

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

Transcription of the 1860 Globe Edition, abridged by 50%.

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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

- **Claudius**, king of Denmark.
- **Hamlet**, son to the late, and nephew to the present king.
- **Polonius**, lord chamberlain.
- **Horatio**, friend to Hamlet.
- **Laertes**, son to Polonius.
- **Rosencrantz**, courtier.
- **Guildenstern**, courtier.
- **Osric**, courtier..
- **A Gentleman**, courtier..
- **A Priest**.
- **Marcellus**, officer.
- **Bernardo**, officer.
- **Francisco**, a soldier.
- **Players**.
- **Two Clowns**, grave-diggers.
  
- **Gertrude**, Queen of Denmark, and mother of Hamlet.
- **Ophelia**, daughter to Polonius.
  
- **Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers**, and other **Attendants**.
- **Ghost of Hamlet's Father**.

# 1. ACT I.

## 1.1. Elsinore. A platform before the castle.

FRANCISCO *at his post. Enter to him* BERNARDO.  
 BERNARDO Who's there?  
 FRANCISCO Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold<sup>o</sup> yourself.  
 Bernardo? You come most carefully upon  
 Your hour. For this relief much thanks.  
 5 BERNARDO If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,  
 The rivals<sup>o</sup> of my watch, bid them make haste.  
 FRANCISCO I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who's there?  
*Enter* HORATIO and MARCELLUS.  
 MARCELLUS Liegemen<sup>o</sup> to the Dane.  
 FRANCISCO Give you good night. *Exit.*  
 10 MARCELLUS O, farewell, honest soldier.  
 BERNARDO Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.  
 MARCELLUS What, has this thing appeared again tonight?  
 BERNARDO I have seen nothing.  
 MARCELLUS Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy.  
 15 Therefore, if again this apparition come,  
 He may approve<sup>o</sup> our eyes and speak to it.  
 HORATIO Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.  
 BERNARDO Let us once again assail your ears,  
 That are so fortified against our story.  
 20 When yond same star that's westward from the pole  
*Enter* GHOST.  
 MARCELLUS Peace! break thee off! Look where it comes again!  
 Thou art a scholar;<sup>o</sup> speak to it, Horatio.  
 HORATIO It harrows<sup>o</sup> me with fear and wonder.  
 MARCELLUS Question it, Horatio.  
 25 HORATIO What art thou that usurp'st this time of night  
 Together with that fair and warlike form

In which the majesty of buried Denmark<sup>o</sup>  
 Did sometimes march? By heaven I charge thee speak!  
 BERNARDO See, it stalks away!  
 30 HORATIO Stay! Speak, speak! I charge thee speak!  
*Exit* GHOST.  
 BERNARDO How now, Horatio? You tremble and look pale.  
 Is not this something more than fantasy<sup>o</sup>?  
 HORATIO Before my God, I might not this believe.  
 Such was the very armor he had on  
 35 When he th' ambitious Norway<sup>o</sup> combated.  
 So frowned he once when, in an angry parle<sup>o</sup>,  
 He smote the sledded Polacks<sup>o</sup> on the ice.  
 MARCELLUS Thus twice before hath he gone by our watch.  
 HORATIO This bodes some strange eruption<sup>o</sup> to our state.  
 40 A mote<sup>o</sup> it is to trouble the mind's eye.  
*Enter* GHOST *again.*  
 But soft! behold! Lo, where it comes again!  
 I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay illusion!  
*Spreads his arms.*  
 Speak to me.  
 If there be any good thing to be done,  
 45 That may to thee do ease, and, grace to me,  
 Speak to me.  
 If thou art privy<sup>o</sup> to thy country's fate,  
 Which happily foreknowing may avoid,  
 O, speak!  
*The cock crows.*  
 50 Speak of it! Stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus!  
 MARCELLUS Shall I strike at it with my partisan?<sup>o</sup>  
 BERNARDO 'Tis here!  
 HORATIO 'Tis here!  
 MARCELLUS 'Tis gone!  
*Exit* GHOST.  
 55 We do it wrong, being so majestical,<sup>o</sup>  
 To offer it the show of violence;

2. **unfold**: reveal      6. **rivals**: companions      8. **Liegemen**: faithful subject, follower  
 16. **approve**: confirm, corroborate      22. **scholar**: a university student who knows Latin  
 and can speak to the ghost      23. **harrows**: distresses      25. **usurp'st**: intrude unjustly

27. **buried Denmark**: the deceased King Hamlet, father of Prince Hamlet      32. **fantasy**:  
 imagination      35. **Norway**: King of Norway      36. **parle**: parley, debate  
 37. **Polacks**: Polish      39. **eruption**: outbreak      40. **mote**: particle of dust  
 47. **privy**: familiar, knowledgeable      51. **partisan**: spear with long, double-edged,  
 triangular blade      55. **majestical**: fearfully great

Our vain blows are malicious mockery.°

BERNARDO It was about to speak when the cock crew.

HORATIO And then it started like a guilty thing.

60 The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,  
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat  
Awake the god of day; and at his warning,  
Th' extravagant and erring spirit hies°  
To his confine.

65 But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill.  
Let us impart what we have seen tonight  
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,  
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

*Exeunt.*

## 1.2. Elsinore. A room of state in the Castle.

*Flourish. Enter CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark,*

*GERTRUDE the Queen, HAMLET, POLONIUS,*

*LAERTES and his sister OPHELIA, Lords Attendant.*

KING CLAUDIUS Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death

The memory be green,° and our whole kingdom

To be contracted in one brow of woe,

Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature

5 That we with wisest sorrow think on him

Together with remembrance of ourselves.

Therefore our sometime sister,° now our queen,

Th' imperial jointress° to this warlike state,

Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,

10 With mirth in funeral, and with dirge° in marriage,

Taken to wife; nor have we herein barred

Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone

With this affair along. For all, our thanks.

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?

15 LAERTES My dread lord,

My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France.

KING CLAUDIUS Have you your father's leave?° What says  
Polonius?

POLONIUS He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave.

KING CLAUDIUS Take thy fair hour, Laertes. Time be thine.

20 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' th' sun.

QUEEN GERTRUDE Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted° color off,

25 Do not for ever with thy veiled lids

Seek for thy noble father in the dust.

Thou know'st 'tis common.° All that lives must die.

HAMLET Ay, madam, it is common.°

QUEEN GERTRUDE If it be,

30 Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET Seems, madam, Nay, it is. I know not "seems."

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

Nor customary suits of solemn black,

Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,

35 Nor the dejected havior° of the visage,

Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,

That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,

For they are actions that a man might play;

But I have that within which passeth show-

40 These but the trappings° and the suits of woe.

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

45 To do obsequious° sorrow. But to persevere

In obstinate condolment° is a course

Of impious stubbornness. For your intent

In going back to school in Wittenberg,

It is most retrograde° to our desire;

50 And we beseech you, bend you to remain

57. **malicious mockery**: harmful 63. **hies**: goes quickly 2. **green**: fresh

7. **sometime sister**: former sister-in-law 8. **jointress**: widow holding ownership of her deceased husband's estate 10. **dirge**: song of mourning

17. **leave**: permission 21. **kind**: sympathetic, benevolent 24. **knighted**: dark, black

27. **common**: a quality belonging to all 28. **common**: base; lowly 35. **havior**:

behavior 40. **trappings**: outward dress 45. **obsequious**: dutiful

46. **condolment**: sorrow 49. **retrograde**: contrary

Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,

Our chiefest courtier,<sup>52</sup> cousin,<sup>53</sup> and our son.

QUEEN GERTRUDE I pray thee stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

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

55 KING CLAUDIUS This sits smiling to my heart. Come away.

*Flourish. Exeunt all but HAMLET.*

HAMLET O that this too, too solid<sup>54</sup> flesh would melt,

Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!

Or that the Everlasting<sup>55</sup> had not fixed

His canon<sup>56</sup> 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!

60 How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable

Seem to me all the uses of this world!

Fie<sup>57</sup> on't! ah, fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden

That grows to seed; things rank<sup>58</sup> and gross<sup>59</sup> in nature

Possess it merely. That it should come to this!

65 But two months dead! Nay, not so much, not two.

So excellent a king, that was to this

Hyperion to a satyr.<sup>60</sup> Heaven and earth!

Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him

As if increase of appetite had grown

70 By what it fed on; and yet, within a month—

Let me not think on't! Frailty, thy name is woman!—

A little month, or ere those shoes were old

With which she followed my poor father's body

Like Niobe,<sup>61</sup> all tears—why she, even she

75 (O God! a beast that wants discourse of reason

Would have mourned longer) married with my uncle;

She married? O, most wicked speed, to post<sup>62</sup>

With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!

It is not, nor it cannot come to good.

*Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.*

80 HORATIO Hail to your lordship!

HAMLET 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.

[*To MARCELLUS*] I am very glad to see you.

85 But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

HORATIO A truant disposition,<sup>63</sup> good my lord.

HAMLET I would not hear your enemy say so,

Nor shall you do my ear that violence.

But what is your affair<sup>64</sup> in Elsinore?

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

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

HORATIO Indeed, my lord, it followed hard<sup>65</sup> upon.

HAMLET Thrift,<sup>66</sup> thrift, Horatio! The funeral baked meats

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

95 My father—methinks I see my father.

HORATIO I saw him once. He was a goodly king.

HAMLET I shall not look upon his like again.

HORATIO My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAMLET Saw? Who?

100 HORATIO My lord, the King your father.

HAMLET The King my father?

HORATIO Season<sup>67</sup> your admiration<sup>68</sup> for a while

With an attentive ear, till I may deliver

This marvel to you.

105 HAMLET For God's love let me hear!

HORATIO Two nights together had these gentlemen

(Marcellus and Bernardo) on their watch

Been thus encountered. A figure like your father,

Appears before them and with solemn march

110 Goes slow and stately by them. This to me

In dreadful<sup>69</sup> secrecy impart they did,

And I with them the third night kept the watch;

Where, each word made true and good,

The apparition comes.

115 HAMLET But where was this? Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO My lord, I did;

52. **chiefest courtier**: most eminent member of the court **cousin**: kinsman 56. **solid**: sullied, i.e. dirty, in some editions 58. **Everlasting**: God 59. **canon**: holy law

62. **Fie**: exclamation of disgust and indignation 63. **rank**: overgrown **gross**: monstrous 67. **Hyperion to a satyr**: contrasts the powerful Greek titan, born of Earth and

Sky, to a minor woodland god, part man, part beast 74. **Niobe**: mythical Greek mother who offended the goddess Leto by boasting that she had 14 children while Leto had only two, Artemis and Apollo; when Artemis and Apollo kill all of Niobe's children, Niobe runs off in despair and is metamorphized into a stone waterfall 77. **post**: to hurry

86. **truant disposition**: inclination to leave school without permission 89. **affair**: business 92. **hard upon**: shortly thereafter 93. **Thrift**: economy; frugality 102. **season**: hold; restrain **admiration**: astonishment 111. **dreadful**: terrified

But answer made it none. Yet once methought  
 It lifted up its head and did address  
 Itself to motion,<sup>o</sup> like as it would speak;  
 120 But even then the morning cock crew loud,  
 And at the sound it shrunk in haste away .  
 HAMLET 'Tis very strange.  
 HORATIO As I do live, my honored lord, 'tis true.  
 HAMLET Hold you the watch to-night?  
 125 MARCELLUS [*with* BERNARDO] We do, my lord.  
 HAMLET I would I had been there.  
 HORATIO It would have much amazed you.  
 HAMLET Very like, very like. Stayed it long?  
 HORATIO While one with moderate haste might tell<sup>o</sup> a hundred.  
 130 HAMLET His beard was grizzled—no?  
 HORATIO It was, as I have seen it in his life,  
 A sable silvered.<sup>o</sup>  
 HAMLET I will watch tonight.  
 Perchance<sup>o</sup> 'twill walk again.  
 135 If you have hitherto concealed this sight,  
 Let it be tenable<sup>o</sup> in your silence still;  
 Upon the platform, 'twixt<sup>o</sup> eleven and twelve,  
 I'll visit you.  
 ALL Our duty to your honor.  
 140 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! *Exit.*

### 1.3. Elsinore. A room in the house of Polonius.

*Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.*

LAERTES Sister, as the winds give benefit,<sup>o</sup>  
 Let me hear from you.  
 OPHELIA Do you doubt that?  
 LAERTES For Hamlet, and the trifling<sup>o</sup> of his favor,<sup>o</sup>

129. **tell**: count      132. **sable silvered**: black and grey      134. **Perchance**: perhaps  
 136. **tenable**: kept back      137. **'twixt**: between      1. **as the winds give benefit**: as  
 winds prove beneficial to ships carrying your letters      4. **trifling**: frivolous conduct  
**favor**: approval

5 Hold it a fashion,<sup>o</sup> and a toy in blood;<sup>o</sup>  
 The perfume and suppliance<sup>o</sup> of a minute.  
 OPHELIA No more but so?  
 LAERTES Perhaps he loves you now,  
 But you must fear, his will is not his own.  
 10 He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
 Carve<sup>o</sup> 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<sup>o</sup> ear you list<sup>o</sup> his songs,  
 15 Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure<sup>o</sup> open  
 To his unmastered importunity.<sup>o</sup>  
 OPHELIA I shall th' effect of this good lesson keep.  
 But, good my brother, do not as some do,  
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,  
 20 Whiles, like a puffed<sup>o</sup> and reckless libertine,<sup>o</sup>  
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance<sup>o</sup> treads.  
*Enter POLONIUS.*  
 LAERTES I stay too long. But here my father comes.  
 POLONIUS Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!  
 And these few precepts<sup>o</sup> in thy memory  
 25 Look<sup>o</sup> thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,<sup>o</sup>  
 Nor any unproportioned<sup>o</sup> thought his act.  
 Be thou familiar,<sup>o</sup> but by no means vulgar:<sup>o</sup>  
 Those friends thou hast, and their adoption<sup>o</sup> tried,  
 Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel;  
 30 But do not dull thy palm<sup>o</sup> with entertainment  
 Of each new-hatched, unfledged<sup>o</sup> comrade. Beware  
 Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,  
 Bear't<sup>o</sup> that th' opposed may beware of thee.  
 Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;

5. **fashion**: momentary preference      **toy in blood**: infatuation      6. **suppliance**: diversion  
 11. **Carve**: choose a spouse      14. **credent**: trustful      **list**: listen to      15. **chaste**  
**treasure**: virginity      16. **unmastered importunity**: unrestrained solicitation  
 20. **puffed**: pompous      **libertine**: a licentious, dissolute person      21. **primrose path of**  
**dalliance**: a hypocritical lifestyle of wanton toying      24. **precepts**: rules for moral conduct  
 25. **Look**: guard      **tongue**: unwarranted expression      26. **unproportioned**:  
 unconsidered      27. **familiar**: friendly      **vulgar**: common, i.e. associating with anyone  
 and everyone      28. **adoption**: friendship      30. **dull thy palm**: make your hand callous  
 by shaking everyone's hand      31. **new-hatched, unfledged**: new-born, immature  
 33. **Bear't**: make sure

35 Take each man's censure,<sup>o</sup> but reserve thy judgment.  
 Neither a borrower nor a lender be;  
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.<sup>o</sup>  
 This above all—to thine own self be true,  
 40 And it must follow, as the night the day,  
 Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
 Farewell. My blessing season<sup>o</sup> this in thee!  
 LAERTES Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.  
 Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well  
 45 What I have said to you.  
 OPHELIA 'Tis in my memory locked. *Exit LAERTES.*  
 POLONIUS What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?  
 OPHELIA So please you, something touching<sup>o</sup> the Lord Hamlet.  
 POLONIUS 'Tis told me he hath very oft of late  
 50 Given private time to you, and you yourself  
 Have of your audience<sup>o</sup> been most free and bounteous.  
 OPHELIA He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders<sup>o</sup>  
 Of his affection to me.  
 POLONIUS Affection? Pooh! You speak like a green<sup>o</sup> girl.  
 55 Think yourself a baby that you have ta'en  
 These tenders<sup>o</sup> for true pay. Tender<sup>o</sup> yourself more dearly,<sup>o</sup>  
 Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,  
 Running it thus) you'll tender<sup>o</sup> me a fool.<sup>o</sup>  
 OPHELIA My lord, he hath importuned<sup>o</sup> me with love  
 60 In honorable fashion.  
 And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,  
 With almost all the holy vows of heaven.  
 POLONIUS Ay, springes<sup>o</sup> to catch woodcocks!<sup>o</sup> I do know,  
 When the blood burns, how prodigal<sup>o</sup> the soul  
 65 Lends the tongue vows. From this time  
 Be something scanter of your maiden<sup>o</sup> presence.  
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth

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35. **censure**: opinion    38. **husbandry**: economy    42. **season**: mature  
 48. **touching**: concerning    51. **audience**: presence, personal time    52. **tenders**:  
 offerings    54. **green**: inexperienced    56. **tenders**: a written offer to execute a  
 purchase    **Tender**: attend to    **dearly**: circumspectly    58. **tender**: present (give  
 birth to)    **fool**: child    59. **importuned**: petitioned    63. **springes**: traps  
**woodcocks**: a British shorebird    64. **prodigal**: recklessly    66. **maiden**: virginal

Have you so slander any moment leisure<sup>o</sup>  
 As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.  
 70 OPHELIA I shall obey, my lord.

*Exeunt.*

#### 1.4. Elsinore. The platform before the Castle.

*Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.*  
 HAMLET The air bites shrewdly;<sup>o</sup> it is very cold.  
 HORATIO It is a nipping and an eager air.  
*A flourish of trumpets, and two pieces go off.*  
 What does this mean, my lord?  
 HAMLET The King doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,<sup>o</sup>  
 5 And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish<sup>o</sup> down,  
 The kettledrum<sup>o</sup> and trumpet thus bray<sup>o</sup> out.  
 HORATIO Is it a custom?  
 HAMLET Ay, marry, is't;  
 But to my mind, it is a custom  
 10 More honored in the breach than the observance.  
*Enter GHOST.*  
 HORATIO Look, my lord, it comes!  
 HAMLET Angels and ministers of grace defend us!  
 Thou com'st in such a questionable<sup>o</sup> shape  
 That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,  
 15 King, father, royal Dane. O, answer me?  
 GHOST *beckons* HAMLET.  
 HORATIO It beckons you to go away with it.  
 MARCELLUS But do not go with it!  
 HORATIO No, by no means!  
 HAMLET It will not speak. Then will I follow it.  
 20 HORATIO Do not, my lord!  
 HAMLET I do not set my life at a pin's fee;<sup>o</sup>  
 And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
 Being a thing immortal as itself?  
 HORATIO What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,  
 25 And there assume some other, horrible form

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68. **slander**: misuse (so that it is ill-spoken)    **moment leisure**: free time  
 1. **shrewdly**: wickedly    4. **rouse**: draft of liquor    5. **Rhenish**: wine from the Rhineland  
 6. **kettledrum**: large drum    **bray**: harshly sound out    13. **questionable**: uncertain,  
 curious    21. **pin's fee**: the value of a pin    24. **flood**: the sea

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!  
 30 HORATIO Be ruled. You shall not go.  
       GHOST *beckons*.  
 HAMLET Still am I called. Unhand me, gentlemen.  
       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.°  
 35 MARCELLUS Let's follow. 'Tis not fit° thus to obey him.  
       Something is rotten in the state of Denmark. *Exeunt*.

### 1.5. Elsinore. The Castle. Another part of the fortifications.

*Enter* GHOST and HAMLET.  
 HAMLET Whither° wilt thou lead me? Speak! I'll go no further.  
 GHOST My hour is almost come.  
       Lend thy serious hearing  
       To what I shall unfold.  
 5 HAMLET Speak. I am bound to hear.  
 GHOST So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.  
       I am thy father's spirit,  
       Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,  
       And for the day confined to fast° in fires.  
 10 If thou didst ever thy dear father love—  
       Revenge his foul and most unnatural murther.°  
 HAMLET Murther?  
 GHOST Murther most foul, as in the best it is.  
 HAMLET Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift  
 15 May sweep to my revenge.  
 GHOST I find thee apt;°  
       'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,  
       A serpent stung° me. But know, thou noble youth,

26. **sovereignty**: royal person    32. **make a ghost**: kill    34. **waxes**: grows  
**imagination**: fantasies, ill thoughts    35. **fit**: proper    1. **Whither**: where    9. **fast**: to  
be fixed    11. **murther**: murder    16. **apt**: eager    18. **serpent**: snake    **stung**:  
bit

The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
 20 Now wears his crown.  
 HAMLET My uncle?  
 GHOST Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
       With witchcraft of wit, won to his shameful lust  
       The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.  
 25 O Hamlet, what a falling-off° was there.  
       But soft! methinks I scent the morning air.  
       Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,  
       Upon my secure° hour thy uncle stole,  
       With juice of cursed hebona° in a vial,  
 30 And in the porches° of my ears did pour  
       The leperous° distilment;° whose effect  
       Holds such an enmity° with blood of man  
       That with a sudden vigour it doth curd  
       The wholesome blood. So did it mine;  
 35 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand  
       Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatched;  
       Cut off even in the blossoms° of my sin,  
       No reckoning° made, but sent to my account  
       With all my imperfections on my head.  
 40 HAMLET O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!  
 GHOST 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  
 45 Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven,  
       Adieu, adieu, adieu! Remember me. *Exit*.  
 HAMLET Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat  
       In this distracted globe.° Remember thee?  
       I'll wipe away all trivial° fond° records,  
 50 And thy commandment all alone shall live  
       Within the book and volume of my brain.  
       O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!

25. **falling-off**: decline in judgment    28. **secure**: safe    29. **hebona**: poisonous  
narcotic    30. **porches**: entrance    31. **leporous**: causing white scales, like leprosy  
**distilment**: distillation    32. **enmity**: hatred, opposition    37. **blossoms**: flowering,  
ripeness    38. **reckoning**: final rite of confession    44. **taint**: injure    48.  
**distracted globe**: disturbed brain    49. **trivial**: negligible    **fond**: foolish

My tables!° Meet it is I set it down  
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain. [*Writes.*]  
55 It is 'Adieu, adieu! Remember me.'

HORATIO [*within*] My lord, my lord!  
*Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.*

MARCELLUS Lord Hamlet!

Illo, ho, ho,° my lord!

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

60 HORATIO What news, my lord?

HAMLET No, you will reveal it.

HORATIO Not I, my lord, by heaven!

HAMLET How say you then? But you'll be secret?

MARCELLUS [*with* HORATIO] Ay, by heaven, my lord.

65 HAMLET I hold it fit that we shake hands and part;  
Look you, I'll go pray.

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

HAMLET I am sorry they offend you, heartily.

HORATIO There's no offense, my lord.

70 HAMLET Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,  
And much offense too. Touching this vision here,  
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you.  
Give me one poor request.

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

75 HAMLET Never make known what you have seen tonight.

MARCELLUS [*with* HORATIO] My lord, we will not.

HAMLET Nay, but swear't. Upon my sword.

*Ghost cries under the stage.*°

GHOST Swear.

HAMLET Aha boy, say'st thou so? Art thou there, truepenny?°

80 Come on! You hear this fellow in the cellarage.°

HORATIO Propose the oath, my lord.

HAMLET Never to speak of this that you have seen.

Swear by my sword.°

GHOST [*beneath*] Swear by his sword.

85 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.

90 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),  
Note that you know aught° of me.

GHOST [*beneath*] Swear.

*They swear.*

95 HAMLET Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!

The time is out of joint.° O cursed spite

That ever I was born to set it right!

Nay, come, let's go together.

*Exeunt.*

## 2. ACT II.

### 2.1. Elsinore. A room in the house of Polonius.

*Enter POLONIUS and OPHELIA separately.*

POLONIUS How now, Ophelia? What's the matter?

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

My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,  
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet° all unbraced,°  
5 No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,°  
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,  
As if he had been loosed out of hell  
To speak of horrors—he comes before me.

POLONIUS Mad for thy love? What said he?

10 OPHELIA He took me by the wrist and held me hard;  
Then goes he to the length of all his arm,  
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
He falls to such perusal° of my face  
As he would draw it. Long stayed he so.  
15 He raised a sigh so piteous and profound°

53. tables: notebook    58. **Illo, ho, ho**: a falconer's call    77. **under the stage**: the Elizabethan stage was a raised platform with room beneath the stage for actors to move to and from a trap door, located in the center of the stage    79. **truepenny**: genuine    80. **cellarage**: area beneath the stage    83. **by my sword**: held inverted to make the shape of a cross

92. **antic disposition**: bizarre, grotesque appearance    93. **aught**: anything    96. **out of joint**: disordered, perverted    4. **doublet**: close-fitting jacket    **unbraced**: unbuttoned  
5. **fouled**: dirty    13. **perusal**: examination    15. **profound**: deep



As it did seem to shatter all his bulk<sup>o</sup>  
 And end his being. That done, he lets me go,  
 He seemed to find his way without his eyes,  
 For to the last bended their light<sup>o</sup> on me.  
 20 POLONIUS This is the very ecstasy<sup>o</sup> of love,  
 What, have you given him any hard<sup>o</sup> words of late?  
 OPHELIA No, as you did command, I did repel  
 his letters, denied his access to me.  
 POLONIUS That hath made him mad.  
 25 I am sorry that with better heed and judgment  
 I had not quoted<sup>o</sup> him. I feared he did but trifle  
 And meant to wrack<sup>o</sup> thee. Come, go we to the King.  
 This must be known. *Exeunt.*

## 2.2. Elsinore. A room in the Castle.

*Flourish. Enter KING and QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ  
 and GUILDENSTERN, cum aliis.*  
 KING CLAUDIUS Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.  
 Something have you heard  
 Of Hamlet's transformation. What it should be,  
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him  
 5 So much from th' understanding of himself,  
 I cannot dream of. I entreat you both  
 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather  
 So much as from occasion you may glean,  
 Whether aught<sup>o</sup> to us unknown afflicts him thus  
 10 That, opened,<sup>o</sup> lies within our remedy.  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE Good gentlemen, he hath much talked of you,  
 And sure I am two men there are not living  
 To whom he more adheres.<sup>o</sup>  
 ROSENCRANTZ Both your Majesties  
 15 Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,  
 Put your dread<sup>o</sup> pleasures more into command  
 Than to entreaty.<sup>o</sup>

16. **bulk:** body      19. **light:** view      20. **ecstasy:** frenzy      21. **hard:** firm, resisting  
 26. **quoted:** noticed      27. **wrack:** ruin      9. **aught:** anything      10. **opened:** revealed  
 13. **adheres:** attaches himself      16. **dread:** royal, and therefore fearsome  
 17. **entreaty:** request

GUILDENSTERN But we both obey,  
 And here give up ourselves, in the full bent,  
 20 To lay our service freely at your feet.  
 KING CLAUDIUS Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE Go, some of you,  
 And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.  
 GUILDENSTERN Heavens make our presence and our practices<sup>o</sup>  
 25 Pleasant and helpful to him!  
*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, with  
 some Attendants.*  
*Enter POLONIUS.*  
 KING CLAUDIUS Thou still hast been the father of good news?<sup>o</sup>  
 POLONIUS I hold my duty as I hold my soul,  
 And I do think that I have found  
 The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.  
 30 KING CLAUDIUS O, speak of that! That do I long to hear.  
 I doubt it is no other but the main,<sup>o</sup>  
 His father's death and our o'erhasty marriage.  
 POLONIUS My liege, and madam, to expostulate<sup>o</sup>  
 Why day is day, night is night, and time is time.  
 35 Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.  
 Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,  
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,<sup>o</sup>  
 I will be brief. Your noble son is mad.  
 Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,  
 40 What is't but to be nothing else but mad?  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE More matter, with less art.  
 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!<sup>o</sup>  
 45 Mad let us grant him then. And now remains  
 That we find out the cause of this effect—  
 For this effect defective comes by cause.  
 I have a daughter who in her duty, mark,  
 Hath given me this. Now gather, and surmise.  
*Reads the letter.*

24. **practices:** actions      26. **father of good news:** deliverer of useful news      31. **main:**  
 primary concern      33. **expostulate:** explain      37. **flourishes:** ostentatious  
 embellishment      44. **figure:** figure of speech

50 'To the celestial,<sup>o</sup> and my soul's idol, the most beautified  
Ophelia,'—That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is vile  
phrase. But you shall hear. Thus: 'In her excellent white bosom,  
these, &c.'

QUEEN GERTRUDE Came this from Hamlet to her?

55 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.

60 '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.

65 KING CLAUDIUS But how hath she received his love?

POLONIUS But what might you think, when I had seen this  
Hot love on the wing. Thus I did bespeak:  
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star.<sup>o</sup>  
This must not be.' And then I prescripts<sup>o</sup> gave her,  
70 That she should lock herself from his resort,<sup>o</sup>  
And he, repulsed, a short tale to make,  
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,<sup>o</sup>  
Thence to a watch,<sup>o</sup> thence into a weakness,  
Thence to a lightness,<sup>o</sup> and, by this declension,<sup>o</sup>

75 Into the madness wherein now he raves.

KING CLAUDIUS Do you think 'tis this?

QUEEN GERTRUDE It may be, very like.

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

80 At such a time I'll loose<sup>o</sup> my daughter to him.  
Be you and I behind an arras then.  
Mark the encounter. If he love her not,  
And he not from his reason fall'n thereon  
Let me be no assistant for a state.

50. **celestial**: heavenly      63. **machine**: body      68. **out of thy star**: out of your range,  
beyond your class      69. **prescripts**: instructions      70. **resort**: visitations      72. **fast**:  
act of abstaining from food      73. **watch**: insomnia      74. **lightness**: lightheadedness  
**declension**: decline      80. **loose**: send out

*Enter HAMLET, reading on a book.*

85 QUEEN GERTRUDE But look where sadly the poor wretch comes  
reading.

POLONIUS I'll board<sup>o</sup> him presently. O, give me leave.  
*Exeunt KING and QUEEN, with Attendants.*

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

HAMLET Well, God-a-mercy.<sup>o</sup>

POLONIUS Do you know me, my lord?

90 HAMLET Excellent well. You are a fishmonger.<sup>o</sup>

POLONIUS Not I, my lord.

HAMLET Then I would you were so honest a man.

POLONIUS Honest, my lord?

HAMLET Ay, sir. To be honest, as this world goes, is to be one  
95 man picked out of ten thousand. Have you a daughter?

POLONIUS I have, my lord.

HAMLET Let her not walk i' th' sun.<sup>o</sup> Conception is a blessing, but  
not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to't.

POLONIUS What do you read, my lord?

100 HAMLET Words, words, words.

POLONIUS What is the matter,<sup>o</sup> 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<sup>o</sup> thick amber<sup>o</sup> and plum-tree gum;<sup>o</sup> and that they have a  
105 plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams.<sup>o</sup> All which,  
sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it  
not honesty to have it thus set down.

POLONIUS [*aside*] Though this be madness, yet there is a method  
in't.—

110 Will you walk out of the air,<sup>o</sup> my lord?

HAMLET Into my grave?

POLONIUS Indeed, that is out o' th' air. My honorable lord, I will  
most humbly take my leave of you.

HAMLET You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more

86. **board**: approach      88. **God-a-mercy**: God have mercy; a light oath  
90. **fishmonger**: literally: fish merchant; figuratively: a pimp      97. **Let her not walk i' th'**  
**sun**: Walk in public and be exposed to Prince Hamlet's love; possibly a reference to exposed  
food or flesh breeding maggots      101. **matter**: subject of the book      104. **purging**:  
discharging      **amber**: pus      **plum-tree gum**: medicinal gum collected from plum trees  
105. **hams**: legs      110. **walk out of the air**: Out of this drafty room in the castle

115 willingly part withal—except my life, except my life, except my life.

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

POLONIUS Fare you well, my lord.

HAMLET These tedious old fools!

*Exit POLONIUS.*

GUILDENSTERN My honored lord!

120 ROSENCRANTZ My most dear lord!

HAMLET My excellent good friends! How dost thou,

Guildestern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

GUILDENSTERN Happy in that we are not over-happy. On

Fortune's cap we are not the very button.°

125 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.

130 HAMLET In the secret parts of Fortune?° O! most true! she is a strumpet.° What news? What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN Prison, my lord?

135 HAMLET Denmark's a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ Then is the world one.

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

ROSENCRANTZ 'Tis too narrow for your mind.

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

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

145 HAMLET But in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

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

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.

150

GUILDENSTERN What should we say, my lord?

HAMLET Why, anything—but to th' purpose. I know the good King and Queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ To what end, my lord?

155

HAMLET That you must teach me. But let me conjure° you by the consonancy° of our youth, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for or no.

ROSENCRANTZ [*aside to GUILDENSTERN*] What say you?

HAMLET [*aside*] Nay then, I have an eye of you.°

160

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

165

to me a sterile promontory;° this most excellent canopy,

the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament,° this

majestical roof fretted° with golden fire—why, it

appeareth no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent°

170

congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man!

how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties!° in form

and moving how express and admirable! in action how

like an angel! in apprehension° how like a god! the

beauty of the world, the paragon° of animals! And yet to

175

me what is this quintessence° of dust? Man delights not

me.

ROSENCRANTZ If you delight not in man, what Lenten°

entertainment the players shall receive from you. We coted°

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

180

HAMLET What players are they?

124. **On Fortune's cap ... button:** literally: the button of Fortune's hat; figuratively: the heights of success 129. **privates:** close friends, but also genitals 130. **secret parts of Fortune:** bawdy pun on the secret will of Fortune 131. **strumpet:** whore 137. **confines:** confinements 140. **bounded:** contained

148. **inclining:** inclination 155. **conjure:** constrain by oath 156. **consonancy:** harmony 159. **have an eye of you:** clearly see you 162. **wherefore:** why 166. **custom of exercise:** usual behavior 164. **frame:** structure 165. **promontory:** headland that juts into a body of water 166. **firmament:** heaven 167. **fretted:** inlaid with ornaments 169. **pestilent:** plague filled 171. **faculties:** abilities 173. **apprehension:** perception 174. **paragon:** highest example 175. **quintessence:** perfection 177. **Lenten:** somber, thus suitable to Lent 178. **coted:** overtook

ROSENCRANTZ Even those you were wont<sup>o</sup> to take such delight in,  
the tragedians of the city.  
*Flourish for the Players.*  
GUILDENSTERN There are the players.  
HAMLET Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands,  
185 come! But my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived. I am  
but mad north-north-west. When the wind is southerly I know a  
hawk from a handsaw.<sup>o</sup>  
*Enter POLONIUS.*  
POLONIUS Well be with you, gentlemen!  
HAMLET I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players. Mark  
190 it.—You say right, sir; a Monday morning; twas so  
indeed.  
POLONIUS My lord, I have news to tell you. The actors are come  
hither, my lord.  
HAMLET Buzz, buzz!<sup>o</sup>  
195 POLONIUS Upon my honor—  
HAMLET Then came each actor on his ass—  
POLONIUS The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy,  
history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-  
historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral; scene indivisible,  
200 or poem unlimited. For the law of writ<sup>o</sup> and the liberty,<sup>o</sup> these  
are the only men.  
HAMLET O Jephthah,<sup>o</sup> judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!  
POLONIUS What treasure had he, my lord?  
HAMLET Why,  
205 'One fair daughter, and no more,  
The which he loved passing well.'<sup>o</sup>  
POLONIUS If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that  
I love passing well.  
HAMLET Nay, that follows not.  
210 POLONIUS What follows then, my lord?  
HAMLET Look where my abridgment<sup>o</sup> comes.  
*Enter four or five Players.*

181. **wont**: likely 185-87. **I am but mad ... handsaw**: I'm only mad in certain respects and can see clearly in most respects. 194. **Buzz, buzz**: like the droning of an annoying insect 200. **writ**: following classical rules **liberty**: free from classical rules  
202. **Jephthah**: In *Judges* 11, Jephthah vows he will sacrifice the first living thing he sees if he's given victory over the Ammonites; after the victory, the first thing he sees is his daughter  
206. **loved: passing well**: well enough 211. **abridgment**: person who cuts me short

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad to see thee.  
Welcome, good friends. We'll have a speech straight. Come,  
215 give us a taste of your quality.<sup>o</sup> Come, a passionate speech.  
FIRST PLAYER What speech, my good lord?  
HAMLET I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never  
acted; or if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember,  
pleased not the million, 'twas caviary to the general.<sup>o</sup> One  
220 speech in't I chiefly loved. 'Twas Æneas' tale to Dido,<sup>o</sup> and  
thereabout of it especially where he speaks of Priam's<sup>o</sup> slaughter.  
If it live in your memory, begin at this line—let me see, let me  
see:  
'The rugged Pyrrhus,<sup>o</sup> he whose sable arms,  
225 Black as his purpose, did the night resemble,  
Now is be total gules,<sup>o</sup> horribly tricked<sup>o</sup>  
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,  
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,  
That lend a tyrannous and a damned light.  
230 Roasted in wrath and fire, the hellish Pyrrhus  
Old grandsire<sup>o</sup> Priam seeks.'  
FIRST PLAYER 'Anon he finds him,  
Striking too short<sup>o</sup> at Greeks. His antique<sup>o</sup> sword,  
Rebellious<sup>o</sup> to his arm, lies where it falls,  
235 Repugnant<sup>o</sup> to command. Unequal matched,  
Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide;  
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword  
Th' unnerved father<sup>o</sup> falls. Then senseless Ilium,  
Seeming to feel this blow,<sup>o</sup> with flaming top  
240 Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash  
Takes prisoner<sup>o</sup> Pyrrhus' ear. For lo! his sword,  
Which was declining on the milky<sup>o</sup> head  
Of reverend Priam, seemed i' th' air to stick<sup>o</sup>.  
So, as a painted tyrant,<sup>o</sup> Pyrrhus stood,

215. **quality**: ability 219. **general**: general populace 220. **Æneas tale to Dido**: the Trojan exile Æneas' story to his paramour Dido, queen of Carthage, about the sack of Troy  
221. **Priam**: king of Troy 224. **Pyrrhus**: Greek warrior 226. **gules**: all red **tricked**: covered 231. **grandsire**: grandfather 233. **Striking too short**: the old Priam's sword is swung too short at his enemies **antique**: ancient 234. **Rebellious**: useless  
235. **Repugnant**: resistant 237. **fell**: terrible 238. **father**: Priam 238-39. **senseless Ilium ... blow**: the literally unfeeling city of Troy seems to feel Pyrrhus's blow 241. **prisoner**: arrests 242. **milky**: white 244. **painted tyrant**: tyrant in a painting

245 And, like a neutral to his will and matter,  
Did nothing.  
But aroused vengeance sets him new awork;  
And never did the Cyclops<sup>o</sup> hammers fall  
On Mars's armor,<sup>o</sup> forged for proof eterne,  
250 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
Now falls on Priam.  
Out, out, thou strumpet Fortune! All you gods,  
In general synod<sup>o</sup> take away her power;  
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,  
255 And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,  
As low as to the fiends!<sup>o</sup>  
POLONIUS This is too long.  
HAMLET He's for a jig<sup>o</sup> or a tale of bawdry,<sup>o</sup> or he sleeps. Say on;  
come to Hecuba.<sup>o</sup>  
260 FIRST PLAYER 'But who, O who, had seen the mobled<sup>o</sup> queen—'  
HAMLET 'The mobled queen?'  
POLONIUS That's good! 'Mobled queen' is good.  
FIRST PLAYER 'Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames  
With bisson rheum,<sup>o</sup> in alarm of fear caught up:  
265 But if the gods themselves did see her then,  
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport  
In mincing<sup>o</sup> with his sword her husband's limbs,  
The instant burst of clamor<sup>o</sup> that she made  
(Unless things mortal<sup>o</sup> move them not at all)  
270 Would have made milch<sup>o</sup> the burning eyes of heaven  
And passion in the gods.'  
HAMLET 'Tis well. I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon.—  
Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed?  
POLONIUS Come, sirs.  
275 HAMLET Follow him, friends. We'll hear a play tomorrow.  
*Exeunt POLONIUS and Players except the FIRST.*

248. **Cyclops**: one-eyed monster from Homer's *Odyssey* 249. **Mars**: Roman god of war  
253. **synod**: assembly 254-56. **Break all the spokes ... fiends**: Fortune's wheel is broken  
and hurled down to hell 258. **jig**: lively, spring dance **bawdry**: obscenity  
259. **Hecuba**: Priam's wife, queen of Troy 260. **mobled**: enwrapped 264. **bisson**  
**rheum**: blinding, mucousy secretion from the eyes 267. **mincing**: finely cutting  
268. **instant burst of clamor**: immediate outpouring of grief 269. **things mortal**: human  
mortality 270. **milch**: milk

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  
280 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.  
285 My good friends, I'll leave you till night. You are welcome to  
Elsinore.  
ROSENCRANTZ Good my lord!  
HAMLET Ay, so, God b' wi' ye!  
*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN  
Now I am alone.  
290 O what a rogue<sup>o</sup> and peasant<sup>o</sup> slave am I!  
Is it not monstrous<sup>o</sup> that this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit<sup>o</sup>  
That, from her working, all his visage wann<sup>o</sup>,  
295 Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,<sup>o</sup>  
A broken voice, and all for nothing!  
For Hecuba!  
That he should weep for her? What would he do,  
Had he the motive and the cue for passion  
300 That I have?  
Yet I say nothing! Am I a coward?  
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate<sup>o</sup> across?  
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?<sup>o</sup>  
'Swounds,<sup>o</sup> I should take it! for it cannot be  
305 But I am pigeon-livered<sup>o</sup> and lack gall<sup>o</sup>  
To make oppression bitter.<sup>o</sup> or ere<sup>o</sup> this

290. **rogue**: rascal, vagabond **peasant**: low-born 291. **monstrous**: awful  
293. **conceit**: imagination 294. **visage wann'ed**: face whitened 295. **distraction ...**  
**aspect**: amazement in his features 302. **pate**: head 303. **Plucks off ... face**: a deep  
insult against manhood and respectability 304. **Swounds**: By God's wounds  
305. **pigeon-livered ... gall**: incapable of becoming angry (pigeons supposedly could not creat  
gall, the humor of anger) 306. **to make oppression bitter**: to make my affliction end in a  
bitter revenge **ere**: before

I should have fattened° all the region kites°  
 With this slave's offal.° Bloody bawdy° villain!  
 Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!  
 310 Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,  
 That I, the son of a dear father murdered,  
 Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
 Must (like a whore) unpack my heart with words  
 And fall a-cursing like a very drab,°  
 315 A scullion!°  
 Fie° upon't! foh! About,° my brain! Hum, I have heard  
 That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,  
 Have by the very cunning of the scene  
 Been struck so to the soul that presently  
 320 They have proclaimed their malefactions;°  
 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,°  
 325 I know my course. The spirit that I have seen  
 May be a devil; and the devil hath power  
 T' assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps  
 Out of my weakness and my melancholy,°  
 As he is very potent° with such spirits,  
 330 Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds  
 More relative° than this. The play's the thing  
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.

*Exit.*

### 3. ACT III.

#### 3.1. Elsinore. A room in the Castle.

*Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA,  
ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and Lords.*

307. **fatted**: fattened, fed      **kites**: birds of prey      308. **offal**: excrement      **bawdy**:  
 soiled, filthy      313-14. (**like a whore ... drab**: ineffectively complain like a whore      315.  
**scullion**: kitchen servant      316. **fie**: exclamation of disgust      **About**: Go about, i.e.  
 think      320. **malefactions**: misdeeds      324. **tent**: probe      **quick**: sensitivity, life  
**bleach**: flinch, whiten      328. **melancholy**: depression      329. **potent**: powerful  
 331. **relative**: pertinent

KING CLAUDIUS    And can you by no drift of circumstance°  
 Get from him why he puts on this confusion?  
 ROSENCRANTZ    He does confess he feels himself distracted,°  
 But from what cause he will by no means speak.  
 5 GUILDENSTERN    Nor do we find him forward° to be sounded,°  
 But with a crafty madness keeps aloof.  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE    Did you assay him to any pastime?  
 ROSENCRANTZ    Madam, it so fell out that certain players  
 10 We o'errought° on the way. Of these we told him.  
 As I think, they have already order  
 This night to play before your Majesties.  
 KING CLAUDIUS    Drive his purpose on to these delights.  
 ROSENCRANTZ    We shall, my lord.  
*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*  
 15 KING CLAUDIUS    Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;  
 For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,  
 That he, as 'twere by accident, may here  
 Affront° Ophelia.  
 Her father and myself (lawful espials°)  
 20 Will so bestow ourselves.  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE    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.  
*Exeunt KING, QUEEN, and POLONIUS.*  
*Enter HAMLET.*  
 25 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-  
 30 No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
 The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks°  
 That flesh is heir° to. 'Tis a consummation°  
 Devoutly to be wished. To die- to sleep.

1. **drift of circumstance**: means of conversation      3. **distracted**: deranged  
 5. **forward**: eager      **sounded**: questioned      10. **o'errought**: overtook      18. **Affront**:  
 confront      19. **espials**: spies      24. **wonted**: usual      29. **them**: i.e. Hamlet's  
 troubles      31. **shocks**: blows      32. **heir**: recipient      **consummation**: fulfillment

35 To sleep- perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub!<sup>o</sup>  
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,<sup>o</sup>  
 Must give us pause. There's the respect<sup>o</sup>  
 That makes calamity<sup>o</sup> of so long life.  
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
 40 Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,<sup>o</sup>  
 The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
 The insolence of office,<sup>o</sup> and the spurns  
 That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,<sup>o</sup>  
 When he himself might his quietus<sup>o</sup> make  
 45 With a bare bodkin?<sup>o</sup> Who would these fardels<sup>o</sup> bear,  
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
 But that the dread of something after death-  
 The undiscovered country, from whose bourn<sup>o</sup>  
 No traveller returns- puzzles the will,  
 50 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,  
 55 And enterprises of great pith<sup>o</sup> and moment  
 With this regard their currents<sup>o</sup> turn awry  
 And lose the name of action.- Soft you now!  
 The fair Ophelia!

OPHELIA How does your honour for this many a day?  
 60 HAMLET I humbly thank you; well, well, well.  
 OPHELIA My lord, I have remembrances of yours.<sup>o</sup>  
 I pray you, now receive them.  
 HAMLET I never gave you aught.<sup>o</sup>  
 OPHELIA My honoured lord, you know right well you did,  
 65 And with them words of so sweet breath composed  
 As made the things more rich. There, my lord.  
 HAMLET Ha, ha! Are you honest? Are you fair?

---

34. **rub**: obstacle    36. **mortal coil**: mortal body    37. **respect**: aspect, quality  
 38. **calamity**: misery    40. **contumely**: rude contempt    42. **insolence of office**:  
 disrespect of those in high office    42-3. **The spurns ... takes**: insults that worth men  
 patiently take from the unworthy    44. **quietus**: rest, i.e. death    45. **bodkin**: dagger  
**fardels**: burdens    48. **bourn**: border    55. **pith**: profundity    56. **currents**: directions  
 61. **remembrances**: love tokens    63. **aught**: anything

OPHELIA What means your lordship?  
 HAMLET The power of beauty will sooner transform honesty  
 70 from what it is to a bawd<sup>o</sup> than the force of honesty can translate  
 beauty into his likeness. I did love you once.  
 OPHELIA Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.  
 HAMLET You should not have believed me; I loved you not.  
 OPHELIA I was the more deceived.  
 75 HAMLET Get thee to a nunnery!<sup>o</sup> 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. Go thy ways to a nunnery.  
 OPHELIA O, help him, you sweet heavens!  
 80 HAMLET If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy  
 dowry:<sup>o</sup> be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not  
 escape calumny.<sup>o</sup> Get thee to a nunnery. Go, farewell. To a  
 nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell. *Exit.*  
 OPHELIA O heavenly powers, restore him!  
 85 O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!  
 And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,  
 That sucked the honey of his music vows,<sup>o</sup>  
 Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,  
 Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.  
*Enter KING and POLONIUS.*  
 90 KING CLAUDIUS Love? his affections do not that way tend;  
 Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little,  
 Was not like madness.  
 He shall with speed to England  
 For the demand of our neglected tribute.  
 95 Haply the seas, and countries different,  
 With variable objects,<sup>o</sup> shall expel  
 This something-settled matter<sup>o</sup> in his heart.  
 POLONIUS Let his queen mother all alone entreat him  
 To show his grief. If she find him not,  
 100 To England send him; or confine him where  
 Your wisdom best shall think.

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70. **bawd**: whore    75. **nunnery**: Both a suggestion of chastity and a slang term for a  
 brothel, since both housed many women.    81. **dowry**: the property the wife brings to her  
 husband as part of the marriage contract    82. **calumny**: slander    87. **music vows**:  
 musical oaths made in courtship    96. **variable objects**: various entertainments  
 97. **something-settled matter**: somewhat settled, and therefore still curable

KING CLAUDIUS It shall be so.  
Madness in great ones must not unwatched go. *Exeunt.*

### 3.2. Elsinore. A hall in the Castle.

*Enter HAMLET and three of the Players.*

HAMLET Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you,  
trippingly on the tongue. Suit the action to the word, the word to  
the action; for anything so overdone is from the purpose of  
playing, whose end, both at the first and now,  
5 was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature.° Make you  
ready.

*Exeunt Players.*

*Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and  
GUILDENSTERN.*

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

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

*Enter HORATIO.*

HAMLET What, ho, Horatio!  
10 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.  
Observe my uncle. If his occulted° guilt  
15 Do not itself unkennel° in one speech,  
It is a damned ghost that we have seen.

HORATIO Well, my lord.

If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,  
And scape° detecting, I will pay the theft.

*Sound a flourish. Enter Trumpets and Kettledrums.  
Danish march. Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS,  
OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and  
other Lords attendant, with the Guard carrying  
torches.*

20 HAMLET Get you a place.

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.

25 These words are not mine.

HAMLET No, nor mine now.

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

HAMLET No, good mother. Here's metal more attractive.° Lady,  
shall I lie in your lap?°

*Sits down at OPHELIA'S feet.*

30 OPHELIA No, my lord.

HAMLET I mean, my head upon your lap? Do you think I meant  
country matters?°

OPHELIA I think nothing, my lord.

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

35 OPHELIA You are merry,° my lord.

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

OPHELIA Nay 'tis twice two months, my lord.

40 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. He 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, pours poison in the sleeper's  
ears, and leaves him. The QUEEN returns, finds the  
KING dead, and makes passionate action. The  
Poisoner with some three or four Mutes, comes in*

5. **the mirror up to nature**: show the truth of natural behavior      14. **occulted**: hidden  
15. **unkennel**: let loose      19. **scape**: escape      21. **fares**: does

22. **chameleon's dish**: chameleons supposedly lived only on air      23. **capons**: castrated  
male chicken (slang term for a fool)      28. **metal more attractive**: a more attractive  
person, i.e. Ophelia      29. **lie in your lap**: with my head in your lap, but with sexual  
innuendo      32. **country matters**: obscene pun on the first word      35. **merry**: jolly,  
excited      36. **jig-maker**: I am nothing but a jig-maker, i.e. the comic actor who performed  
a foolish song and dance to conclude a play      42. **The dumb show**: a pantomime that  
enacts the matter of the play being performed



*again, seem to condole with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the QUEEN with gifts; she seems harsh and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love. Exeunt.*

*Enter PROLOGUE.*

PROLOGUE For us, and for our tragedy,  
Here stooping to your clemency,<sup>o</sup>

45 We beg your hearing patiently. *Exit.*

HAMLET Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?<sup>o</sup>

OPHELIA 'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET As woman's love.

*Enter two Players as KING and QUEEN.*

50 PLAYER KING Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart<sup>o</sup> gone round  
Since love our hearts, and Hymen<sup>o</sup> did our hands,  
Unite comutual<sup>o</sup> in most sacred bands.

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

55 PLAYER KING Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;  
My operant powers<sup>o</sup> their functions leave to do.  
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,  
Honoured, beloved, and haply one as kind  
For husband shalt thou-

60 PLAYER QUEEN O, confound the rest!  
Such love must needs be treason in my breast.  
When second husband let me be accurst!<sup>o</sup>  
None wed the second but who killed the first.

HAMLET [*aside*] Wormwood,<sup>o</sup> wormwood!

65 PLAYER KING I do believe you think what now you speak;  
But what we do determine oft we break.  
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!

70 HAMLET If she should break it now!

PLAYER KING 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile.  
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile

The tedious day with sleep.

PLAYER QUEEN Sleep rock<sup>o</sup> thy brain,  
*He sleeps.*

75 PLAYER QUEEN And never come mischance between us twain!<sup>o</sup>  
*Exit.*

HAMLET Madam, how like you this play?

QUEEN GERTRUDE The lady doth protest<sup>o</sup> too much, methinks.

80 KING CLAUDIUS Have you heard the argument?<sup>o</sup> Is there no  
offence in't?

HAMLET No, no! They do but jest, poison in jest;<sup>o</sup> no offence i'th'  
world.

KING CLAUDIUS What do you call the play?

85 HAMLET 'The Mousetrap.' This play is the image of a murder  
done in Vienna. Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista.  
*Enter LUCIANUS.*

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the King.

OPHELIA You are as good as a chorus,<sup>o</sup> my lord.

90 HAMLET I could interpret<sup>o</sup> between you and your love, if I  
could see the puppets dallying.<sup>o</sup>

OPHELIA You are keen,<sup>o</sup> my lord, you are keen.

HAMLET It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.<sup>o</sup>

95 PLAYER LUCIANUS Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time  
agreeing;  
Confederate<sup>o</sup> season, else no creature seeing;  
Thou mixture rank,<sup>o</sup> of midnight weeds collected,  
With Hecate's ban<sup>o</sup> thrice blasted, thrice infected,  
Thy natural magic and dire property  
On wholesome life usurp<sup>o</sup> immediately.

*Pours the poison in his ears.*

OPHELIA The King rises.

100 HAMLET What, frightened with false fire?<sup>o</sup>

QUEEN GERTRUDE How fares my lord?

KING CLAUDIUS Give me some light! Away!

44. **clemency**: mild temper    46. **posy of a ring**: poetry inscribed in a ring, and thus terse  
49. **Phoebus' cart**: Apollo's chariot, the sun    50. **Hymen**: god of marriage  
51. **comutual**: mutually    55. **operant powers**: bodily strength    61. **accurst**: cursed  
63. **Wormwood**: a bitter, medicinal herb

74. **rock**: soothingly sway    75. **twain**: two    77. **protest**: insist against remarriage  
79. **argument**: plot    81. **poison in jest**: bitterness in joking    88. **chorus**: like a Greek chorus, actors who provide commentary on the plot  
89. **interpret**: translate, act as a go-between for two lovers    90. **puppets dallying**: flirting  
91. **keen**: satirical    92. **take off my edge**: satisfy my lust    94. **confederate**: complicit  
95. **rank**: foul    96. **Hecate's ban**: The goddess of withcraft's curse  
98. **usurp**: overtake    100. **false fire**: fireworks

ALL Lights, lights, lights!  
*Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.*  
 HAMLET O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a  
 105 thousand pound!° Didst perceive?  
 HORATIO Very well, my lord.  
 HAMLET Upon the talk of the poisoning?  
 HORATIO I did very well note him.  
 HAMLET Aha! Come, some music! Come, the recorders!°  
 110 Come, some music!  
*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*  
 GUILDENSTERN Good my lord, vouchsafe° me a word with you.  
 HAMLET Sir, a whole history.°  
 GUILDENSTERN The King, sir is in his retirement,°  
 115 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 the doctor.  
 120 GUILDENSTERN Good my lord, put your discourse into some  
 frame,° and start not so wildly from my affair.° The Queen, your  
 mother, in most great affliction of spirit hath sent me to you.  
 HAMLET You are welcome.  
 125 GUILDENSTERN If it shall please you to make me a wholesome  
 answer, I will do your mother's commandment.  
 HAMLET Sir, I cannot.  
 GUILDENSTERN What, my lord?  
 HAMLET Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased.  
 130 ROSENCRANTZ Thus she says: your behaviour hath struck her into  
 amazement and admiration.  
 HAMLET O wonderful son, that can so stonish° a mother!  
 ROSENCRANTZ She desires to speak with you in her closet ere you  
 go to bed.  
 135 HAMLET We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you  
 any further trade° with us?

105. **thousand pound**: a weighty sum of money  
 109. **recorders**: wind instrument, like a  
 flute  
 111. **vouchsafe**: bestow a favor on  
 113. **a whole history**: an entire history  
 book  
 114. **retirement**: withdrawal  
 115. **distempered**: out of sorts  
 117.  
**choler**: anger; Hamlet takes it as indigestion  
 120-21. **put your ... frame**: talk to me in  
 an orderly way  
 121. **affair**: point of conversation  
 132. **stonish**: astonish, surprise  
 136. **trade**: conversation

ROSENCRANTZ My lord, you once did love me. You do surely bar  
 the door upon your own liberty,° if you deny your griefs to your  
 friend.  
 140 HAMLET O, the recorders! Let me see one. Will you play upon  
 this pipe?  
 GUILDENSTERN My lord, I cannot.  
 HAMLET I pray you.  
 GUILDENSTERN Believe me, I cannot. I know, no touch° of it,  
 145 my lord.  
 HAMLET It is as easy as lying. Govern these ventages° with your  
 fingers and thumbs, give it breath with your mouth, and it will  
 discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.°  
 150 GUILDENSTERN But these cannot I command to any utt'rance of  
 harmony. I have not the skill.  
 HAMLET Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of  
 me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my  
 stops; you would pluck out the heart of my  
 160 mystery;° you would sound° me from my lowest note to the top  
 of my compass.° 'Sblood,° do you think I am easier to be played  
 on than a pipe?  
*Enter POLONIUS.*  
 POLONIUS My lord, the Queen would speak with you, and  
 presently.  
 165 HAMLET Then will I come to my mother by-and-by.° - They fool  
 me to the top of my bent.° - I will come by-and-by.  
 POLONIUS I will say so. *Exit.*  
 HAMLET 'By-and-by' is easily said.- Leave me, friends.  
*Exeunt all but HAMLET.*  
 170 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

138. **liberty**: freedom from sickness, madness  
 144. **touch**: control  
 146. **ventages**:  
 openings  
 149. **stops**: placements for your fingers  
 160. **mystery**: inner secrets  
**sound**: fathom, measure my depth  
 161. **compass**: range  
 'Sblood: By God's blood  
 165. **by-and-by**: immediately  
 166. **fool ... bent**: They act like fools beyond what I can  
 stand.  
 172. **quake**: tremble

175 The soul of Nero° enter this firm bosom.  
 Let me be cruel, not unnatural;  
 I will speak daggers to her, but use none.  
 My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites-°  
 How in my words somever she be shent,°  
 To give them seals° never, my soul, consent! *Exit.*

### 3.3. A room in the Castle.

*Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN,  
 and POLONIUS.*

KING CLAUDIUS I like him not, nor stands it safe with us.  
 I your commission° will forthwith dispatch,°  
 And he to England shall along with you.  
 Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;  
 5 For we will fetters° put upon this fear,  
 Which now goes too free-footed.

ROSENCRANTZ [*with GUILDENSTERN*] We will haste us.  
*Exeunt Gentlemen.*

POLONIUS My lord, he's going to his mother's closet.  
 Behind the arras I'll convey myself.°  
 10 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,  
 15 A brother's murder! Pray can I not.  
 My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent.  
 What if this cursed hand  
 Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,°  
 Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens  
 20 To wash it white as snow? 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 possessed  
 Of those effects for which I did the murder-  
 25 My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.°  
 O wretched state! O bosom black as death!  
 Bow, stubborn knees; and heart with strings of steel,  
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!  
 All may be well. *He kneels.°*

*Enter HAMLET.*

30 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 scanned.°  
 A villain kills my father; and for that,  
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send  
 35 To heaven.

Why, this is hire and salary,° not revenge!  
 He took my father grossly, full of bread,  
 All his crimes broad blown.° Am I then revenged,  
 To take him in the purging of his soul,  
 40 When he is fit and seasoned° for his passage?°  
 No.

When he is drunk asleep; or in his rage;  
 Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed;  
 Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,°  
 45 And that his soul may be as damned and black  
 As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays.

This physic° but prolongs thy sickly days. *Exit.*

KING CLAUDIUS [*rises*] My words fly up, my thoughts remain  
 below.

Words without thoughts never to heaven go. *Exit.*

174. **Nero**: Roman emperor who allegedly murdered his mother  
**hypocrites**: his words and desires oppose one another 178. **shent**: rebuked  
 179. **them seals**: confirm them 2. **commission**: orders **dispatch**: send  
 5. **fetters**: restraints 9. **arras ... myself**: curtain I'll place myself 13. **rank**: gross  
 14. **primal eldest curse**: the curse against Cain, who killed Abel  
 18. **thicker than ... blood**: covered in his brother's blood

21. **is past**: is behind me 24. **effects**: rewards 29. **He kneels**: in prayer 30.  
**pat**: immediately 32. **scanned**: looked at further 36. **hire and salary**: serving an  
 employer 37-38. **grossly ... blown**: spiritually unprepared, with his sins in full bloom  
 40. **fit and seasoned**: ready and perfected **passage**: voyage to the afterlife 44. **heels**  
 ... **heaven**: i.e. pointed straight to hell 47. **physic**: medicine

### 3.4. The Queen's closet.

*Enter QUEEN and POLONIUS.*

POLONIUS He will come straight. Look you lay home° to him.  
Pray you be round° with him.

HAMLET [*within*] Mother, mother, mother!

QUEEN GERTRUDE I'll warrant° you; fear me not. Withdraw; I  
5 hear him coming.

POLONIUS *hides behind the arras.*

*Enter HAMLET.*

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.

10 QUEEN GERTRUDE Have you forgot me?°

HAMLET 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.°

15 HAMLET 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!

POLONIUS [*behind*] What, ho! help, help, help!

HAMLET [*draws*] How now? a rat? Dead for a ducat,° dead!

*Makes a pass through the arras and kills POLONIUS.*

20 POLONIUS [*behind*] O, I am slain!

QUEEN GERTRUDE O me, what hast thou done?

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE As kill a king?

25 HAMLET Ay, lady, it was my word.

*Lifts up the arras and sees POLONIUS.*

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

Leave wringing of your hands. Peace! sit you down

1. **lay home**: thoroughly reprimand 2. **round**: severe 4. **warrant**: assure 6. **thy father**: i.e. Claudius 7. **my father**: King Hamlet 8. **idle**: foolish 10. **forgot me**: forgotten to respect me 13. **I'll set those to you**: I'll have others force you to speak 14. **glass**: mirror 15. **inmost**: deepest, most intimate 19. **ducat**: gold coin; a bet

And let me wring your heart.

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

In noise so rude against me?

HAMLET Look here upon th's picture,° and on this,  
The counterfeit° presentment of two brothers.

35 See what a grace° was seated on this brow;  
Hyperion's° curls; the front° of Jove himself;

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.

40 Here is your husband, like a mildewed ear°  
Blasting° his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?

You cannot call it love; for at your age

The heyday° in the blood is tame, it's humble,

And waits upon the judgment.° What devil was't

45 That thus hath cozened° you at hoodman-blind?°  
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

50 As will not leave their tinct.°

HAMLET Nay, but to live

In the rank sweat of an enseamed° bed,

Stewed° in corruption, honeying° and making love

Over the nasty sty!

55 QUEEN GERTRUDE O, speak to me no more!

These words like daggers enter in mine ears.

HAMLET A murderer and a villain!

QUEEN GERTRUDE No more!

Enter the Ghost in his nightgown.

32. **this picture**: a small portrait of Hamlet's father **this**: a small portrait of Claudius

33. **counterfeit**: imitation 34. **grace**: gracefulness, favor 35. **Hyperion's**: the sun

god's **front**: forehead 37. **set his seal**: set his insignia 40. **mildewed ear**:

rotten piece of grain 41. **Blasting**: Infesting 43. **heyday**: sexual excitement

44. **the judgment**: the last judgment of God 45. **cozened**: cheated **hoodman-blind**:

blindman's bluff 49. **grained**: engrained 50. **tinct**: tincture, color

52. **enseamed**: greasy 53. **Stewed**: slowly boiled **honeying**: tickling, delighting

60 HAMLET A king of shreds and patches!°-  
 Save me and hover o'er me with your wings,  
 You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE Alas, he's mad!  
 HAMLET Do you not come your tardy son to chide?°  
 65 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.  
 Speak to her, Hamlet.  
 70 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 th' encorporal° air do hold discourse?  
 HAMLET Look you how pale he glares!  
 75 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.  
 80 HAMLET Why, look you there! Look how it steals away!  
 My father, in his habit as he lived!  
*Exit GHOST.*  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE This is the very coinage° of your brain.  
 This bodiless° creation ecstasy°  
 Is very cunning in.  
 85 HAMLET Ecstasy?  
 My pulse as yours doth temperately° keep time  
 And makes as healthful music. It is not madness  
 That I have uttered. Mother, for love of grace,  
 Lay not that flattering unction° to your soul  
 90 That not your trespass° but my madness speaks.  
 Confess yourself to heaven;  
 Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;  
 And do not spread the compost on the weeds°

60. **shreds and patches**: motley, like a court jester sharpen  
 72. **vacancy**: nothingness  
 73. **encorporal**: immaterial  
 82. **coinage**: creation  
 83. **bodiless**: unsubstantial  
 86. **temperately**: with regular time  
 89. **unction**: balm  
 90. **trespass**: transgression  
 93. **do not ... weeds**: don't fertilize your vice and make it grow worse  
 64. **chide**: scold  
 66. **whet**: sharpen

To make them ranker.°  
 95 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 my uncle's bed.  
 Assume a virtue, if you have it not.  
 100 And when you are desirous to be blest,  
 I'll blessing beg of you.- For this same lord,  
 I do repent; but heaven hath pleased it so,  
 To punish me with this, and this with me,  
 That I must be their scourge and minister.°  
 105 I must be cruel, only to be kind;  
 Thus bad begins, and worse° remains behind.  
 One word more, good lady.  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE What shall I do?  
 HAMLET Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:  
 110 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,  
 Make you to ravel° all this matter out,  
 That I essentially am not in madness,  
 115 But mad in craft.° 'Twere good you let him know.  
 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?  
 120 QUEEN GERTRUDE I had forgot! 'Tis so concluded on.  
 HAMLET There's letters sealed;° and my two schoolfellows,  
 Whom I will trust as I will adders° fanged,  
 They marshal me to knavery.° Let it work;  
 For 'tis the sport° to have the engineer  
 125 Hoist with his own petar;° and 't shall go hard  
 But I will delve one yard below their mines

94. **ranker**: grosser  
 95. **cleft**: divided  
 104. **scourge and minister**: divine chastiser and agent  
 106. **worse**: the worst, i.e. Gertrude's sin  
 110. **bloat**: fat  
 111. **Pinch wanton**: dally with pinches?; pinch the cheeks to have a blushing appearance, and thereby look wanton?  
 112. **reechy**: filthy  
 113. **ravel**: unravel, describe  
 115. **craft**: by design  
 121. **sealed**: stamped and ready for sending  
 122. **adders**: snakes  
 123. **knavery**: foolishness  
 124. **sport**: game  
 124-25. **engineer ... petar**: military engineer blown up by his own bomb

And blow them at the moon.<sup>o</sup>  
 I'll lug the guts<sup>o</sup> into the neighbour<sup>o</sup> room.-  
 Mother, good night.-  
 130 Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.  
 Good night, mother.

*Exit HAMLET, tugging in POLONIUS. Then exit the QUEEN.*

## 4. ACT IV.

### 4.1. Elsinore. A room in the Castle.

*Enter KING and QUEEN.*

QUEEN GERTRUDE Ah, mine own 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<sup>o</sup>

5 Which is the mightier. In his lawless<sup>o</sup> fit  
 Behind the arras hearing something stir,  
 Whips out his rapier, cries 'A rat, a rat!'  
 And in this brainish<sup>o</sup> apprehension<sup>o</sup> kills  
 The unseen good old man.

KING CLAUDIUS It had been so with us, had we been there.

10 Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answered?<sup>o</sup>  
 Where is he gone?

QUEEN GERTRUDE To draw apart the body he hath killed.

KING CLAUDIUS We will ship him hence; and this vile deed

15 We must with all our majesty and skill  
 Both countenance<sup>o</sup> and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

Friends both, go join you with some further aid.<sup>o</sup>

Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain.

Go seek him out. I pray you haste in this.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

Come, Gertrude- O, come away!

20 My soul is full of discord<sup>o</sup> and dismay. *Exeunt.*

126-27. **I will delve ... moon:** during siege warfare, opposing engineers would try to outwit each other by tunneling beneath each other and exploding the opponent's tunnel 128.

**guts:** Polonius's body **neighbour:** adjoining 3. **contend:** argue, fight about 4. **lawless:** wild 7. **brainish apprehension:** brainsickness 10. **answered:** responded to 15. **countenance:** explain 16. **aid:** helpers 20. **discord:** confusion

### 4.2. Elsinore. A passage in the Castle.

*Enter HAMLET.*

ROSENCRANTZ &

GUILDENSTERN [*Within*] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

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

GUILDENSTERN Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence

And bear it to the chapel.

5 HAMLET Do not believe it.

ROSENCRANTZ Believe what?

HAMLET That I can keep your counsel,<sup>o</sup> and not mine own.

Besides, to be demanded of a sponge,<sup>o</sup> what replication<sup>o</sup>  
 should be made by the son of a king?

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

HAMLET Ay, sir; that soaks up the King's countenance,<sup>o</sup> his  
 rewards, his authorities. He keeps them, like an ape, in the corner  
 of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed.

ROSENCRANTZ I understand you not, my lord.

15 HAMLET I am glad of it. A knavish<sup>o</sup> speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

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

HAMLET Bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.<sup>o</sup> *Exeunt.*

### 4.3. Elsinore. A room in the Castle.

*Enter KING.*

KING CLAUDIUS How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!

Yet must not we put the strong law on him.

He's loved of the distracted<sup>o</sup> multitude.

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ.*

How now? What hath befall'n?

5 ROSENCRANTZ Where the dead body is bestowed,<sup>o</sup> my lord,

We cannot get from him.

KING CLAUDIUS But where is he? Bring him before us.

7. **counsel:** advice, opinions 8. **sponge:** a servant who soaks up the king's favor

**replication:** reply 11. **countenance:** favor 15. **knavish:** foolish

19. **Hide fox ... after:** an invitation to play hide-and-seek 3. **distracted:** thoughtless

5. **bestowed:** hidden

ROSENCRANTZ Ho, Guildenstern! Bring in my lord.

*Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN with Attendants.*

KING CLAUDIUS Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

10 HAMLET At supper.

KING CLAUDIUS At supper? Where?

HAMLET Not where he eats, but where he is eaten. A certain  
convocation<sup>o</sup> of politic<sup>o</sup> worms are e'en<sup>o</sup> at him. Your fat king  
and your lean beggar is but variable<sup>o</sup> service- two  
15 dishes, but to one table. That's the end.

KING CLAUDIUS Where is Polonius?

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

KING CLAUDIUS [*To Attendants.*] Go seek him there.

HAMLET He will stay till you come.

*Exeunt Attendants.*

KING CLAUDIUS Hamlet, this deed must send thee hence  
With fiery quickness. Therefore prepare thyself.

25 The bark<sup>o</sup> is ready and the wind at help,  
Th' associates tend,<sup>o</sup> and everything is bent  
For England.

HAMLET Good. Farewell, dear mother.

KING CLAUDIUS Thy loving father, Hamlet.

30 HAMLET My mother! Father and mother is man and wife; man and  
wife is one flesh;<sup>o</sup> and so, my mother. Come, for England! *Exit.*

KING CLAUDIUS Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed  
aboard.<sup>o</sup>

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,<sup>o</sup>  
thou mayst not coldly set

35 Our sovereign process,<sup>o</sup> which imports at full<sup>o</sup>

The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England. *Exit.*

13. **convocation**: assembly    **politic**: cunning    14. **variable**: various    20. **nose**: smell  
25. **bark**: ship    26. **Th'associates tend**: The servants await    31. **man and ... flesh**: see  
Genesis 2: 24    32. **tempt him ... aboard**: quickly urge him aboard ship    33. **aught**:  
anything    34-35. **coldly set ... process**: disdain my royal command  
35. **imports at full**: details completely

#### 4.4. A Fortinbras scene—completely abridged

#### 4.5. Elsinore. A room in the Castle.

*Enter HORATIO, QUEEN, and a GENTLEMAN.*

QUEEN GERTRUDE I will not speak with her.

GENTLEMAN. Her mood will needs be pitied.

QUEEN GERTRUDE What would she have?

GENTLEMAN. She speaks much of her father; speaks things in  
doubt,<sup>o</sup>

5 That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,  
Yet the unshaped use<sup>o</sup> of it doth move  
The hearers to collection.<sup>o</sup>

HORATIO 'Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew<sup>o</sup>  
Dangerous conjectures<sup>o</sup> in ill-breeding minds.<sup>o</sup>

10 QUEEN GERTRUDE Let her come in.

*Exit GENTLEMAN.*

[*Aside*] Each toy seems Prologue to some great amiss.<sup>o</sup>

*Enter Ophelia distracted.*

OPHELIA Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN GERTRUDE How now, Ophelia?

OPHELIA [*Sings*]

15 How should I your true-love know  
From another one?  
By his cockle bat and' staff<sup>o</sup>  
And his sandal shoon.<sup>o</sup>

QUEEN GERTRUDE Alas, sweet lady, what imports<sup>o</sup> this song?

20 OPHELIA Say you? Nay, pray you mark.<sup>o</sup>

[*Sings*] He is dead and gone, lady,

He is dead and gone;

At his head a grass-green turf,<sup>o</sup>

At his heels a stone.<sup>o</sup>

Pray you mark.

4. **in doubt**: obscurely    6. **unshaped use**: incoherence    7. **collection**: piecing together  
the meaning    8. **strew**: spread    9. **conjectures in ... minds**: thoughts in  
impressionable minds that might then do evil    11. **amiss**: problem    16. **cockle bat**  
**and staff**: an ornament that shows a pilgrim has visited St. James's shrine at Compostela in  
Spain.    17. **sandal shoon**: shoes    18. **imports**: means    19. **mark**: listen  
22. **turf**: sod to cover the grave    23. **stone**: gravestone

25 [Sings] White his shroud as the mountain snow-  
*Enter KING.*  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE Alas, look here, my lord!  
 KING CLAUDIUS How do you, pretty lady?  
 OPHELIA Well, God dild you!° They say the owl was a baker's  
 daughter.°  
 30 KING CLAUDIUS Conceit° upon her father.  
 OPHELIA Pray let's have no words of this; but when they ask, you  
 what it means, say you this:  
 [Sings] To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,  
 All in the morning bedtime,  
 35 And I a maid at your window,  
 To be your Valentine.°  
 Then up he rose and donned his clo'es°  
 And dupped° the chamber door,  
 Let in the maid, that out a maid  
 40 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!  
 45 Young men will do't° if they come to't°  
 By Cock, they are to blame.  
 Quoth she, 'Before you tumbled me,°  
 You promised me to wed.'  
 He answers:  
 50 'So would I 'a° done, by yonder sun,  
 An thou hadst not come to my bed.'  
 KING CLAUDIUS How long hath she been thus?  
 OPHELIA Good night, ladies. Good night, sweet  
 ladies. Good night, good night. *Exit.*

28. **dild you**: yield you [a reward for asking] 28-29. **the owl ... daughter**: a folk tale in which a disguised Christ visits a bakery asking for bread; the baker prepares a large loaf, but he daughter rebukes him; for her stinginess, she's transformed to an owl. Reflects Ophelia's guilt about being stingy with her affection to Hamlet. 30. **Conceit**: imagination 36. **Valentine**: sweetheart; betrothed 37. **clo'es**: clothes 38. **dupped**: opened 43. **Gis**: Jesus 44. **Alack**: interjection of sorrow, regret 45. **do't**: do it; i.e. take a maid's virginity **come to't**: have opportunity 47. **tumbled me**: rolled with me in bed 50 **'a'**: have

55 KING CLAUDIUS Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray  
 you.  
*Exit HORATIO.*  
 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,°  
 60 For good Polonius' death, and we have done but greenly  
 In hugger-mugger to inter him.°  
 Last, and as much containing as all these,  
 Her brother is in secret come from France..  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE Alack, what noise is this?  
 65 KING CLAUDIUS Where are my Switzers?° Let them guard the  
 door.  
*Enter a MESSENGER.*  
 MESSENGER Save Yourself, my lord:  
 Young Laertes, in a riotous head,°  
 O'erbears° Your offices.°  
 A noise within.  
 70 QUEEN GERTRUDE O, this is counter,° you false Danish dogs!  
 KING CLAUDIUS The doors are broke.  
*Enter Laertes with others.*  
 LAERTES Where is this king?- Sirs, staid you all without.  
 Keep the door. Give me my father!  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE Calmly, good Laertes.  
 75 LAERTES That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard.°  
 KING CLAUDIUS What is the cause, Laertes,  
 That thy rebellion looks so giantlike?°  
 Why thou art thus incensed.°  
 LAERTES Where is my father?  
 80 KING CLAUDIUS Dead.  
 LAERTES How came he dead? I'll not be juggled° with:  
 I'll be revenged most thoroughly° for my father.

56-57. **single spies ... battalions**: troubles don't come as lone scouts but as a numerous army  
 58. **violent author**: Hamlet's violence is the cause 59. **just remove**: proper removal  
**muddied**: confused 60-61. **greenly ... inter him**: hastily and secretly bury him  
 65. **Switzers**: Swiss guards 67. **riotous head**: leading a riot 68. **O'erbears**:  
 overwhelms **offices**: guards 70. **counter**: contrary, unjust 76. **bastard**: a child  
 not born of my father 77. **giantlike**: monstrous 78. **incensed**: enraged 81.  
**juggled**: fooled 82. **thoroughly**: thoroughly



KING CLAUDIUS Who shall stay you?  
 LAERTES My will, not all the world!  
 85 KING CLAUDIUS Is't writ<sup>o</sup> in your revenge  
 That sweepstake<sup>o</sup> you will draw both<sup>o</sup> friend and foe?  
 LAERTES None but his enemies.  
 To his good friends thus wide<sup>o</sup> I'll ope<sup>o</sup> my arms  
 And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,  
 90 Repast them with my blood.<sup>o</sup>  
 KING CLAUDIUS Why, now you speak  
 Like a good child and a true gentleman.  
 That I am guiltless of your father's death,  
 It shall as level to your judgment pierce<sup>o</sup>  
 95 As day does to your eye.  
 DANES [*Within*] Let her come in.  
 LAERTES How now? What noise is that?  
*Enter OPHELIA.*  
 Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!  
 O heavens! is't possible a young maid's wits  
 Should be as mortal as an old man's life?  
 100 OPHELIA [*Sings*] They bore him barefaced<sup>o</sup> on the bier  
 (Hey non nony, nony, hey nony)  
 Fare you well, my dove!  
 LAERTES Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,  
 105 It could not move thus.  
 OPHELIA You must sing 'A-down a-down, and you call him  
 a-down-a.'  
 It is the false steward,<sup>o</sup> that stole his master's daughter.  
 LAERTES This nothing's more than matter.  
 110 OPHELIA There's rosemary,<sup>o</sup> that's for remembrance. Pray you,  
 love, remember. And there is pansies,<sup>o</sup> that's for thoughts.  
 There's fennel<sup>o</sup> for you, and columbines.<sup>o</sup> There's rue<sup>o</sup> for you,

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85. **Is't writ**: Is it prescribed      86. **sweepstake**: indiscriminately      **draw both**: take from both      88. **thus wide**: Laertes may spread his arms wide at this moment      **ope**: open  
 89. **life-rend'ring ... blood**: pelicans supposedly fed their young on their own blood  
 94. **level ... pierce**: directly appeal to your reason      101. **barefaced**: shroudless  
 108. **steward**: servant; part of an unknown folk tale      110. **rosemary**: first of many distributed flowers, each symbolically significant; in this case, remembrance  
 111. **pansies**: thoughtfulness, contemplation      112. **fennel**: marital infidelity  
**columbines**: flattery, insincerity

and here's some for me. We may call it herb of grace o'  
 Sundays.<sup>o</sup> I would give you some  
 115 violets,<sup>o</sup> but they withered all when my father died. They say he  
 made a good end.  
 [*Sings*]  
 He never will come again.  
 His beard was as white as snow,  
 All flaxen<sup>o</sup> was his poll.  
 120 He is gone, he is gone,  
 And we cast away moan.  
 I pray God. God b' wi' you. *Exit.*  
 LAERTES Do you see this, O God?  
 KING CLAUDIUS If by direct or by collateral<sup>o</sup> hand  
 125 You find us touched,<sup>o</sup> we will our kingdom give,  
 Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,  
 To you in satisfaction;<sup>o</sup> but if not,  
 Be you content to lend your patience to us.  
 LAERTES Let this be so.  
 130 His means of death, his obscure<sup>o</sup> funeral-  
 No noble rite nor formal ostentation,-<sup>o</sup>  
 Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,  
 That I must call't in question.  
 KING CLAUDIUS So you shall;  
 135 And where th' offence is let the great axe<sup>o</sup> fall. *Exeunt.*

#### 4.6. Elsinore. Another room in the Castle.

*Enter HORATIO with an ATTENDANT.*  
 HORATIO What are they that would speak with me?  
 ATTENDANT Seafaring men, sir. They say they have letters for  
 you.  
 HORATIO Let them come in.  
*Exit ATTENDANT.*  
*Enter Sailors.*  
 5 FIRST SAILOR God bless you, sir.

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113. **rue**: repentance and sorrow      114. **herb ... Sundays**: another name for rue  
 115. **violets**: faithfulness      119. **flaxen**: pale yellow      124. **collateral**: associated  
 125. **touched**: implicated      127. **satisfaction**: compensation      130. **obscure**: muddled  
 131. **noble rite ... ostentation**: rites of grief      135. **great axe**: the king's condemnation

HORATIO Let him bless thee too.

FIRST SAILOR 'A shall,<sup>o</sup> sir, an't<sup>o</sup> please him. There's a letter for you, sir,- it comes from th' ambassador that was bound for England- if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

HORATIO [*reads the letter*] 'Horatio, Let the King have the letters I have sent, and repair<sup>o</sup> thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst<sup>o</sup> fly death. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold

15 their course for England. Of them I have much to tell thee.

Farewell. 'He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.'

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

And do't the speedier that you may direct me<sup>o</sup>

To him from whom you brought them. *Exeunt.*

#### 4.7. Elsinore. Another room in the Castle.

*Enter KING and LAERTES.*

KING CLAUDIUS Now must your conscience my acquittance<sup>o</sup> seal,  
Sith<sup>o</sup> you have heard, and with a knowing<sup>o</sup> ear,  
That he which hath your noble father slain  
Pursued my life.

5 LAERTES It well appears. And so have I a noble father lost;  
A sister driven into desp'rate terms.<sup>o</sup>

But my revenge will come.

*Enter a MESSENGER with letters.*

KING CLAUDIUS How now? What news?

10 MESSENGER Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:

This to your Majesty; this to the Queen.

KING CLAUDIUS From Hamlet? Who brought them?

MESSENGER Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not.

KING CLAUDIUS Laertes, you shall hear them. Leave us.

*Exit Messenger.*

*Reads*

15 'High and Mighty,-You shall know I am set naked<sup>o</sup> on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes;

when I shall (first asking your pardon thereunto) recount<sup>o</sup> the occasion of my sudden and more strange<sup>o</sup> return.

20 'HAMLET.'

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

Can you advise me?

LAERTES I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come!

It warms the very sickness<sup>o</sup> in my heart.

25 KING CLAUDIUS If it be so, Laertes

Will you be ruled<sup>o</sup> by me?

LAERTES Ay my lord,

So you will not o'errule<sup>o</sup> me to a peace.

KING CLAUDIUS To thine own peace. If he be now returned

30 I will work him<sup>o</sup>

To exploit<sup>o</sup> now ripe in my device,

Under the which he shall not choose but fall.

LAERTES My lord, I will be ruled.

KING CLAUDIUS It falls right.<sup>o</sup>

35 You have been talked of since your travel<sup>o</sup> much,  
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality<sup>o</sup>  
Wherein they say you shine. Your sum of parts<sup>o</sup>  
Did not together pluck such envy<sup>o</sup> from him  
As did that one.

40 LAERTES What part is that, my lord?

KING CLAUDIUS Two months since

Here was a gentleman of Normandy,

And gave you such a masterly report

For art and exercise in your defence,<sup>o</sup>

45 And for your rapier<sup>o</sup> most especially,

That he cried out 'twould be a sight indeed

If one could match you. Sir, this report of his

Did Hamlet so envenom<sup>o</sup> with his envy

That he could nothing do but wish and beg

50 Your sudden coming o'er to play with you.

LAERTES What out of this,<sup>o</sup> my lord?

7. 'A shall: He shall      an't: if it      12. repair: come      13. as though wouldst: as if you would  
18. speedier ... me: faster so that you can lead me      1. acquittance: innocence  
2. Sith: since      knowing: thoughtful      6. desp'rate terms: insanity  
15. naked: destitute

18. recount: tell      strange: bizarre      24. very sickness: extreme hatred      26. ruled: directed  
28. o'errule: overrule      30. work him: conduct him      31. exploit: an action  
34. falls right: happens correctly      35. travel: overseas voyages      36. quality: attribute, hobby  
37. sum of parts: abilities      38. pluck such envy: encourage envy  
44. art ... defence: swordplay      45. rapier: long, heavy, double-edged sword      48. envenom: poison  
51. out of this: What does this mean

KING CLAUDIUS What would you undertake  
 To show yourself your father's son in deed  
 More than in words?

55 LAERTES To cut his throat i' th' church!

KING CLAUDIUS No place indeed should murder sanctuarize;°  
 Revenge should have no bounds.° Will you do this?  
 Hamlet returned shall know you are come home.  
 We'll put on those shall praise your excellence

60 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,°  
 Will not peruse° the foils; so that with ease,  
 Or with a little shuffling, you may choose

65 A sword unbated,° and, in a pass of practice,  
 Requite° him for your father.

LAERTES I will do't!  
 And for that purpose I'll anoint° my sword.  
 I bought an unction° of a mountebank,°

70 So mortal° that, but dip a knife in it,  
 Where it draws blood no cataplasm° so rare,  
 Can save the thing from death.

KING CLAUDIUS This project  
 Should have a back or second,° that might hold

75 If this did blast in proof.°  
 When in your motion° you are hot and dry-  
 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,°

80 Our purpose may hold there.- But stay, what noise,  
*Enter QUEEN.*  
 How now, sweet queen?

QUEEN GERTRUDE One woe doth tread upon another's heel,

So fast they follow.° Your sister's drowned, Laertes.

LAERTES Drowned! O, where?

85 QUEEN GERTRUDE There is a willow grows aslant° a brook.  
 There with fantastic garlands did she come  
 Of crowsflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,  
 That our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.°  
 There on the pendant° boughs her coronet° weeds

90 Clamb'ring° to hang, an envious sliver° broke,  
 When down her weedy° trophies° and herself  
 Fell in the weeping° brook. Her clothes spread wide  
 And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up;  
 Which time she chaunted° snatches of old tunes,

95 As one incapable of her own distress,°  
 but long it could not be  
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,°  
 Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay°  
 To muddy death.

100 LAERTES Alas, then she is drowned?

QUEEN GERTRUDE Drowned, drowned.

LAERTES Too much of water° hast thou, poor Ophelia,  
 And therefore I forbid my tears; but yet  
 The woman will be out.° Adieu, my lord.

105 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 I  
 Now fear I this will give it start again;°

110 Therefore let's follow. *Exeunt.*

56. **sanctuarize**: Murder should nowhere be protected by sanctuary laws 57. **bounds**: limits 60. **varnish**: gloss 61. **in fine**: in conclusion 62. **remiss**: careless  
 63. **peruse**: inspect 65. **unbated**: unblunted (practice foils had blunted tips)  
 66. **requite**: retaliate 68. **anoint**: smear with liquid 69. **unction**: ointment  
**mountebank**: person who sells quack medicines 70. **mortal**: deadly  
 71. **cataplasm**: healing poultice 74. **back or second**: a secondary plan 75. **blast in proof**: blow up when we try to prove if it works 76. **motion**: fencing  
 78. **chalice**: cup **nonce**: occasion 79. **stuck**: thrust

82-83. **One woe ... follow**: Troubles come on after the other 85. **aslant**: across  
 86-88. **There with ... call them**: Ophelia came with garlands made of wildflowers (some chaste maids calling long purples by a symbolic name) 89. **pendant**: hanging  
**coronet**: crown 90. **Clamb'ring**: climbing **envious sliver**: malicious twig (small branch) 91. **weedy trophies**: flower garlands 92. **weeping**: flowing with water (also a personification) 94. **chaunted**: sang 95. **incapable ... distress**: unaware of her own danger 97. **drink**: soaked water 98. **lay**: song 102. **water**: pun on "tears"  
 104. **woman will be out**: feminine attribute, crying, will still happen  
 106. **douts**: extinguishes 109. **give it start again**: start Laertes' rage again

## 5. ACT V.

### 5.1. Elsinore. A churchyard.

*Enter two CLOWNS, with spades and pickaxes.*

FIRST CLOWN Is she to be buried in Christian burial<sup>1</sup> when she willfully seeks her own salvation?<sup>2</sup> How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defense?

SECOND CLOWN Why, 'tis found so.

FIRST CLOWN Here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly,<sup>3</sup> it argues an act; and an act hath three branches-it is to act, to do, and to perform; argal,<sup>4</sup> she drowned herself wittingly.

SECOND CLOWN Nay, but hear you, Goodman Delver!<sup>5</sup>

FIRST CLOWN Give me leave. Here lies the water; good. Here stands the man; good. If the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he nill he,<sup>6</sup> he goes- mark you that. But if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself. Argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

SECOND CLOWN Will you ha' the truth an't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

FIRST CLOWN Why, there thou say'st! Come, my spade! There is no ancient<sup>7</sup> gentlemen but gard'ners, ditchers, and grave-makers. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason,<sup>8</sup> the shipwright,<sup>9</sup> or the carpenter?

SECOND CLOWN Marry, now I can tell! Mass, I cannot tell.

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO afar off.*

FIRST CLOWN Cudgel<sup>10</sup> thy brains no more about it; and when you are asked this question next, say 'a grave-maker. 'The houses he makes lasts till doomsday.

*Exit SECOND CLOWN.*

1. **Christian burial**: burial in holy ground with church rituals, forbidden to suicides, who committed a mortal sin    2. **she ... salvation**: mistake "for damnation"?    4. **wittingly**: knowingly    6. **argal**: uneducated slurring of the Latin "ergo," i.e. "therefore"  
7. **Delver**: Digger    10. **will he nill he**: willy-nilly, whether he wants to or not  
19. **ancient**: old, and therefore respectable    21. **mason**: stoneworker    20. **shipwright**: ship builder    22. **Cudgel**: club

*CLOWN digs and sings.*

25 FIRST CLOWN In youth when I did love, did love,  
Methought<sup>26</sup> it was very sweet;  
But age with his stealing steps  
Hath clawed me in his clutch,  
And hath shipped me intil the land,  
30 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<sup>32</sup> it to the ground, as if 'twere Cain's<sup>33</sup> jawbone, that did the first murder!

HORATIO Ay, my lord.

35 FIRST CLOWN [*Sings*] A pickaxe and a spade, a spade,  
For and a shrouding<sup>36</sup> sheet;  
O, a Pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.<sup>38</sup>

*Throws up another skull.*

40 HAMLET There's another. Hum! I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?<sup>40</sup>

FIRST CLOWN Mine, sir.

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

FIRST CLOWN You lie out on it, sir, and therefore 'tis not yours. For my part, I do not lie in it, yet it is mine.

45 HAMLET What man dost thou dig it for?

FIRST CLOWN For no man, sir.

HAMLET What woman then?

FIRST CLOWN For none neither.

HAMLET Who is to be buried in't?

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

HAMLET How absolute<sup>52</sup> the knave is! How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

55 FIRST CLOWN Of all the days i' th' year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.<sup>55</sup> It was the very day that young Hamlet was born- he that is mad, and sent into England.

26. **Methought**: I thought    32. **knave jowls**: fool slams    **Cain's**: first son of Adam and Eve    36. **shrouding**: cloth or sheet used to wrap a corpse for burial    38. **meet**: appropriate    40. **sirrah**: archaic form of address used for inferiors    52. **absolute**: precise    55. **Fortinbras**: king of Norway

HAMLET Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?  
 FIRST CLOWN Why, because 'a° was mad. 'A shall recover his wits  
 60 there; or, if 'a do not, 'tis no great matter there. 'Twill not be seen  
 in him there. There the men are as mad as he.  
 HAMLET How long will a man lie i' th' earth ere° he rot?  
 FIRST CLOWN Faith, if 'a be not rotten before 'a die, I will last you  
 some eight year or nine year. Here's a skull now. This skull hath  
 65 lien you i' th' earth three-and-twenty years.  
 HAMLET Whose was it?  
 FIRST CLOWN A whoreson,° mad fellow's it was. Whose do you  
 think it was?  
 HAMLET Nay, I know not.  
 70 FIRST CLOWN This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the King's  
 jester.  
 HAMLET This? 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  
 75 now how abhorred° in my imagination it is! My gorge° rises at  
 it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft.  
 Where be your 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?°  
 80 HORATIO E'en so, my lord.  
 HAMLET To what base° uses we may return, Horatio! Why may  
 not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till  
 he find it stopping a bung-hole?°  
 HORATIO 'Twere to consider too curiously,° to consider so.  
 85 HAMLET But soft!° but soft! aside! Here comes the King-  
*Enter priests with a coffin in funeral procession,*  
 KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, *with Lords attendant.*  
 The Queen, the courtiers. Who is this they follow?  
 Couch° we awhile, and mark.  
*Retires with HORATIO.*  
 LAERTES What ceremony else?°

59. 'a: he 62. ere: before 67. whoreson: bastard, scoundrel 73. infinite jest:  
 immense humor 74. fancy: imagination borne: carried 75. abhorred: disgusting  
 gorge: stomach 77. gibes: taunts 79. gambols: skipping 78. wont: accustomed  
 roar: loud outburst of laughter 79. your own grinning: the grinning skull 81. base:  
 lowly 83. bung-hole: a hole in a cask 84. curiously: inquisitively 85. soft:  
 quiet 87. Couch: lay down 88. ceremony else: other burial ceremonies

FIRST PRIEST Her obsequies have been as far enlarged°  
 90 As we have warranty. Her death was doubtful;  
 And, but that great command o'ersways° the order,  
 She should in ground unsanctified° have lodged°  
 Till the last trumpet.  
 LAERTES Lay her i' th' earth;  
 95 And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
 May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish° priest,  
 A minist'ring° angel shall my sister be  
 When thou liest howling.°  
 HAMLET What, the fair Ophelia?  
 100 QUEEN GERTRUDE Sweets° to the sweet! Farewell.  
*Scatters flowers.*  
 I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;  
 I thought thy bride-bed to have decked,° sweet maid,  
 And not have strewed° thy grave.  
 LAERTES Hold off the earth° awhile,  
 105 Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.  
*Leaps in the grave.*  
 HAMLET [*comes forward*] What is he whose grief  
 Bears such an emphasis?° This is I,  
 Hamlet the Dane.  
*Leaps in after Laertes.*  
 LAERTES The devil take thy soul!  
*Grapples with him.*  
 110 HAMLET I prithee° take thy fingers from my throat;  
 For, though I am not splenitive° and rash,°  
 Yet have I in me something dangerous.  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE Hamlet, Hamlet!  
 ALL Gentlemen!  
*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the*  
*grave.*  
 115 HAMLET I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers  
 Could not (with all their quantity of love)

89. obsequies: funeral rites enlarged: extended 91. o'ersways: governs 92.  
 unsanctified: a burial site outside holy ground lodged: been buried 96. churlish:  
 common, vulgar 97. minist'ring: servant 98. howling: damned to hell 100.  
 Sweets: sweet smelling flower 102. decked: covered 103. strewed: scattered  
 flowers on 104. the earth: dirt spread on the grave 107. emphasis: intensity  
 110. prithee: pray thee 111. splenitive: full of spleen; irritable rash: hasty

Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE For love of God, forbear<sup>o</sup> him!  
 HAMLET 'Swords,<sup>o</sup> show me what thou't do.  
 120 Woo't<sup>o</sup> weep? woo't fight? woo't fast?<sup>o</sup> woo't tear thyself?  
 Woo't drink up esill?<sup>o</sup> eat a crocodile?  
 I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?  
 To outface me with leaping in her grave?  
 Be buried quick with her, and so will I.  
 125 QUEEN GERTRUDE This is mere madness.  
 HAMLET What is the reason that you use me thus?  
 I loved you ever.<sup>o</sup> But it is no matter.  
 Let Hercules<sup>o</sup> himself do what he may,  
 The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.<sup>o</sup> *Exit.*  
 130 KING CLAUDIUS I pray thee, good Horatio, wait<sup>o</sup> upon him.  
*Exit* HORATIO.  
 [To LAERTES] Strengthen your patience<sup>o</sup> in our last night's  
 speech.  
 We'll put the matter to the present push.-  
 Good Gertrude, set some watch<sup>o</sup> over your son.  
 An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;  
 135 Till then in patience our proceeding be. *Exeunt.*

## 5.2. Elsinore. A hall in the Castle.

*Enter* HAMLET and HORATIO.  
 HAMLET You do remember all the circumstance?<sup>o</sup>  
 HORATIO Remember it, my lord!  
 HAMLET Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting  
 That would not let me sleep.  
 5 Our indiscretion<sup>o</sup> sometime serves us well  
 When our deep plots do pall;<sup>o</sup> and that should learn us  
 There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
 Rough-hew<sup>o</sup> them how we will-

118. **forbear**: control 119. **'Swords**: By God's wounds 120. **Woo't**: Would you  
**fast**: abstain from food 121. **esil**: vinegar 127. **ever**: always 128. **Hercules**:  
 Greek mythical hero famous for his twelve labors 129. **The cat ... day**: normalcy will  
 return, and my day will come 130. **wait**: attend 131. **patience**: ability to wait for  
 revenge 133. **watch**: guard 1. **circumstance**: state of things 5. **indiscretion**:  
 unguarded, unreasoned action 6. **pall**: weaken 8. **Rough-hew**: roughly carve

HORATIO That is most certain.  
 10 HAMLET Up from my cabin,  
 My sea-gown scarfed<sup>o</sup> about me, in the dark  
 Groped I to find out them; had my desire,  
 Fingered their packet, and in fine<sup>o</sup> withdrew  
 To mine own room again; making so bold  
 15 (My fears forgetting manners) to unseal  
 Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio  
 (O royal knavery!), an exact<sup>o</sup> command,  
 Larded<sup>o</sup> with many several sorts of reasons,  
 That, on the supervise,<sup>o</sup> no leisure bated,<sup>o</sup>  
 20 My head should be struck off.  
 HORATIO Is't possible?  
 HAMLET Here's the commission; read it at more leisure.<sup>o</sup>  
 But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed?  
 HORATIO I beseech you.  
 25 HAMLET I sat me down;  
 Devised a new commission.  
 An earnest conjuration<sup>o</sup> from the King,  
 As England was his faithful tributary,  
 That, on the view and knowing of these contents,  
 30 Without debatement<sup>o</sup> further, more or less,  
 He should the bearers put to sudden death.  
 HORATIO So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.  
 HAMLET They are not near my conscience;<sup>o</sup> their defeat  
 Does by their own insinuation<sup>o</sup> grow.  
 35 HORATIO Why, what a king is this!  
 HAMLET He that hath killed my king, and whored my mother;  
 Popped<sup>o</sup> in between th' election and my hopes;  
 Thrown out his angle<sup>o</sup> for my proper life,  
 And with such coz'nage-<sup>o</sup> is't not perfect conscience  
 40 To quit him with this arm?  
 HORATIO It must be shortly known to him from England  
 What is the issue of the business there.  
 HAMLET It will be short; the interim<sup>o</sup> is mine.

11. **scarfed**: wrapped 13. **in fine**: finally 17. **exact**: precise 18. **Larded**: Filled up  
 19. **supervise**: reading 22. **leisure bated**: time wasted 22. **leisure**: when time allows  
 27. **conjuration**: commission 30. **debatement**: questioning 33. **conscience**: feelings  
 34. **insinuation**: creeping into the affections 37. **Popped**: inserted himself 38.  
**angle**: fish hook 39. **coz'nage**: trickery 43. **interim**: intervening time

- But I am very sorry, good Horatio,  
 45 That to Laertes I forgot<sup>o</sup> myself.  
 HORATIO Peace! Who comes here?  
*Enter young OSRIC, a courtier.*  
 OSRIC Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.  
 HAMLET I humbly thank you, sir.  
 OSRIC Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should  
 50 impart<sup>o</sup> a thing to you from his Majesty.  
 HAMLET I will receive it, sir, with all diligence<sup>o</sup> of spirit.  
 OSRIC Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes. Indeed, to speak  
 feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar<sup>o</sup> of gentry;<sup>o</sup> for you  
 shall find in him the continent<sup>o</sup> of what part<sup>o</sup> a gentleman would  
 55 see.  
 HAMLET Sir, his definement<sup>o</sup> suffers no perdition<sup>o</sup> in you; though,  
 I know, to divide him inventorially<sup>o</sup> would dozy<sup>o</sup> th' arithmetic  
 of memory.  
 OSRIC Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.  
 60 HAMLET The concernancy,<sup>o</sup> sir? Why do we wrap the gentleman in  
 our more rawer<sup>o</sup> breath?  
 OSRIC Sir?  
 HAMLET What imports<sup>o</sup> the nomination<sup>o</sup> of this gentleman?  
 OSRIC You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is-  
 65 HAMLET I dare not confess that, lest<sup>o</sup> I should compare with him in  
 excellence; but to know a man well were to know himself.  
 OSRIC I mean, sir, for his weapon.  
 HAMLET What's his weapon?  
 OSRIC Rapier and dagger.  
 70 HAMLET That's two of his weapons- but well.  
 OSRIC The King, sir, hath laid<sup>o</sup> that, in a dozen passes<sup>o</sup> 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<sup>o</sup> the answer.

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45. **forgot**: neglected    50. **impart**: deliver    51. **diligence**: attention    53. **card or**  
**calendar**: map and directory    53. **gentry**: gentlemanly behavior    54. **continent**:  
embodiment    **part**: attributes    56. **definement**: definition    **perdition**: loss  
57. **inventorially**: bit by bit    **dozy**: dizzy    60. **concernancy**: relevance    61.  
**rawer**: less refined    63. **imports**: means    **nomination**: naming    65. **lest**: for fear  
that    71. **laid**: bet    **passes**: rounds    74. **vouchsafe**: acknowledge

- 75 HAMLET Sir, I will walk here in the hall. If it please his Majesty, I  
will win for him if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame  
and the odd hits.  
OSRIC I commend my duty to your lordship.  
HAMLET Yours, yours.  
*Exit OSRIC.*  
*Enter a LORD.*  
80 LORD My lord, his Majesty sends to know if your pleasure hold to  
play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.  
HAMLET I am constant<sup>o</sup> to my purposes; they follow the  
King's pleasure.  
LORD The King and Queen and all are coming down.  
*Exit LORD.*  
85 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<sup>o</sup> all's here about my heart. But it is no  
matter.  
90 HORATIO If your mind dislike anything, obey it. I will forestall<sup>o</sup>  
their repair hither and say you are not fit.  
HAMLET Not a whit,<sup>o</sup> we defy augury;<sup>o</sup> 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  
95 come: the readiness<sup>o</sup> is all.  
*Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, OSRIC, and Lords,*  
*with other Attendants with foils and gauntlets. A*  
*table and flagons of wine on it.*  
KING CLAUDIUS Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from  
me.  
*The KING puts LAERTES' hand into HAMLET'S.*  
HAMLET Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong;  
But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.  
What I have done  
100 That might your nature, honor, and exception<sup>o</sup>  
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.  
Let my disclaiming<sup>o</sup> from a purposed<sup>o</sup> evil

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82. **constant**: resolute    88. **ill**: unsettled    90. **forestall**: hold off    92. **whit**: very  
small portion    **augury**: fortune telling    95. **readiness**: preparedness    100.  
**exception**: objections    102. **disclaiming**: repudiation    **purposed**: intended

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts  
 That I have shot my arrow o'er the house  
 105 And hurt my brother.  
 LAERTES I am satisfied in nature. But in my terms of honour  
 I stand aloof,<sup>o</sup> and will no reconciliation<sup>o</sup>  
 Till I have a voice and precedent<sup>o</sup> of peace  
 To keep my name ungor'd.<sup>o</sup> But till that time  
 110 I do receive your offered love like love.  
 HAMLET I embrace it freely,  
 And will this brother's wager frankly<sup>o</sup> play.  
 Give us the foils.<sup>o</sup> Come on.  
 LAERTES Come, one for me.  
 115 KING CLAUDIUS Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,  
 You know the wager?  
 HAMLET Very well, my lord.  
 Your Grace has laid the odds o' th' weaker side.  
 KING CLAUDIUS I do not fear it, I have seen you both.  
 LAERTES This is too heavy; let me see another.  
 120 HAMLET This likes me well. These foils have all a length?  
 Prepare to play.  
 OSRIC Ay, my good lord.  
 KING CLAUDIUS Set me the stoups<sup>o</sup> of wine upon that table.  
 If Hamlet give the first or second hit,  
 125 Let all the battlements<sup>o</sup> their ordnance<sup>o</sup> fire;  
 The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath,  
 And in the cup an union<sup>o</sup> shall he throw  
 Richer than that which four successive kings  
 In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;  
 130 And you the judges, bear a wary eye.  
 HAMLET Come on, sir.  
 LAERTES Come, my lord.  
*They play.*  
 HAMLET One.  
 LAERTES No.  
 HAMLET Judgment!  
 OSRIC A hit, a very palpable<sup>o</sup> hit.

107. **aloof**: detached      **reconciliation**: reconciliation      108. **precedent**: authoritative  
 judgment      109. **ungor'd**: reputable      112. **frankly**: unreservedly      113. **foils**: fencing  
 swords      120. **all a length**: all the proper length      123. **stoups**: jars      125. **battlements**:  
 castle walls      **ordnance**: cannons      127. **union**: large pearl      132. **palpable**: clear

LAERTES Well, again!  
 KING CLAUDIUS Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;  
 Here's to thy health.  
*Drum; trumpets sound; a piece goes off within.*  
 Give him the cup.  
 135 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't.  
 KING CLAUDIUS Our son shall win.  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE Here, Hamlet, take my napkin,<sup>o</sup> rub thy brows.  
 140 The Queen carouses<sup>o</sup> to thy fortune, Hamlet.  
 HAMLET Good madam!  
 KING CLAUDIUS Gertrude, do not drink.  
 QUEEN GERTRUDE I will, my lord; I pray you pardon me.  
*Drinks.*  
 KING CLAUDIUS [*aside*] It is the poisoned cup; it is too late.  
 HAMLET I dare not drink yet, madam; by-and-by.  
 145 QUEEN GERTRUDE Come, let me wipe thy face.  
 HAMLET Come for the third, Laertes! You but dally.  
 LAERTES Say you so? Come on.  
*Play.*  
 OSRIC Nothing neither way.  
 LAERTES Have at you now!  
 LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then in scuffling, they  
 change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES.  
 150 KING CLAUDIUS Part them! They are incensed.<sup>o</sup>  
 HAMLET Nay come! again!  
*The QUEEN falls.*  
 OSRIC Look to the Queen there, ho!  
 HORATIO They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?  
 OSRIC How is't, Laertes?  
 155 LAERTES I am justly killed with mine own treachery.  
 HAMLET How does the Queen?  
 KING CLAUDIUS She sounds<sup>o</sup> to see them bleed.

139. **napkin**: handkerchief      140. **carouses**: drinks      150. **incensed**: enraged  
 157. **sounds**: swoons, faints



QUEEN GERTRUDE No, no! the drink, the drink! O my dear  
Hamlet!  
The drink, the drink! I am poisoned. [*Dies.*]  
160 HAMLET O villainy! Ho! let the door be locked.  
Treachery! Seek it out.  
LAERTES *falls.*  
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.  
165 The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,  
Unbated° and envenomed.° The foul practice  
Hath turned itself on me. Lo, here I lie,  
Never to rise again. Thy mother's poisoned.  
I can no more. The King, the King's to blame.  
170 HAMLET The point envenomed too?  
Then, venom, to thy work.  
*Hurts the KING.*  
ALL Treason! treason!  
KING CLAUDIUS O, yet defend me, friends! I am but hurt.  
HAMLET Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane,  
175 Drink off this potion! Is thy union here?  
Follow my mother.  
*King dies.*  
LAERTES He is justly served.  
It is a poison tempered by himself.  
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.  
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,  
180 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,  
185 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 liv'st; report me and my cause aright.

166. **unbated**: not blunted      **envenomed**: poisoned      182. **Wretched**: miserable  
185. **fell sergeant**: fearsome officer

HORATIO Never believe it.  
190 I am more an antique Roman° than a Dane.  
Here's yet some liquor left.  
HAMLET As th'art a man,  
Give me the cup. Let go! By heaven, I'll ha't.  
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,  
195 Absent° thee from felicity° awhile,  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,  
To tell my story. O, I die, Horatio!  
The potent poison quite o'ercrows° my spirit.  
I cannot live to hear the news from England,  
200 The rest is silence.  
*Dies.*  
HORATIO Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!  
What is it you will see?  
Give order that these bodies  
205 High on a stage° be placed to the view;  
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world  
How these things came about. So shall you hear  
Of carnal,° bloody and unnatural acts;  
Of accidental judgments, casual° slaughters;  
210 Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause;°  
And, in this upshot,° purposes mistook  
Fallen on th' inventors' heads.°  
Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this  
Becomes the field° but here shows much amiss.  
215 Go, bid the soldiers shoot.  
*Exeunt marching; after the which a peal of ordnance  
are shot off.*

THE END

190. **antique Roman**: Ancient Roman servants would preserve their honor by dying alongside their master.      195. **Absent**: Hold off      **felicity**: friendship (which would make you follow me)      198. **o'ercrows**: overwhelms      205. **stage**: platform  
208. **carnal**: mortal      209. **casual**: chance      210. **forced cause**: involuntary causes  
211. **upshot**: result      212. **Fall'n ... heads**: misdeeds fell on their own creators  
214. **Becomes the field**: is more suitable to a battlefield