
***THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET, PRINCE
OF DENMARK (1604)***



by William Shakespeare

Styled by LimpidSoft

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John Redmond Sydney, Australia

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Claudius, King of Denmark.
Marcellus, Officer.
Hamlet, son to the former, and nephew to the present king.
Polonius, Lord Chamberlain.
Horatio, friend to Hamlet.
Laertes, son to Polonius.
Voltemand, courtier.
Cornelius, courtier.
Rosencrantz, courtier.
Guildenstern, courtier.
Osric, courtier.
A Gentleman, courtier.
A Priest.
Marcellus, officer.
Bernardo, officer.
Francisco, a soldier
Reynaldo, servant to Polonius.
Players.
Two Clowns, gravediggers.
Fortinbras, Prince of Norway.
A Norwegian Captain.
English Ambassadors.
Getrude, Queen of Denmark, mother to Hamlet.
Ophelia, daughter to Polonius.
Ghost of Hamlet's Father.
Lords, ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, Attendants.

ACT I

SCENE.— ELSINORE

SCENE I

Elsinore. A platform before the Castle Enter two Sentinels. first Francisco, who paces up and down at his post; then Bernardo, who approaches him

BER Who's there

FRAN Nay, answer me

BER Long live the King!

FRAN Bernardo?

BER He

FRAN You come most carefully upon your hour

BER 'Tis now struck twelve

FRAN For this relief much thanks
And I am sick at heart.

BER Have you had quiet guard?

FRAN Not a mouse stirring

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

Enter Horatio and Marcellus

FRAN I think I hear them

HOR Friends to this ground

MAR And liegemen to the Dane

FRAN Give you good night

MAR O, farewell, honest soldier
Who hath reliev'd you?

FRAN Bernardo hath my place
Give you good night. *Exit*

MAR Holla, Bernardo!

BER Say-
What, is Horatio there ?

HOR A piece of him

BER Welcome, Horatio

MAR What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

BER I have seen nothing

MAR Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him

Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us.
Therefore I have entreated him along,
With us to watch the minutes of this night,
That, if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

HOR Tush, tush, 'twill not appear

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

HOR Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

BER Last night of all,
When yond same star that's westward from the
pole
Had made his course t' illumine that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one-

Enter Ghost

MAR Peace! break thee off! Look where it comes
again!

BER In the same figure, like the King that's dead

MAR Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio

BER Looks it not like the King? Mark it, Horatio

HOR Most like

BER It would be spoke to

MAR Question it, Horatio

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

MAR It is offended

BER See, it stalks away!

HOR Stay! Speak, speak! I charge thee speak!
Exit Ghost

MAR 'Tis gone and will not answer

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

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

MAR Is it not like the King?

HOR As thou art to thyself
Such was the very armour he had on

When he th' ambitious Norway combated.
So frown'd he once when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
'Tis strange.

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

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

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

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

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

HOR A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;
As stars with trains of fire, and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.

And even the like precurse of fierce events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates
And prologue to the omen coming on,
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climature and countrymen.

Enter Ghost again

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

Spreads his arms

If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
Speak to me.
If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease, and, race to me,
Speak to me.
If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which happily foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak!
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth
(For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in
death),

The cock crows

Speak of it! Stay, and speak!— Stop it, Marcellus!

MAR Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

HOR Do, if it will not stand

BER 'Tis here!

HOR 'Tis here!

MAR 'Tis gone!

Exit Ghost

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

BER It was about to speak, when the cock crew

HOR And then it started, like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
Th' extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine; and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

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

HOR So have I heard and do in part believe it
But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill.
Break we our watch up; and by my advice
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?
Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know

Where we shall find him most conveniently.
Exeunt

SCENE II

*Elsinore. A room of state in the Castle.
Flourish. Enter Claudius, King of Denmark,
Gertrude the Queen, Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes
and his sister Ophelia, Voltemand, Cornelius,
Lords Attendant*

KING Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
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,
With an auspicious, and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,
Taken to wife; nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Collegued with this dream of his advantage,
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bands of law,
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting.
Thus much the business is: we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,
Who, impotent and bedrid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose, to suppress
His further gait herein, in that the levies,
The lists, and full proportions are all made
Out of his subject; and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltemand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the King, more than the scope
Of these dilated articles allow. *Gives a paper*
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

COR , Volt

KING We doubt it nothing

Exeunt Voltemand and Cornelius

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

What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

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

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

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

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

HAM *(Aside)* A little more than kin, and less than
kind!

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

HAM Not so, my lord

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

HAM Ay, madam, it is common

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

HAM Seems, madam, Nay, it is
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected havior of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
'That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passeth show-
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,
Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father;
But you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term
To do obsequious sorrow. But to persevere
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness. 'Tis unmanly grief;
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschool'd;
For what we know must be, and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,

A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
 To reason most absurd, whose common theme
 Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
 From the first corse till he that died to-day,
 'This must be so.' We pray you throw to earth
 This unprevailing woe, and think of us
 As of a father; for let the world take note
 You are the most immediate to our throne,
 And with no less nobility of love
 Than that which dearest father bears his son
 Do I impart toward you. For your intent
 In going back to school in Wittenberg,
 It is most retrograde to our desire;
 And we beseech you, bend you to remain
 Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

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

HAM I shall in all my best obey you, madam

KING Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply
 Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come.
 This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
 Sits smiling to my heart; in grace whereof,
 No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
 And the King's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,
 Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away.
Flourish. Exeunt all but Hamlet

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

Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo

HOR Hail to your lordship!

HAM I am glad to see you well

Horatio!- or I do forget myself.

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

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

MAR My good lord!

HAM I am very glad to see you
 But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

HOR A truant disposition, good my lord

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

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

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

HOR Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon

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

HOR O, where, my lord?

HAM In my mind's eye, Horatio

HOR I saw him once

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

HOR My lord, I think I saw him yesternight

HAM Saw? who?

HOR My lord, the King your father

HAM The King my father?

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

HAM For God's love let me hear!

HOR Two nights together had these gentlemen
 (Marcellus and Bernardo) on their watch
 In the dead vast and middle of the night
 Been thus encount'ed. A figure like your father,
 Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,
 Appears before them and with solemn march
 Goes slow and stately by them. Thrice he walk'd
 By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
 Within his truncheon's length; whilst they
 distill'd
 Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
 Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
 In dreadful secrecy impart they did,
 And I with them the third night kept the watch;
 Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,

Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes. I knew your father.
These hands are not more like.

HAM But where was this?

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

HAM Did you not speak to it?

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

HAM 'Tis very strange

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

HAM Indeed, indeed, sirs
Hold you the watch to-night?

BOTH MAR AND BER We do, my lord.

HAM Arm'd, say you?

BOTH Arm'd, my lord

HAM From top to toe?

BOTH My lord, from head to foot

HAM Then saw you not his face?

HOR O, yes, my lord! He wore his beaver up

HAM What, look'd he frowningly

HOR A countenance more in sorrow than in anger

HAM Pale or red?

HOR Nay, very pale

HAM And fix'd his eyes upon you?

HOR Most constantly

HAM I would I had been there

HOR It would have much amaz'd you

HAM Very like, very like

HOR While one with moderate haste might tell a
hundred

BOTH Longer, longer

HOR Not when I saw't

HAM His beard was grizzled— no?

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

HAM I will watch to-night
Perchance 'twill walk again.

HOR I warr'nt it will

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

Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding but no tongue.
I will requite your loves. So, fare you well.
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

ALL Our duty to your honour

HAM Your loves, as mine to you

Exeunt all but Hamlet

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

Exit

SCENE III

*Elsinore. A room in the house of Polonius.
Enter Laertes and Ophelia*

LAER My necessaries are embark'd
And, sister, as the winds give benefit
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

OPH Do you doubt that?

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

OPH No more but so?

LAER Think it no more
For nature crescent does not grow alone
In thews and bulk; but as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch
The virtue of his will; but you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
For he himself is subject to his birth.
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends
The safety and health of this whole state,
And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves
you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed; which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmast' red importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough

If she unmask her beauty to the moon.
 Virtue itself scopes not calumnious strokes.
 The canker galls the infants of the spring
 Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd,
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.
 Be wary then; best safety lies in fear.
 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPH I shall th' effect of this good lesson keep
 As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
 Do not as some ungracious pastors do,
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
 Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
 And recks not his own rede.

LAER O, fear me not!

Enter Polonius

I stay too long. But here my father comes.
 A double blessing is a double grace;
 Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

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

LAER Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord

POL The time invites you

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

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

LAER Farewell

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

OPH So please you, something touching the Lord
 Hamlet

POL Marry, well bethought!

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

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

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

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

POL Marry, I will teach you! Think yourself a baby
 That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
 Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more
 dearly,
 Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
 Running it thus) you'll tender me a fool.

OPH My lord, he hath importun'd me with love
 In honourable fashion.

POL Ay, fashion you may call it

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

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

OPH I shall obey, my lord

Exeunt

SCENE IV

*Elsinore. The platform before the Castle.
Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus*

HAM The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold

HOR It is a nipping and an eager air

HAM What hour now?

HOR I think it lacks of twelve

MAR No, it is struck

HOR Indeed? I heard it not

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

A flourish of trumpets, and two pieces go off
What does this mean, my lord?

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

HOR Is it a custom?

HAM Ay, marry, is't;

But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nations;
They clip us drunkards and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition; and indeed it takes
From our achievements, though perform'd at
height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So oft it chanceth in particular men
That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As in their birth,— wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin,—
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens
The form of plausive manners, that these men
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,
Their virtues else— be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo—
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault. The dram of e'il
Doth all the noble substance often dote To his
own scandal.

Enter Ghost

HOR Look, my lord, it comes!

HAM Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from
hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane. O, answer me?
Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell

Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws
To cast thee up again. What may this mean
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel,
Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous, and we fools of nature
So horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? What should we do?

Ghost beckons Hamlet

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

MAR Look with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground.
But do not go with it!

HOR No, by no means!

HAM It will not speak

HOR Do not, my lord!

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

HOR What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other, horrible form
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness? Think of it.
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fadoms to the sea
And hears it roar beneath.

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

MAR You shall not go, my lord

HAM Hold off your hands!

HOR Be rul'd

HAM My fate cries out
And makes each petty artire in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.

Ghost beckons

Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!—
I say, away!— Go on. I'll follow thee.

Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet

HOR He waxes desperate with imagination

MAR Let's follow

HOR Have after

MAR Something is rotten in the state of Denmark

HOR Heaven will direct it

MAR Nay, let's follow him

Exeunt

SCENE V

Elsinore. The Castle. Another part of the fortifications.

Enter Ghost and Hamlet

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

GHOST Mark me

HAM I will

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

HAM Alas, poor ghost!

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

HAM Speak

GHOST So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear

HAM What?

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

HAM O God!

GHOST Revenge his foul and most unnatural
murder

HAM Murder?

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

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

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

HAM O my prophetic soul!

My uncle?

GHOST Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts-
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce!- won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there,
From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage, and to decline
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine!

But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed
And prey on garbage.

But soft! methinks I scent the morning air.
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebona in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine;
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust
All my smooth body.

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd;
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhous'led, disappointed, unanel'd,
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.

HAM O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!

GHOST If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven,
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once.
The glowworm shows the matin to be near
And gins to pale his uneffectual fire.
Adieu, adieu, adieu! Remember me. *Exit*

HAM O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
And shall I couple hell? Hold, hold, my heart!
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee?
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past
That youth and observation copied there,
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter. Yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!

My tables! Meet it is I set it down
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark.
Writes

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

HOR (*within*) My lord, my lord!

Enter Horatio and Marcellus

MAR Lord Hamlet!

HOR Heaven secure him!

HAM So be it!

MAR Illo, ho, ho, my lord!

HAM Hillo, ho, ho, boy! Come, bird, come

MAR How is't, my noble lord?

HOR What news, my lord?

MAR O, wonderful!

HOR Good my lord, tell it

HAM No, you will reveal it

HOR Not I, my lord, by heaven!

MAR Nor I, my lord

HAM How say you then? Would heart of man once
think it?
But you'll be secret?

BOTH Ay, by heaven, my lord

HAM There's neer a villain dwelling in all Denmark
But he's an arrant knave.

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

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

HOR These are but wild and whirling words, my
lord

HAM I am sorry they offend you, heartily;
Yes, faith, heartily.

HOR There's no offence, my lord

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

HOR What is't, my lord? We will

HAM Never make known what you have seen

to-night

BOTH My lord, we will not

HAM Nay, but swear't

HOR In faith,
My lord, not I.

MAR Nor I, my lord— in faith

HAM Upon my sword

MAR We have sworn, my lord, already

HAM Indeed, upon my sword, indeed
Ghost cries under the stage

GHOST Swear

HAM Aha boy, say'st thou so? Art thou there,
truepenny?
Come on! You hear this fellow in the cellarage.
Consent to swear.

HOR Propose the oath, my lord

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

GHOST *Beneath* Swear

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

GHOST *Beneath* Swear by his sword

HAM Well said, old mole! Canst work i' th' earth so
fast?
A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good
friends."

HOR O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAM And therefore as a stranger give it welcome
There are more things in heaven and earth,
Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
But come!
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself
(As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic disposition on),
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
With arms encumb' red thus, or this head-shake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, an if we
would,'
Or 'If we list to speak,' or 'There be, an if they
might,'
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
That you know aught of me— this is not to do,
So grace and mercy at your most need help you,
Swear.

GHOST (*beneath*) Swear
They swear

HAM Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! So, gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you;
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
May do t' express his love and friending to you,

God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint. O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right!
Nay, come, let's go together.

Exeunt

ACT II

SCENE I

*Elsinore. A room in the house of Polonius.
Enter Polonius and Reynaldo*

POL Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo

REY I will, my lord

POL You shall do marvell's wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before You visit him, to make inquire
Of his behaviour.

REY My lord, I did intend it

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

REY Ay, very well, my lord

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

REY As gaming, my lord

POL Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,
Drabbing. You may go so far.

REY My lord, that would dishonour him

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

REY But, my good lord—

POL Wherefore should you do this?

REY Ay, my lord,

I would know that.

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

REY Very good, my lord

POL And then, sir, does 'a this— 'a does— What was
I about to say?
By the mass, I was about to say something!
Where did I leave?

REY At 'closes in the consequence,' at 'friend or
so,' and gentleman.'

POL At 'closes in the consequence'— Ay, marry!
He closes thus: 'I know the gentleman.
I saw him yesterday, or t'other day,
Or then, or then, with such or such; and, as you
say,
There was 'a gaming; there o'ertook in's rouse;
There falling out at tennis'; or perchance,
'I saw him enter such a house of sale,'
Videlicet, a brothel, or so forth.
See you now—
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth;
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlasses and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out.
So, by my former lecture and advice,
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not

REY My lord, I have

POL God b' wi' ye, fare ye well!

REY Good my lord! (*Going*)

POL Observe his inclination in yourself

REY I shall, my lord

POL And let him ply his music

REY Well, my lord

POL Farewell!

Exit Reynaldo

Enter Ophelia

How now, Ophelia? What's the matter?

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

POL With what, i' th' name of God I

OPH My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,

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

POL Mad for thy love?

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

POL What said he?

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

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

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

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

Exeunt

SCENE II

*Elsinore. A room in the Castle.
 Flourish. Enter King and Queen, Rosencrantz
 and Guildenstern, cum aliis*

KING Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern
 Moreover that we much did long to see you,
 The need we have to use you did provoke
 Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
 Of Hamlet's transformation. So I call it,

Sith nor th' exterior nor the inward man
 Resembles that it was. What it should be,
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put
 him

So much from th' understanding of himself,
 I cannot dream of. I entreat you both
 That, being of so young clays brought up with
 him,
 And since so neighbour'd to his youth and
 haviour,
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
 Some little time; so by your companies
 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
 So much as from occasion you may glean,
 Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus
 That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

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

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

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

KING Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern

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

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

QUEEN Ay, amen!
*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, with some
 Attendants]*
Enter Polonius

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

KING Thou still hast been the father of good news

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

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

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

KING Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in
Exit Polonius

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

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

KING Well, we shall sift him
*Enter Polonius, Voltemand, and
Cornelius*
Welcome, my good friends.
Say, Voltemand, what from our brother Norway?

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

Gives a paper

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

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

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

QUEEN More matter, with less art

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

Reads the letter

'To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most
beautified Ophelia,'—
That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is a
vile phrase

But you shall hear. Thus: (*Reads*)

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

QUEEN Came this from Hamlet to her?

POL Good madam, stay awhile

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

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

'Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst
this machine is to him,

HAMLET.'

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

KING But how hath she
Receiv'd his love?

POL What do you think of me?

KING As of a man faithful and honourable

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

KING Do you think 'tis this?

QUEEN it may be, very like

POL Hath there been such a time— I would fain
know that—
That I have Positively said "'Tis so,'
When it prov'd otherwise.?

KING Not that I know

POL (*Points to his head and shoulder*) Take this
from this, if this be otherwise

If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

KING How may we try it further?

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

QUEEN So he does indeed

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

KING We will try it
Enter Hamlet, reading on a book

QUEEN But look where sadly the poor wretch
comes reading

POL Away, I do beseech you, both away
I'll board him presently. O, give me leave.
Exeunt King and Queen, with Attendants
How does my good Lord Hamlet?

HAM Well, God-a-mercy

POL Do you know me, my lord?

HAM Excellent well

POL Not I, my lord

HAM Then I would you were so honest a man

POL Honest, my lord?

HAM Ay, sir pick'd out of ten thousand.

POL That's very true, my lord

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

POL I have, my lord

HAM Let her not walk i' th' sun as your daughter
may conceive. Friend, look to't.

POL (*Aside*) How say you by that? Still harping on
my daughter he knew me not at first. He said I
was a fishmonger. He is far gone, far gone! And
truly in my youth I suff'ered much extremity for
love— very near this. I'll speak to him again.—
What do you read, my lord?

HAM Words, words, words

POL What is the matter, my lord?

HAM Between who?

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

HAM Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here
that old men have grey beards; that their faces are
wrinkled; their eyes purging thick amber and
plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack
of wit, together with most weak hams. All which,
sir, though I most powerfully and potently
believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus

set down; for you yourself, sir, should be old as I
am if, like a crab, you could go backward.

POL (*Aside*) Though this be madness, yet there is a
method in't

WILL YOU WALK OUT OF THE AIR, MY LORD?

HAM Into my grave?

POL Indeed, that is out o' th' air his replies are! a
happiness that often madness hits on, which
reason and sanity could not so prosperously be
delivered of. I will leave him and suddenly
contrive the means of meeting between him and
my daughter.— My honourable lord, I will most
humbly take my leave of you.

HAM You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I
will more willingly part withal— except my life,
except my life, except my life,

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

POL Fare you well, my lord

HAM These tedious old fools!

POL You go to seek the Lord Hamlet

ROS *To Polonius* God save you, sir!
Exit Polonius

GUIL My honour'd lord!

ROS My most dear lord!

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

ROS As the indifferent children of the earth

GUIL Happy in that we are not over-happy
On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

HAM Nor the soles of her shoe?

ROS Neither, my lord

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

GUIL Faith, her privates we

HAM In the secret parts of Fortune? O! most true!
she is a strumpet. What news?

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

HAM Then is doomsday near! But your news is not
true question more in particular. What have you,
my good friends, deserved at the hands of
Fortune that she sends you to prison hither?

GUIL Prison, my lord?

HAM Denmark's a prison

ROS Then is the world one

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

ROS We think not so, my lord

HAM Why, then 'tis none to you; for there is

nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison.

ROS Why, then your ambition makes it one mind.

HAM 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.

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

HAM A dream itself is but a shadow

ROS Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

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

BOTH We'll wait upon you

HAM No such matter! I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

ROS To visit you, my lord; no other occasion

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

GUIL What should we say, my lord?

HAM Why, anything— but to th' purpose there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour. I know the good King and Queen have sent for you.

ROS To what end, my lord?

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

ROS (*Aside*) to *Guildestern* What say you?

HAM (*Aside*) Nay then, I have an eye of you not off.

GUIL My lord, we were sent for

HAM I will tell you why discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen moult no feather. I have of late— but wherefore I know not— lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air,

look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire— why, it appeareth no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals! And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me— no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

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

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

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

HAM He that plays the king shall be welcome— his Majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' th' sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt fort. What players are they?

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

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

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

HAM Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so follow'd?

ROS No indeed are they not

HAM How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

ROS Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace; but there is, sir, an eyrie of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question and are most tyrannically clapp'd fort. These are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages (so they call them) that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goosequills and dare scarce come thither.

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

ROS Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy. There was, for a while, no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player

went to cuffs in the question.

HAM Is't possible?

GUIL O, there has been much throwing about of brains

HAM Do the boys carry it away?

ROS Ay, that they do, my lord— Hercules and his load too

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

Flourish for the Players

GUIL There are the players

HAM Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony. Let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players (which I tell you must show fairly outwards) should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome. But my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceiv'd.

GUIL In what, my dear lord?

HAM I am but mad north-north-west know a hawk from a handsaw.

Enter Polonius

POL Well be with you, gentlemen!

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

ROS Happily he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child.

HAM I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players

YOU SAY RIGHT, SIR; A MONDAY MORNING;
T WAS SO INDEED

POL My lord, I have news to tell you

HAM My lord, I have news to tell you Rome—

POL The actors are come hither, my lord

HAM Buzz, buzz!

POL Upon my honour—

HAM Then came each actor on his ass—

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

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

POL What treasure had he, my lord?

HAM Why,

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

POL (*Aside*) Still on my daughter

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

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

HAM Nay, that follows not

POL What follows then, my lord?

HAM Why,

As by lot, God wot,' and then, you know,
'It came to pass, as most like it was.'

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

Enter four or five Players

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

1 Play

HAM 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, pleas'd not the million, 'twas caviary to the general; but it was (as I receiv'd it, and others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine) an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation; but call'd it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in't I chiefly lov'd. 'Twas AENEAS' tale to Dido, and thereabout of it especially where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line— let me see, let me see:

'The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian
beast—'

'Tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus:

'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night
resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion
smear'd
With heraldry more dismal. Head to foot
Now is be total gules, horridly trick'd

With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters,
sons,
Bak'd and impasted with the parching
streets,
That lend a tyrannous and a damned light
To their lord's murder. Roasted in wrath
and fire,
And thus o'ersized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish
Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks.'

So, proceed you.

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

1. PLAY

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

POL This is too long

HAM It shall to the barber's, with your beard
He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps.
Say on; come to Hecuba.

1. PLAY 'But who, O who, had seen the mobled
queen—'

HAM 'The mobled queen?'

POL That's good! 'Mobled queen' is good

1. PLAY

'Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the
flames
With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,
About her lank and all o'erteemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up—
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have
pronounc'd.

But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In Mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made
(Unless things mortal move them not at all)
Would have made milch the burning eyes of
heaven
And passion in the gods.'

POL Look, whe'r he has not turn'd his colour, and
has tears in's eyes. Prithee no more!

HAM 'Tis well

Good my lord, will you see the players well
bestow'd? Do you hear? Let them be well us'd;
for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of
the time. After your death you were better have a
bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

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

HAM God's bodykins, man, much better! Use every
man after his desert, and who should scape
whipping? Use them after your own honour and
dignity. The less they deserve, the more merit it
is in your bounty. Take them in.

POL Come, sirs

HAM Follow him, friends

*Exeunt Polonius and Players (except the
First)*

Dost thou hear me, old friend? Can you play
'The Murder of Gonzago?'

1. PLAY Ay, my lord.

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

1 Play

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

Exit First Player

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

ROS Good my lord!

HAM Ay, so, God b' wi' ye!

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

Now I am alone.

O what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That, from her working, all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech;
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing! No, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?
'Tweaks me by th' nose? gives me the lie i' th'
throat
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this, ha?
'Swounds, I should take it! for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal. Bloody bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless
villain!
O, vengeance!
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must (like a whore) unpack my heart with words
And fall a-cursing like a very drab,
A scullion!
Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain! 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
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ, I'll have these
Players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks;
I'll tent him to the quick. If he but blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be 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,
Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds
More relative than this. The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.
Exit

ACT III

SCENE I

*Elsinore. A room in the Castle.
Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia,
Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and Lords*

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

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

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

QUEEN Did he receive you well?

ROS Most like a gentleman

GUIL But with much forcing of his disposition

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

QUEEN Did you assay him
To any pastime?

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

POL 'Tis most true;
And he beseech'd me to entreat your Majesties
To hear and see the matter.

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

ROS We shall, my lord
Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

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

That thus he suffers for.

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

OPH Madam, I wish it may
Exit Queen

POL Ophelia, walk you here
We will bestow ourselves.—
To Ophelia Read on this book,
That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness.— We are oft to blame in this,
'Tis too much prov'd, that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The Devil himself.

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

POL I hear him coming
*Exeunt King and Polonius
Enter Hamlet*

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

And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.— Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia!— Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins rememb'ed.

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

HAM I humbly thank you; well, well, well

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

HAM No, not I!
I never gave you aught.

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

HAM Ha, ha! Are you honest?

OPH My lord?

HAM Are you fair?

OPH What means your lordship?

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

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

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

OPH Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so

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

OPH I was the more deceived

HAM Get thee to a nunnery! Why wouldst thou be a
breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent
honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things
that it were better my mother had not borne me. I
am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more
offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put
them in, imagination to give them shape, or time
to act them in. What should such fellows as I do,
crawling between earth and heaven? We are
arrant knaves all; believe none of us. Go thy ways
to a nunnery. Where's your father?

OPH At home, my lord

HAM Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may
play the fool

nowhere but in's own house. Farewell.

OPH O, help him, you sweet heavens!

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

OPH O heavenly powers, restore him!

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

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

Enter King and Polonius

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

POL It shall do well

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

KING It shall be so

Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.
Exeunt

SCENE II

Elsinore. hall in the Castle.

Enter Hamlet and three of the Players

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

PLAYER I warrant your honour

HAM Be not too tame neither; but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show Virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly (not to speak it profanely), that, neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of Nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

PLAYER I hope we have reform'd that indifferently with us, sir

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

Exeunt Players

Enter Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern

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

POL And the Queen too, and that presently

HAM Bid the players make haste, *Exit Polonius*

help to hasten them?

BOTH We will, my lord

HAM What, ho, Horatio!

Enter Horatio

HOR Here, sweet lord, at your service

HAM Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.

HOR O, my dear lord!

HAM Nay, do not think I flatter;

For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be
flatter'd?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou
hear?

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath scald thee for herself. For thou hast been
As one, in suff'ring all, that suffers nothing;
A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and blest are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well
commingled

That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee. Something too much of this I
There is a play to-night before the King.
One scene of it comes near the circumstance,
Which I have told thee, of my father's death.
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
Even with the very comment of thy soul
Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.

HOR 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

HAM They are coming to the play
Get you a place.

KING How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAM Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish
promise-cramm'd. You cannot feed capons so.

KING I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet mine.

HAM No, nor mine now i' th' university, you say?

POL That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good

actor

HAM What did you enact?

POL I did enact Julius Caesar; I was kill'd i' th'
Capitol; Brutus kill'd me.

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

ROS Ay, my lord

QUEEN Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me

HAM No, good mother

POL *To the King* O, ho! do you mark that?

HAM Lady, shall I lie in your lap?
Sits down at Ophelia's feet

OPH No, my lord

HAM I mean, my head upon your lap?

OPH Ay, my lord

HAM Do you think I meant country matters?

OPH I think nothing, my lord

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

OPH What is, my lord?

HAM Nothing

OPH You are merry, my lord

HAM Who, I?

OPH Ay, my lord

HAM 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.

OPH Nay 'tis twice two months, my lord

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

*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 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

OPH What means this, my lord?

HAM Marry, this is miching malhecho; it means
mischief

OPH Belike this show imports the argument of the
play

Enter Prologue

HAM We shall know by this fellow
they'll tell all.

OPH Will he tell us what this show meant?

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

OPH You are naught, you are naught! I'll mark the
play Pro. For us, and for our tragedy.
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently. *Exit*

HAM Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

OPH 'Tis brief, my lord

HAM As woman's love

Enter two Players as King and Queen

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

QUEEN So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But woe is me! you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state.
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must;
For women's fear and love holds quantity,
In neither aught, or in extremity.
Now what my love is, proof hath made you know;
And as my love is siz'd, my fear is so.
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows
there.

KING Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do.
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, belov'd, and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou—

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

HAM (*Aside*) Wormwood, wormwood!

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

KING I do believe you think what now you speak;
But what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth, but poor validity;

Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree,
 But fill unshaken when they mellow b
 Most necessary 'tis that we forget
 To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt.
 What to ourselves in passion we propose,
 The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
 The violence of either grief or joy
 Their own enactures with themselves destroy
 Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;
 Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
 This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strang
 That even our loves should with our fortunes
 change;
 For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
 Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
 The great man down, you mark his favourite flies,
 The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies;
 And hitherto doth love on fortune tend,
 For who not needs shall never lack a friend,
 And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
 Directly seasons him his enemy.
 But, orderly to end where I begun,
 Our wills and fates do so contrary run
 That our devices still are overthrown;
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our
 own.
 So think thou wilt no second husband wed;
 But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

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

HAM If she should break it now!

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

QUEEN Sleep rock thy brain,

He sleeps

And never come mischance between us twain!

Exit

HAM Madam, how like you this play?

QUEEN The lady doth protest too much, methinks

HAM O, but she'll keep her word

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

HAM No, no! They do but jest, poison in jest; no
 offence i' th' world.

KING What do you call the play?

HAM 'The Mousetrap image of a murder done in
 Vienna. Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife,
 Baptista. You shall see anon. 'Tis a knavish piece
 of work; but what o' that? Your Majesty, and we
 that have free souls, it touches us not. Let the
 gall'd jade winch; our withers are unwrung.

Enter Lucianus

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the King.

OPH You are as good as a chorus, my lord

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

OPH You are keen, my lord, you are keen

HAM It would cost you a groaning to take off my
 edge

OPH Still better, and worse

HAM So you must take your husbands thy
 damnable faces, and begin! Come, the croaking
 raven doth bellow for revenge.

LUC Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time
 agreeing;
 Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
 Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
 With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
 Thy natural magic and dire property
 On wholesome life usurp immediately
Pours the poison in his ears

HAM He poisons him i' th' garden for's estate
 The story is extant, and written in very choice
 Italian. You shall see anon how the murderer
 gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

OPH The King rises

HAM What, frighted with false fire?

QUEEN How fares my lord?

POL Give o'er the play

KING Give me some light! Away!

ALL Lights, lights, lights!

Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio

HAM Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
 The hart ungalled play;

For some must watch, while some must sleep:

Thus runs the world away.

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

HOR Half a share

HAM A whole one I!

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,

This realm dismantled was

Of Jove himself; and now reigns here

A very, very— pajock

HOR You might have rhym'd

HAM O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for
 a thousand pound! Didst perceive?

HOR Very well, my lord

HAM Upon the talk of the poisoning?

HOR I did very well note him

HAM Aha! Come, some music! Come, the
 recorders!

For if the King like not the comedy,
 Why then, belike he likes it not, perdy.
 Come, some music!

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

GUIL Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you

HAM Sir, a whole history

GUIL The King, sir-

HAM Ay, sir, what of him?

GUIL Is in his retirement, marvellous distemper'd

HAM With drink, sir?

GUIL No, my lord; rather with choler

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

GUIL Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

HAM I am tame, sir; pronounce

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

HAM You are welcome

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

HAM Sir, I cannot

GUIL What, my lord?

HAM Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseas'd answer is I can make, you shall command; or rather, as you say, my mother. Therefore no more, but to the matter! My mother, you say-

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

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

ROS She desires to speak with you in her closet ere you go to bed

HAM We shall obey, were she ten times our mother further trade with us?

ROS My lord, you once did love me

HAM And do still, by these pickers and stealers!

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

HAM Sir, I lack advancement

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

HAM Ay, sir, but 'while the grass grows' - the proverb is something musty.

Enter the Players with recorders

O, the recorders! Let me see one. To withdraw with you- why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

GUIL O my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly

HAM I do not well understand that

GUIL My lord, I cannot

HAM I pray you

GUIL Believe me, I cannot

HAM I do beseech you

GUIL I know, no touch of it, my lord

HAM It is as easy as lying fingers and thumbs, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

GUIL But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony have not the skill.

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

Enter Polonius

God bless you, sir!

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

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

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

HAM Methinks it is like a weasel

POL It is back'd like a weasel

HAM Or like a whale

POL Very like a whale

HAM Then will I come to my mother by-and-by top of my bent.- I will come by-and-by.

POL I will say so

HAM 'By-and-by' is easily said

Exeunt all but Hamlet

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood

And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother!

O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom.

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

SCENE III

A room in the Castle.

Enter King, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern

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

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

ROS The single and peculiar life is bound
With all the strength and armour of the mind
To keep itself from noyance; but much more
That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests
The lives of many. The cesse of majesty
Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw
What's near it with it. It is a massy wheel,
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boist'rous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

KING Arm you, I pray you, to th', speedy voyage;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

BOTH We will haste us
Exeunt Gentlemen
Enter Polonius

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

KING Thanks, dear my lord
Exit Polonius

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murmur! Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will.
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,

Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul
murther'?

That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murther-
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd and retain th' offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law; but 'tis not so above.
There is no shuffling; there the action lies
In his true nature, and we ourselves compell'd,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? What rests?
Try what repentance can. What can it not?
Yet what can it when one cannot repent?
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,
Art more engag'd! Help, angels! Make assay.
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

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

KING (*Rises*) My words fly up, my thoughts remain
below
Words without thoughts never to heaven go. *Exit*

SCENE IV

The Queen's closet.
Enter Queen and Polonius

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

HAM (within) Mother, mother, mother!

QUEEN I'll warrant you; fear me not
Polonius hides behind the arras
Enter Hamlet

HAM Now, mother, what's the matter?

QUEEN Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended

HAM Mother, you have my father much offended

QUEEN Come, come, you answer with an idle
 tongue

HAM Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue

QUEEN Why, how now, Hamlet?

HAM What's the matter now?

QUEEN Have you forgot me?

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

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

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

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

POL (*Behind*) What, ho! help, help, help!

HAM (*Draws*) How now? a rat? Dead for a ducat,
 dead!
Makes a pass through the arras and kills Polonius

POL (*Behind*) O, I am slain!

QUEEN O me, what hast thou done?

HAM Nay, I know not

QUEEN O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

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

QUEEN As kill a king?

HAM Ay, lady, it was my word
Lifts up the arras and sees Polonius
 Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
 I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune.
 Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.
 Leave wringing of your hinds. Peace! sit you
 down
 And let me wring your heart; for so I shall
 If it be made of penetrable stuff;
 If damned custom have not braz'd it so

That it is proof and bulwark against sense.

QUEEN What have I done that thou dar'st wag thy
 tongue
 In noise so rude against me?

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

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

HAM Look here upon th's picture, and on this,
 The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
 See what a grace was seated on this brow;
 Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
 An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
 A station like the herald Mercury
 New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill:
 A combination and a form indeed
 Where every god did seem to set his seal
 To give the world assurance of a man.
 This was your husband. Look you now what
 follows.
 Here is your husband, like a mildew'd ear
 Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
 Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
 And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes
 You cannot call it love; for at your age
 The heyday in the blood is tame, it's humble,
 And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
 Would step from this to this? Sense sure you
 have,
 Else could you not have motion; but sure that
 sense
 Is apoplex'd; for madness would not err,
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd
 But it reserv'd some quantity of choice
 To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
 Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense
 Could not so mope.
 O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
 If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
 To flaming youth let virtue be as wax
 And melt in her own fire. Proclaim no shame
 When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
 And reason panders will.

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

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

Over the nasty sty!

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

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

QUEEN No more!
Enter the Ghost in his nightgown

HAM 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 Alas, he's mad!

HAM Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, laps'd in time and passion, lets go by
Th' important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

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

HAM How is it with you, lady?

QUEEN Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with th' encorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in th' alarm,
Your bedded hairs, like life in excrements,
Start up and stand an end. O gentle son,
Upon the beat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience! Whereon do you look?

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

QUEEN To whom do you speak this?

HAM Do you see nothing there?

QUEEN Nothing at all; yet all that is I see

HAM Nor did you nothing hear?

QUEEN No, nothing but ourselves

HAM Why, look you there! Look how it steals
away!
My father, in his habit as he liv'd!
Look where he goes even now out at the portal!
Exit Ghost

QUEEN This is the very coinage of your brain
This bodiless creation ecstasy

Is very cunning in.

HAM Ecstasy?
My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time
And makes as healthful music. It is not madness
That I have utt' red. Bring me to the test,
And I the matter will reword; which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul
That not your trespass but my madness speaks.
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue;
For in the fatness of these pursy times
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg-
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

QUEEN O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain

HAM 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.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat
Of habits evil, is angel yet in this,
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery,
That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence; the next more easy;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either master the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night;
And when you are desirous to be blest,
I'll blessing beg of you.- For this same lord,
I do repent; but heaven hath pleas'd it so,
To punish me with this, and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So again, good night.
I must be cruel, only to be kind;
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.
One word more, good lady.

QUEEN What shall I do?

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

QUEEN Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe

What thou hast said to me.

HAM I must to England; you know that?

QUEEN Alack,
I had forgot! 'Tis so concluded on.

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

*Exit the Queen, then Exit Hamlet, tugging in
Polonius*

ACT IV

SCENE I

*Elsinore. A room in the Castle.
Enter King and Queen, with Rosencrantz and
Guildenstern*

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

QUEEN Bestow this place on us a little while
Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern
Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen to-night!

KING What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

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

KING O heavy deed!
It had been so with us, had we been there.
His liberty is full of threats to all-
To you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of
haunt
This mad young man. But so much was our love
We would not understand what was most fit,
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

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

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

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

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

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends
And let them know both what we mean to do

And what's untimely done. So haply slander-
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,
Transports his poisoned shot- may miss our name
And hit the woundless air.- O, come away!
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

Exeunt

SCENE II

*Elsinore. A passage in the Castle.
Enter Hamlet*

HAM Safely stow'd

GENTLEMEN (within) Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

HAM But soft! What noise? Who calls on Hamlet?
O, here they come

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

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

HAM Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin

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

HAM Do not believe it

ROS Believe what?

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

ROS Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

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

ROS I understand you not, my lord

HAM I am glad of it

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

HAM The body is with the King, but the King is not
with the body
The King is a thing-

GUIL A thing, my lord?

HAM Of nothing

Exeunt

SCENE III

Elsinore. A room in the Castle. Enter King

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

Enter Rosencrantz

How now O What hath befall'n?

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

KING But where is he?

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

KING Bring him before us

ROS Ho, Guildenstern! Bring in my lord

*Enter Hamlet and Guildenstern with
Attendants*

KING Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAM At supper

KING At supper? Where?

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

KING Alas, alas!

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

KING What dost thou mean by this?

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

KING Where is Polonius?

HAM In heaven there, seek him i' th' other place
yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within
this month, you shall nose him as you go up the
stair, into the lobby.

KING Go seek him there

HAM He will stay till you come

Exeunt Attendants

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

HAM For England?

KING Ay, Hamlet

HAM Good

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

HAM I see a cherub that sees them
Farewell, dear mother.

KING Thy loving father, Hamlet

HAM My mother! Father and mother is man and
wife; man and wife is one flesh; and so, my
mother. Come, for England! *Exit*

KING Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed
aboard
Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night.
Away! for everything is seal'd and done
That else leans on th' affair. Pray you make haste.

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern]

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

SCENE IV

Near Elsinore.

Enter Fortinbras with his Army over the stage

FOR Go, Captain, from me greet the Danish king
Tell him that by his license Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promis'd march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
if that his Majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye;
And let him know so.

CAPT I will do't, my lord

FOR Go softly on

Exeunt all but the Captain

*Enter Hamlet, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and
others*

HAM Good sir, whose powers are these?

CAPT They are of Norway, sir

HAM How purpos'd, sir, I pray you?

CAPT Against some part of Poland

HAM Who commands them, sir?

CAPT The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras

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

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

HAM Why, then the Polack never will defend it

CAPT Yes, it is already garrison'd

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

CAPT God b' wi' you, sir

ROS Will't please you go, my lord?

HAM I'll be with you straight

Exeunt all but Hamlet

How all occasions do inform against me
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th' event,—
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part
wisdom
And ever three parts coward,— I do not know
Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do,'
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and
means
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me.
Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men

That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! *Exit*

SCENE V

Elsinore. A room in the Castle.

Enter Horatio, Queen, and a Gentleman

QUEEN I will not speak with her

GENT She is importunate, indeed distract
Her mood will needs be pitied.

QUEEN What would she have?

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

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

QUEEN Let her come in

Exit Gentleman

(Aside)

To my sick soul (as sin's true nature is)
Each toy seems Prologue to some great amiss.
So full of artless jealousy is guilt
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

Enter Ophelia distracted

OPH Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN How now, Ophelia?

OPH (sings)

*How should I your true-love know
From another one?
By his cockle bat and' staff
And his sandal shoon*

QUEEN Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPH Say you? Nay, pray You mark

(Sings)

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

O, ho!

QUEEN Nay, but Ophelia—

OPH Pray you mark

(Sings)

White his shroud as the mountain snow-

Enter King

QUEEN Alas, look here, my lord!

OPH

Sings

Larded all with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did not go
With true-love showers

KING How do you, pretty lady?

OPH Well, God dild you! They say the owl was a
baker's daughter

Lord, we know what we are, but know not what
we may be. God be at your table!

KING Conceit upon her father

OPH 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,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.
Then up he rose and donn'd his clo'es
And dupp'd the chamber door,
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more

KING Pretty Ophelia!

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

(Sings)

By Gis and by Saint Charity,
Alack, and fie for shame!
Young men will do't if they come to't
By Cock, they are to blame.
Quoth she, 'Before you tumbled me,
You promis'd me to wed.'

He answers:

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

KING How long hath she been thus?

OPH I hope all will be well choose but weep to
think they would lay him i' th' cold ground. My
brother shall know of it; and so I thank you for
your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good
night, ladies. Good night, sweet ladies. Good
night, good night. *Exit*

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

Exit Horatio

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies.
But in battalions! First, her father slain;
Next, Your son gone, and he most violent author
Of his own just remove; the people muddied,

Thick and and unwholesome in their thoughts
and whispers
For good Polonius' death, and we have done but
greenly

In hugger-mugger to inter him; Poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair-judgment,
Without the which we are Pictures or mere beasts;
Last, and as such containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France;
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
Feeds on his wonder, keep, himself in clouds,
With pestilent speeches of his father's death,
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick Our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murd'ring piece, in many places
Give, me superfluous death. *A noise within*

QUEEN Alack, what noise is this?

KING Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the
door

Enter a Messenger

What is the matter?

MESS Save Yourself, my lord:
The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste
Than Young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears Your offices. The rabble call him lord;
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry 'Choose we! Laertes shall be king!'
Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,
'Laertes shall be king! Laertes king!'

A noise within

QUEEN How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!

KING The doors are broke

Enter Laertes with others

LAER Where is this king?— Sirs, staid you all
without

ALL No, let's come in!

LAER I pray you give me leave

ALL We will, we will!

LAER I thank you
O thou vile king,
Give me my father!

QUEEN Calmly, good Laertes

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

KING What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giantlike?
Let him go, Gertrude. Do not fear our person.
There's such divinity doth hedge a king
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incens'd. Let him go, Gertrude.

Speak, man.

LAER Where is my father?

KING Dead

QUEEN But not by him!

KING Let him demand his fill

LAER How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
That both the world, I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
Most thoroughly for my father.

KING Who shall stay you?

LAER My will, not all the world!
And for my means, I'll husband them so well
They shall go far with little.

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

LAER None but his enemies

KING Will you know them then?

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

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

A noise within: 'Let her come in.'

LAER How now? What noise is that?

Enter Ophelia

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

OPH (*sings*)

*They bore him barefac'd on the bier
(Hey non nony, nony, hey nony)
And in his grave rain'd many a tear
Fare you well, my dove!*

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

OPH You must sing 'A-down a-down, and you call
him a-down-a

how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward,
that stole his
master's daughter.

LAER This nothing's more than matter

OPH There's rosemary, that's for remembrance
remember. And there is pansies, that's for
thoughts.

LAER A document in madness! Thoughts and
remembrance fitted

OPH There's fennel for you, and columbines and
here's some for me. We may call it herb of grace
o' Sundays.

O, you must wear your rue with a difference!
There's a daisy. I would give you some violets,
but they wither'd all when my father died. They
say he made a good end.

Sings

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

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

OPH (*sings*)

And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?

No, no, he is dead;
Go to thy deathbed;
He never will come again.
His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll.
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan.
God 'a'mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God b'
wi', you.

Exit

LAER Do you see this, O God?

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

LAER Let this be so

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

KING So you shall;

And where th' offence is let the great axe fall.
I pray you go with me.

Exeunt

 SCENE VI

Elsinore. Another room in the Castle.

Enter Horatio with an Attendant

HOR What are they that would speak with me?

SERVANT Seafaring men, sir

HOR Let them come in

Exit Attendant

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

Enter Sailors

SAILOR God bless you, sir

HOR Let him bless thee too

SAILOR 'A shall, sir, an't please him sir,— it comes
from th' ambassador that was bound for
England— if your name be Horatio, as I am let to
know it is.

HOR (reads the letter)

'Horatio, when thou shalt have overlook'd
this, give these fellows some means to the
King. They have letters for him. Ere we
were two days old at sea, a pirate of very
warlike appointment gave us chase.
Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put
on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I
boarded them. On the instant they got clear
of our ship; so I alone became their
prisoner. They have dealt with me like
thieves of mercy; but they knew what they
did: I am to do a good turn for them. Let
the King have the letters I have sent, and
repair thou to me with as much speed as
thou wouldst fly death. I have words to
speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet
are they much too light for the bore of the
matter. These good fellows will bring thee
where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern
hold their course for England. Of them I
have much to tell thee. Farewell.

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

 SCENE VII

Elsinore. Another room in the Castle.

Enter King and Laertes

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

LAER It well appears

Why you proceeded not against these feats
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

KING O, for two special reasons,

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

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

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

Enter a Messenger with letters

How now? What news?

MESS Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:
This to your Majesty; this to the Queen.

KING From Hamlet? Who brought them?

MESS Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not
They were given me by Claudio; he receiv'd them
Of him that brought them.

KING Laertes, you shall hear them
Leave us.

Exit Messenger

Reads

'High and Mighty,—You shall know I am set
naked on your
kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to
see your kingly eyes;
when I shall (first asking your pardon
thereunto) recount the
occasion of my sudden and more strange
return.

'HAMLET.'

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

LAER Know you the hand?

KING 'Tis Hamlet's character
And in a postscript here, he says 'alone.'

Can you advise me?

LAER I am lost in it, my lord
It warms the very sickness in my heart
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
'Thus didest thou.'

KING If it be so, Laertes
(As how should it be so? how otherwise?),
Will you be rul'd by me?

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

KING To thine own peace
As checking at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, I will work him
To exploit now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall;
And for his death no wind
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice
And call it accident.

LAER My lord, I will be rul'd;
The rather, if you could devise it so
That I might be the organ.

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

LAER What part is that, my lord?

KING A very riband in the cap of youth-
Yet needfull too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears
Thin settled age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness. Two months
since
Here was a gentleman of Normandy.
I have seen myself, and serv'd against, the
French,
And they can well on horseback; but this gallant
Had witchcraft in't. He grew unto his seat,
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse
As had he been incorp'd and demi-natur'd
With the brave beast. So far he topp'd my thought
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Come short of what he did.

LAER A Norman was't?

KING A Norman

LAER Upon my life, Lamound

KING The very same

LAER I know him well
And gem of all the nation.

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

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

LAER What out of this, my lord?

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

LAER Why ask you this?

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

LAER To cut his throat i' th' church!

KING No place indeed should murder sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good
Laertes,
Will you do this? Keep close within your
chamber.
Will return'd shall know you are come home.
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you; bring you in fine
together
And wager on your heads. He, being remiss,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and, in a pass of practice,
Requite him for your father.

LAER I will do't!

And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
This is but scratch'd withal. I'll touch my point
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

KING Let's further think of this,
Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape. If this should fall,
And that our drift look through our bad
performance.
'Twere better not assay'd. Therefore this project
Should have a back or second, that might hold
If this did blast in proof. Soft! let me see.

We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings-
 I ha't!
 When in your motion you are hot and dry-
 As make your bouts more violent to that end-
 And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepar'd him
 A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,
 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
 Our purpose may hold there.— But stay, what
 noise,

Enter Queen

How now, sweet queen?

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

LAER Drown'd! O, where?

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

LAER Alas, then she is drown'd?

QUEEN Drown'd, drown'd

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

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

Exeunt

ACT V

SCENE I

Elsinore. A churchyard.

Enter two Clowns, with spades and pickaxes

CLOWN Is she to be buried in Christian burial when she wilfully seeks her own salvation?

OTHER I tell thee she is; therefore make her grave straight
The crowner hath sate on her, and finds it
Christian burial.

CLOWN How can that be, unless she drown'd herself in her own defence?

OTHER Why, 'tis found so

CLOWN It must be se offendendo; it cannot be else the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act; and an act hath three branches-it is to act, to do, and to perform; argal, she drown'd herself wittingly.

OTHER Nay, but hear you, Goodman Delver!

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

OTHER But is this law?

CLOWN Ay, marry, is't- crowner's quest law

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

CLOWN Why, there thou say'st! And the more pity that great folk should have count'nance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even-Christen. Come, my spade! There is no ancient gentlemen but gard'ners, ditchers, and grave-makers. They hold up Adam's profession.

OTHER Was he a gentleman?

CLOWN 'A was the first that ever bore arms

OTHER Why, he had none

CLOWN What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture?
The Scripture says Adam digg'd. Could he dig without arms?

I'll put another question to thee. If thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself-

OTHER Go to!

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

OTHER The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

CLOWN I like thy wit well, in good faith
But how does it well? It does well to those that do ill. Now, thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church. Argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come!

OTHER Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

CLOWN Ay, tell me that, and unyoke

OTHER Marry, now I can tell!

CLOWN To't

OTHER Mass, I cannot tell

Enter Hamlet and Horatio afar off

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

*Exit Second Clown
Clown digs and sings*

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

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

HOR Custom hath made it in him a Property of easiness

HAM 'Tis e'en so sense.

CLOWN (*Sings*)

But age with his stealing steps
Hath clawed me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me intil the land,
As if I had never been such

Throws up a skull

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

HOR It might, my lord

HAM Or of a courtier, which could say 'Good
morrow, sweet lord!
How dost thou, good lord?' This might be my
Lord Such-a-one, that prais'd my Lord
Such-a-one's horse when he meant to beg it—
might it not?

HOR Ay, my lord

HAM Why, e'en so! and now my Lady Worm's,
chapless, and knock'd about the mazzard with a
sexton's spade. Here's fine revolution, and we
had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no
more the breeding but to play at loggets with
'em? Mine ache to think on't.

CLOWN (*Sings*)

A pickaxe and a spade, a spade,
For and a shrouding sheet;
O, a Pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet

Throws up another skull

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

HOR Not a jot more, my lord

HAM Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

HOR Ay, my lord, And of calveskins too

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

CLOWN Mine, sir

Sings

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

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

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

HAM Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine

the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

CLOWN 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again from
me to you

HAM What man dost thou dig it for?

CLOWN For no man, sir

HAM What woman then?

CLOWN For none neither

HAM Who is to be buried in't?

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

HAM How absolute the knave is! We must speak by
the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the
Lord, Horatio, this three years I have taken note
of it, the age is grown so picked that the toe of the
peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier he
galls his kibe.— How long hast thou been a
grave-maker?

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

HAM How long is that since?

CLOWN Cannot you tell that? Every fool can tell
that very day that young Hamlet was born— he
that is mad, and sent into England.

HAM Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

CLOWN Why, because 'a was mad or, if 'a do not,
'tis no great matter there.

HAM Why?

CLOWN 'Twill not be seen in him there he.

HAM How came he mad?

CLOWN Very strangely, they say

HAM How strangely?

CLOWN Faith, e'en with losing his wits

HAM Upon what ground?

CLOWN Why, here in Denmark thirty years.

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

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

HAM Why he more than another?

CLOWN Why, sir, his hide is so tann'd with his trade
that 'a will keep out water a great while; and your
water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead
body. Here's a skull now. This skull hath lien you
i' th' earth three-and-twenty years.

HAM Whose was it?

CLOWN A whoreson, mad fellow's it was

HAM Nay, I know not

CLOWN A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! 'A
pour'd a flagon of Rhenish on my head once.

This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the King's jester.

HAM This?

CLOWN E'en that

HAM Let me see

Horatio. A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand tunes. And now how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kiss'd I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? Quite chap-fall'n? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come. Make her laugh at that. Prithce, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HOR What's that, my lord?

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

HOR E'en so

HAM And smelt so? Pah!
Puts down the skull

HOR E'en so, my lord

HAM 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?

HOR 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so

HAM No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it; as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam (whereto he was converted) might they not stop a beer barrel?

Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.

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

And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken
The corse they follow did with desp'rate hand
Fordo it own life. 'Twas of some estate.

Couch we awhile, and mark.

Retires with Horatio

LAER What ceremony else?

HAM That is Laertes,
A very noble youth. Mark.

LAER What ceremony else?

PRIEST Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd
As we have warranty. Her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd

Till the last trumpet. For charitable prayers,
Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her.

Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

LAER Must there no more be done?

PRIEST No more be done

We should profane the service of the dead
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

LAER Lay her i' th' earth;

And from her fair and unpolled flesh
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be
When thou liest howling.

HAM What, the fair Ophelia?

QUEEN Sweets to the sweet! Farewell

Scatters flowers

I hop'd thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's
wife;

I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet
maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave.

LAER O, treble woe

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

Leaps in the grave

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

HAM *(Comes forward)* What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them
stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane. *Leaps in after Laertes*

LAER The devil take thy soul!

Grapples with him

HAM Thou pray'st not well

I prithee take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,
Yet have I in me something dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand!

KING Pluck them asunder

QUEEN Hamlet, Hamlet!

ALL Gentlemen!

HOR Good my lord, be quiet

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

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

QUEEN O my son, what theme?

HAM I lov'd Ophelia

Could not (with all their quantity of love)
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

KING O, he is mad, Laertes

QUEEN For love of God, forbear him!

HAM 'Swounds, show me what thou't do
Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear
thyself?
Woo't drink up esill? 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.
And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,
I'll rant as well as thou.

QUEEN This is mere madness;
And thus a while the fit will work on him.
Anon, as patient as the female dove
When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,
His silence will sit drooping.

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

KING I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him

Exit Horatio

To Laertes

Strengthen your patience in our last night's
speech.
We'll put the matter to the present push.-
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.-
This grave shall have a living monument.
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;
Till then in patience our proceeding be.

Exeunt

SCENE II

Elsinore. A hall in the Castle.

Enter Hamlet and Horatio

HAM So much for this, sir; now shall you see the
other
You do remember all the circumstance?

HOR Remember it, my lord!

HAM Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep. Methought I lay
Worse than the mutinies in the bilboes. Rashly-
And prais'd be rashness for it; let us know,
Our indiscretion sometime serves us well
When our deep plots do pall; and that should
learn us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will-

HOR That is most certain

HAM Up from my cabin,

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

HOR Is't possible?

HAM Here's the commission; read it at more leisure
But wilt thou bear me how I did proceed?

HOR I beseech you

HAM Being thus benetted round with villanies,
Or I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play. I sat me down;
Devis'd a new commission; wrote it fair.
I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service. Wilt thou know
Th' effect of what I wrote?

HOR Ay, good my lord

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

HOR How was this seal'd?

HAM Why, even in that was heaven ordinant
I had my father's signet in my purse,
which was the model of that Danish seal;
Folded the writ up in the form of th' other,
Subscrib'd it, gave't th' impression, plac'd it
safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

HOR So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't

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

HOR Why, what a king is this!

HAM Does it not, thinks't thee, stand me now upon-
He that hath kill'd my king, and whor'd my
mother;
Popp'd in between th' election and my hopes;

Thrown out his angle for my Proper life,
 And with such coz'nage— is't not perfect
 conscience
 To quit him with this arm? And is't not to be
 damn'd
 To let this canker of our nature come
 In further evil?

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

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

HOR Peace! Who comes here?

Enter young Osric, a courtier

OSR Your lordship is right welcome back to
 Denmark

HAM I humbly thank you, sir waterfly?

HOR (*Aside to Hamlet*) No, my good lord

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

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

HAM I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit
 bonnet to his right use. 'Tis for the head.

OSR I thank your lordship, it is very hot

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

OSR It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed

HAM But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for
 my complexion

OSR Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry, as
 'twere— I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his
 Majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a
 great wager on your head. Sir, this is the matter—

HAM I beseech you remember

Hamlet moves him to put on his hat

OSR Nay, good my lord; for mine ease, in good
 faith newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an
 absolute gentleman, full of most excellent
 differences, of very soft society and great
 showing. Indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is
 the card or calendar of gentry; for you shall find
 in him the continent of what part a gentleman
 would see.

HAM Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in
 you; though, I know, to divide him inventorially
 would dozy th' arithmetic of memory, and yet but
 yaw neither in respect of his quick sail.

But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a
 soul of great article, and his infusion of such
 dearth and rareness as, to make true diction of
 him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else
 would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

OSR Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him

HAM The concernancy, sir? Why do we wrap the
 gentleman in our more rawer breath

OSR Sir?

HOR (*Aside to Hamlet*) Is't not possible to
 understand in another tongue? You will do't, sir,
 really.

HAM What imports the nomination of this
 gentleman

OSR Of Laertes?

HOR (*Aside*) His purse is empty already spent.

HAM Of him, sir

OSR I know you are not ignorant—

HAM I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it
 would not much approve me. Well, sir?

OSR You are not ignorant of what excellence
 Laertes is—

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

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

HAM What's his weapon?

OSR Rapier and dagger

HAM That's two of his weapons— but well

OSR The King, sir, hath wager'd with him six
 Barbary horses; against the which he has
 impon'd, as I take it, six French rapiers and
 poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers,
 and so. Three of the carriages, in faith, are very
 dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most
 delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

HAM What call you the carriages?

HOR (*Aside to Hamlet*) I knew you must be edified
 by the margent ere you had done.

OSR The carriages, sir, are the hangers

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

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

lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

HAM How if I answer no?

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

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

OSR Shall I redeliver you e'en so?

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

OSR I commend my duty to your lordship

HAM Yours, yours himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

HOR This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head

HAM He did comply with his dug before he suck'd it and many more of the same bevy that I know the drossy age dotes on, only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter- a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fann'd and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial-the bubbles are out,

Enter a Lord

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

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

LORD The King and Queen and all are coming down

HAM In happy time

LORD The Queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

HAM She well instructs me
Exit Lord

HOR You will lose this wager, my lord

HAM I do not think so continual practice. I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart. But it is no matter.

HOR Nay, good my lord -

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

HOR If your mind dislike anything, obey it repair hither and say you are not fit.

HAM Not a whit, we defy augury; there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now,

'tis not to come', if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all. Since no man knows aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.
Enter King, Queen, Laertes, Osric, and Lords, with other Attendants with foils and gauntlets. A table and flagons of wine on it

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

The King puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's

HAM Give me your pardon, sir
But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows,
And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd
With sore distraction. What I have done
That might your nature, honour, and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet.
If Hamlet from himself be taken away,
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then? His madness. If't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts
That I have shot my arrow o'er the house
And hurt my brother.

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

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

LAER Come, one for me

HAM I'll be your foil, Laertes
Your skill shall, like a star i' th' darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

LAER You mock me, sir

HAM No, by this bad

KING Give them the foils, young Osric
You know the wager?

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

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

LAER This is too heavy; let me see another

HAM This likes me well
Prepare to play

OSR Ay, my good lord

KING Set me the stoups of wine upon that table

If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;
The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath,
And in the cup an union shall he throw
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
'Now the King drinks to Hamlet.' Come, begin.
And you the judges, bear a wary eye.

HAM Come on, sir

LAER Come, my lord

HAM One

LAER No

HAM Judgment!

OSR A hit, a very palpable hit

LAER Well, again!

KING Stay, give me drink
Here's to thy health.

Drum; trumpets sound; a piece goes off within
Give him the cup.

HAM I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile
Come. (*They play*) Another hit. What say you?

LAER A touch, a touch; I do confess't

KING Our son shall win

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

HAM Good madam!

KING Gertrude, do not drink

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

KING (*Aside*) It is the poison'd cup; it is too late

HAM I dare not drink yet, madam; by-and-by

QUEEN Come, let me wipe thy face

LAER My lord, I'll hit him now

KING I do not think't

LAER (*Aside*) And yet it is almost against my
conscience

HAM Come for the third, Laertes! You but dally
pray You Pass with your best violence;
I am afeard You make a wanton of me.

LAER Say you so? Come on

OSR Nothing neither way

LAER Have at you now!

*Laertes wounds Hamlet; then in scuffling, they
change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes*

KING Part them! They are incens'd

HAM Nay come! again! *The Queen falls*

OSR Look to the Queen there, ho!

HOR They bleed on both sides

OSR How is't, Laertes?

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

HAM How does the Queen?

KING She sounds to see them bleed

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

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

Laertes falls

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

HAM The point envenom'd too?
Then, venom, to thy work. *Hurts the King*

ALL Treason! treason!

KING O, yet defend me, friends! I am but hurt

HAM Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned
Dane,
Drink off this potion! Is thy union here?
Follow my mother. *King dies*

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

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

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

HAM As th'art a man,
Give me the cup. Let go! By heaven, I'll ha't.
O good Horatio, what a wounded name
(Things standing thus unknown) shall live behind
me!
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story. *March afar off, and shot within*
What warlike noise is this?

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

HAM O, I die, Horatio!
The potent poison quite o'ercrows my spirit.
I cannot live to hear the news from England,
But I do prophesy th' election lights
On Fortinbras. He has my dying voice.
So tell him, with th' occurrents, more and less,
Which have solicited— the rest is silence. *Dies*

HOR Now cracks a noble heart
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!
March within
Why does the drum come hither?
*Enter Fortinbras and English Ambassadors, with
Drum, Colours, and Attendants*

FORT Where is this sight?

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

FORT This quarry cries on havoc
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck.

AMBASSADOR The sight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late.
The ears are senseless that should give us bearing
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.
Where should We have our thanks?

HOR Not from his mouth,
Had it th' ability of life to thank you.
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from
England,
Are here arriv'd, give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view;
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about. So shall You hear
Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts;
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters;
Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause;
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on th' inventors' heads. All this can I
Truly deliver.

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

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

FORT Let four captains

Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have prov'd most royally; and for his passage
The soldiers' music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him.
Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this
Becomes the field but here shows much amiss.
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.
*Exeunt marching; after the which a peal of
ordnance are shot off*