sings]  
They bore him barefaced on the bier;  
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;  
And in his grave rain'd many a tear:--  
Fare you well, my dove!

**LAERTES**

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

**OPHELIA**

[Sings]  
You must sing a-down a-down,  
An you call him a-down-a.  
O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false  
steward, that stole his master's daughter.

**LAERTES**

This nothing's more than matter.

**OPHELIA**

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray,  
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-grace o' Sundays: O you must wear your rue with  
a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you  
some violets, but they withered all when my father  
died: they say he made a good end,--

*Sings*

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

**LAERTES**

Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,  
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

**OPHELIA**

[Sings]  
And will he not come again?  
And will he not come again?  
No, no, he is dead:  
Go to thy death-bed:  
He never will come again.  
His beard was as white as snow,  
All flaxen was his poll:  
He is gone, he is gone,  
And we cast away moan:  
God ha' mercy on his soul!  
And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' ye.

*Exit*

**LAERTES**

Do you see this, O God?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Laertes, I must commune with your grief,  
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,  
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will.  
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:  
If by direct or by collateral hand  
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,  
Our crown, our life, and all that we can ours,  
To you in satisfaction; but if not,  
Be you content to lend your patience to us,  
And we shall jointly labour with your soul  
To give it due content.

**LAERTES**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

So you shall;  
And where the offence is let the great axe fall.  
I pray you, go with me.

*Exeunt*

**(Scene 17 has moved to the beginning of scene 19)**

**SCENE 18. Another room in the castle.**

*Lights up on KING CLAUDIUS and LAERTES*. *Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

How now, sweet queen!

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**LAERTES**

Drown'd! O, where?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**LAERTES**

Alas, then, she is drown'd?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Drown'd, drown'd.

**LAERTES**

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

*Exit*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

*Exeunt*

**SCENE 19. A churchyard.**

*Hamlet and Horatio enter*

**HAMLET**

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 good turn for them. Let the king  
have the letters I have sent. I have words to speak

in thine ear will make thee dumb; Rosencrantz and

Guildenstern hold their  
course for England: of them I have much to tell  
thee.

*Enter a GRAVEDIGGER*. *He digs and sings.*

**GRAVEDIGGER**

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

**HAMLET**

Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he  
sings at grave-making?

**HORATIO**

Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

**HAMLET**

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

**GRAVEDIGGER**

[Sings]  
But age, with his stealing steps,  
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,  
And hath shipped me intil the land,  
As if I had never been such.

*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 it were  
Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It  
might be the pate of a politician, which this ass  
now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God,  
might it not?

**HORATIO**

It might, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Or of a courtier; which could say 'Good morrow,  
sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?' This might  
be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord  
such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

**HORATIO**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Why, e'en so: and now my Lady Worm's; chapless, and  
knocked about the mazzard 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 loggats with 'em? mine ache to think on't.

**GRAVEDIGGER**

[Sings]  
A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,  
For and a shrouding sheet:  
O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

*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 rude knave now to knock him about the  
sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of  
his action of battery?

**HAMLET**

I will speak to this fellow. Whose  
grave's this, sirrah?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

Mine, sir.

*Sings*

O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

**HAMLET**

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

**GRAVEDIGGER**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**GRAVEDIGGER**

'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away gain, from me to  
you.

**HAMLET**

What man dost thou dig it for?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

For no man, sir.

**HAMLET**

What woman, then?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

For none, neither.

**HAMLET**

Who is to be buried in't?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

**HAMLET**

How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the  
card, or equivocation will undo us.

How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that day  
that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

**HAMLET**

How long is that since?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it  
was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he that  
is mad, and sent into England.

**HAMLET**

Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits  
there; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

**HAMLET**

Why?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

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

**HAMLET**

How came he mad?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

Very strangely, they say.

**HAMLET**

How strangely?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

**HAMLET**

Upon what ground?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

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

**HAMLET**

How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

I' faith, if he be not rotten before he die--as we  
have many pocky corses now-a-days, that will scarce  
hold the laying in--he will last you some eight year  
or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

**HAMLET**

Why he more than another?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that  
he will keep out water a great while; and your water  
is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body.  
Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth  
three and twenty years.

**HAMLET**

Whose was it?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

A whoreson mad fellow's it was: whose do you think it was?

**HAMLET**

Nay, I know not.

**GRAVEDIGGER**

A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! a' poured a  
flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull,  
sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

**HAMLET**

This?

**GRAVEDIGGER**

E'en that.

**HAMLET**

Let me see.

*Takes the skull*

Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow  
of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath  
borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how  
abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rims at  
it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know  
not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your  
gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment,  
that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one  
now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen?  
Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let  
her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must  
come; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell  
me one thing.

**HORATIO**

What's that, my lord?

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

E'en so.

**HAMLET**

And smelt so? pah!

*Puts down the skull*

**HORATIO**

E'en so, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the king.

*Enter in procession; the Corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following; KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE*

The queen, the courtiers: who is this they follow?  
Couch we awhile, and mark.

*Retiring with HORATIO*

**LAERTES**

Lay her i' the earth:  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring!

**HAMLET**

What, the fair Ophelia!

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

*Scattering flowers*

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;  
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,  
And not have strew'd thy grave.

**LAERTES**

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

*Leaps into the grave*

**HAMLET**

[Advancing] What is he whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis?

*Leaps into the grave*

**LAERTES**

The devil take thy soul!

*Grappling with him*

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Pluck them asunder.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Hamlet, Hamlet!

**All**

Gentlemen,--

**HORATIO**

Good my lord, be quiet.

*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave*

**HAMLET**

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

Dost thou come here to whine?  
To outface me with leaping in her grave?  
Be buried quick with her, and so will I:  
**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

This is mere madness:  
And thus awhile the fit will work on him.  
**HAMLET**

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

*Exit*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.

*Exit HORATIO*

*To LAERTES*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**LAERTES**

Why ask you this?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Not that I think you did not love your father;  
But that I know love is begun by time;  
And that I see, in passages of proof,  
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.  
But, to the quick o' the ulcer:--  
Hamlet comes back: what would you undertake,  
To show yourself your father's son in deed  
More than in words?

**LAERTES**

To cut his throat i' the church.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;  
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,  
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence  
And set a double varnish on the fame  
The Frenchman gave you, bring you in fine together  
And wager on your heads: he, being remiss,  
Most generous and free from all contriving,  
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practise  
Requite him for your father.

**LAERTES**

I will do't:  
And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.  
I bought an unction of a mountebank,  
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,  
Where it draws blood nothing can save the thing from death  
That is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point  
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,  
It may be death.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

*Exeunt*

**SCENE 20. A hall in the castle.**

*Lights up on HAMLET and HORATIO.* *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. Put your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

**OSRIC**

I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

**HAMLET**

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

**OSRIC**

The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary  
horses. The king, sir, hath laid, 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, 'tis 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 re-deliver you e'en so?

**HAMLET**

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

**OSRIC**

I commend my duty to your lordship.

**HAMLET**

Yours, yours.

*Exit OSRIC*

**HORATIO**

You will lose this wager, my lord.

**HAMLET**

I do not think so: since he went into France, I  
have been in continual practice: I shall win at the  
odds. But thou 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  
gain-giving, as would perhaps trouble a woman.

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

Not a whit, we defy augury: there's a special  
providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now,  
'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be  
now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the  
readiness is all: since no man has aught of what he  
leaves, what is't to leave betimes?

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and Attendants with foils, etc.*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

*KING CLAUDIUS puts LAERTES' hand into HAMLET's*

**HAMLET**

Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong;  
But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.  
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,  
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,  
And hurt my brother.

**LAERTES**

I am satisfied in nature,  
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most  
To my revenge: but in my terms of honour  
I stand aloof; and will no reconcilement,  
Till by some elder masters, of known honour,  
I have a voice and precedent of peace,  
To keep my name ungored. But till that time,  
I do receive your offer'd love like love,  
And will not wrong it.

**HAMLET**

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

**LAERTES**

Come, one for me.

**HAMLET**

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

**LAERTES**

You mock me, sir.

**HAMLET**

No, by this hand.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

Very well, my lord  
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**LAERTES**

This is too heavy, let me see another.

**HAMLET**

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

*They prepare to play*

**OSRIC**

Ay, my good lord.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Set me the stoops of wine upon that table.  
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,  
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,  
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire:  
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;  
Give me the cups;  
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,  
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,  
The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,  
Come, begin: and you, the judges, bear a wary eye. **Drum BOOM BOOM**

**HAMLET**

Come on, sir.

**LAERTES**

Come, my lord.

*They play*

**HAMLET**

One.

**LAERTES**

No.

**HAMLET**

Judgment.

**OSRIC**

A hit, a very palpable hit.

**LAERTES**

Well; again.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within*

Give him the cup.

**HAMLET**

I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile. Come.

*They play*

Another hit; what say you?

**LAERTES**

A touch, a touch, I do confess.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Our son shall win.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

He's fat, and scant of breath.  
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows;  
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

**HAMLET**

Good madam!

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Gertrude, do not drink.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

[Aside] It is the poison'd cup: it is too late.

**HAMLET**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Come, let me wipe thy face.

**LAERTES**

My lord, I'll hit him now.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

I do not think't.

**LAERTES**

[Aside] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

**HAMLET**

Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;  
I pray you, pass with your best violence;  
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

**LAERTES**

Say you so? come on.

*They play*

**OSRIC**

Nothing, neither way.

**LAERTES**

Have at you now!

*LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then in scuffling, they change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Part them; they are incensed.

**HAMLET**

Nay, come, again.

*QUEEN GERTRUDE falls*

**OSRIC**

Look to the queen there, ho!

**HORATIO**

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

**OSRIC**

How is't, Laertes?

**LAERTES**

Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric;  
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

**HAMLET**

How does the queen?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

She swoons to see them bleed.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

No, no, the drink, the drink,--O my dear Hamlet,--  
The drink, the drink! I am poison'd.

*Dies*

**HAMLET**

O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd:  
Treachery! Seek it out.

**LAERTES**

It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;  
No medicine in the world can do thee good;  
In thee there is not half an hour of life;  
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,  
Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practice  
Hath turn'd itself on me lo, here I lie,  
Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd:  
I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.

**HAMLET**

The point!--envenom'd too!  
Then, venom, to thy work.

*Stabs KING CLAUDIUS*

**All**

Treason! treason!

**KING CLAUDIUS**

O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.

**HAMLET**

Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,  
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?  
Follow my mother.

*KING CLAUDIUS dies*

**LAERTES**

He is justly served;  
It is a poison temper'd by himself.  
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:  
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,  
Nor thine on me.

*Dies*

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

As thou'rt a man,  
Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll have't.  
O good Horatio, what a wounded name,  
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!  
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart  
Absent thee from felicity awhile,  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,  
To tell my story.

*March afar off, and shot within* **DRUM BOOM…BOOM …BOOM**

What warlike noise is this?

**OSRIC**

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

**HAMLET**

O, I die, Horatio;  
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:  
I cannot live to hear the news from England;  
But I do prophesy the election lights  
On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;  
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,  
Which have solicited. The rest is silence.

*Dies*

**HORATIO**

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

*March within*