Hamlet

By William Shakespeare

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with Susan Ruddick - Sarah Blackstone - Charles Darlington

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Characters in the Play

THE GHOST
HAMLET, Prince of Denmark, son of the late King Hamlet and Queen Gertrude
QUEEN GERTRUDE, widow of King Hamlet, now married to Claudius
KING CLAUDIUS, brother to the late King Hamlet

OPHELIA
LAERTES, her brother
POLONIUS, father of Ophelia and Laertes, councillor to King Claudius
REYNALDO, servant to Polonius

HORATIO, Hamlet's friend and confidant

Courtiers at the Danish court:
- VOLTEMAND
- CORNELIUS
- ROSENCRANTZ
- GUILDENSTERN
- OSRIC
- Gentlemen
- A Lord

Danish soldiers:
- FRANCISCO
- BARNARDO
- MARCELLUS

FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway
A Captain in Fortinbras's army

Ambassadors to Denmark from England

Players who take the roles of Prologue, Player King, Player Queen, and Lucianus in *The Murder of Gonzago*

Two Messengers

Sailors
Gravedigger
Gravedigger's companion
Doctor of Divinity

Attendants, Lords, Guards, Musicians, Laertes's Followers,
Soldiers, Officers

ACT 1

Scene 1

Enter Barnardo and Francisco, two sentinels.

BARNARDO Who's there?
FRANCISCO
  Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.
BARNARDO Long live the King!
FRANCISCO Barnardo?
BARNARDO He.
FRANCISCO
  You come most carefully upon your hour.
BARNARDO
  'Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco.
FRANCISCO
  For this relief much thanks. 'Tis bitter cold,
  And I am sick at heart.
BARNARDO Have you had quiet guard?
FRANCISCO Not a mouse stirring.
BARNARDO Well, good night.
  If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
  The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

FRANCISCO
  I think I hear them.—Stand ho! Who is there?
HORATIO Friends to this ground.
MARCELLUS And liegemen to the Dane.
FRANCISCO Give you good night.
MARCELLUS
  O farewell, honest soldier. Who hath relieved
    you?
FRANCISCO
  Barnardo hath my place. Give you good night.
Francisco exits.
MARCELLUS Holla, Barnardo.
BARNARDO Say, what, is Horatio there?
HORATIO A piece of him.
BARNARDO
  Welcome, Horatio.—Welcome, good Marcellus.
HORATIO
  What, has this thing appeared again tonight?
BARNARDO I have seen nothing.
MARCELLUS
  Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy
  And will not let belief take hold of him
  Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us.
  Therefore I have entreated him along
  With us to watch the minutes of this night,
  That, if again this apparition come,
  He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

HORATIO
Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.
BARNARDO Sit down awhile,
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we have two nights seen.
HORATIO Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Barnardo speak of this.
BARNARDO Last night of all,
When yond same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his course t' illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one—

Enter Ghost.

MARCELLUS
Peace, break thee off! Look where it comes again.
BARNARDO
In the same figure like the King that's dead.
MARCELLUS*, to Horatio*
Thou art a scholar. Speak to it, Horatio.
BARNARDO
Looks he not like the King? Mark it, Horatio.
HORATIO
Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder.
BARNARDO
It would be spoke to.
MARCELLUS Speak to it, Horatio.
HORATIO
What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? By heaven, I charge thee,
speak.
MARCELLUS
It is offended.
BARNARDO See, it stalks away.
HORATIO
Stay! speak! speak! I charge thee, speak!

Ghost exits.

MARCELLUS 'Tis gone and will not answer.
BARNARDO
How now, Horatio, you tremble and look pale.
Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you on 't?
HORATIO
Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.
MARCELLUS Is it not like the King?
HORATIO As thou art to thyself.
Such was the very armor he had on
When he the ambitious Norway combated.
So frowned he once when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.

’Tis strange.
MARCELLUS
Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.
HORATIO
In what particular thought to work I know not,
But in the gross and scope of mine opinion
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.
MARCELLUS
Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon
And foreign mart for implements of war,
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week.
What might be toward that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint laborer with the day?
Who is ’t that can inform me?
HORATIO That can I.
At least the whisper goes so: our last king,
Whose image even but now appeared to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto pricked on by a most emulate pride,
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet
(For so this side of our known world esteemed him)
Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a sealed compact,
Well ratified by law and heraldry,
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror.
Against the which a moiety competent
Was gagèd by our king, which had returned
To the inheritance of Fortinbras
Had he been vanquisher, as, by the same comart
And carriage of the article designed,
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
Of unimprovèd mettle hot and full,
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Sharked up a list of lawless resolutes
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 posthaste and rummage in the land.
BARNARDO
I think it be no other but e’en so.
Well may it sort that this portentous figure
Comes armèd through our watch so like the king
That was and is the question of these wars.
HORATIO
A mote it is to trouble the mind’s eye.
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,

A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
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 feared events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates
And prologue to the omen coming on,
Have heaven and Earth together demonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen.

Enter Ghost.

But soft, behold! Lo, where it comes again!
I'll cross it though it blast me.—Stay, illusion!
It 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 grace to me,
Speak to me.
If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which happily foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak!
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
Speak of it. *The cock crows.*
Stay and speak!—Stop it, Marcellus.

MARCELLUS
Shall I strike it with my partisan?

HORATIO Do, if it will not stand.

BARNARDO 'Tis here.

HORATIO 'Tis here.
Ghost exits.

MARCELLUS 'Tis gone.
We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence,
For it is as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

BARNARDO
It was about to speak when the cock crew.

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

MARCELLUS
It faded on the crowing of the cock.

Some say that ever ’gainst that season comes
Wherein our Savior’s birth is celebrated,
This 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 hallowed and so gracious is that time.

HORATIO

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

MARCELLUS

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

They exit.

Scene 2

Flourish. Enter Claudius, King of Denmark, Gertrude the Queen, the Council, as Polonius, and his son Laertes, Hamlet, with others, among them Voltemand and Cornelius.

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 barred
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,
Colleaguèd with this dream of his advantage,
He hath not failed to pester us with message
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds 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.
Giving them a paper.
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

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

KING
We doubt it nothing. Heartily farewell.
Voltemand and Cornelius exit.
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?

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

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

POLONIUS
Hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laborsome petition, and at last
Upon his will I sealed my hard consent.
I do beseech you give him leave to go.

KING
Take thy fair hour, Laertes. Time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will.—
But now, my cousin Hamlet and my son—

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

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

HAMLET
Not so, my lord; I am too much in the sun.

QUEEN
Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not forever with thy vailèd lids

Seek for thy noble father in the dust.
Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.
HAMLET
Ay, madam, it is common.
QUEEN If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?
HAMLET
"Seems," madam? Nay, it is. I know not "seems."
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected havior of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
That can denote me truly. These indeed "seem,"
For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passes show,
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.
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 persever
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 unschooled.
For what we know must be and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd, whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died today,
"This must be so." We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe and think of us
As of a father; for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne,
And with no less nobility of love
Than that which dearest father bears his son
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire,
And we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.
QUEEN
Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet.
I pray thee, stay with us. Go not to Wittenberg.

HAMLET
I shall in all my best obey you, madam.
KING
Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.
Be as ourself in Denmark.—Madam, come.
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart, in grace whereof
No jocund health that Denmark drinks today
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the King's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,
Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away.
Flourish. All but Hamlet exit.
HAMLET
O, that this too, too sullied flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God, God,
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on 't, ah fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this:
But two months dead—nay, not so much, not two.
So excellent a king, that was to this
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and Earth,
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on. And yet, within a month
(Let me not think on 't; frailty, thy name is woman!),
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she 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 mourned 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 gallèd eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo.

HORATIO Hail to your Lordship.
HAMLET I am glad to see you well.
Horatio—or I do forget myself!
HORATIO
The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.
HAMLET
Sir, my good friend. I'll change that name with you.
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?—

Marcellus?
MARCELLUS My good lord.
HAMLET
I am very glad to see you. *To Barnardo.* Good even, sir.—
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?
HORATIO
A truant disposition, good my lord.
HAMLET
I would not hear your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do 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.
HORATIO
My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.
HAMLET
I prithee, do not mock me, fellow student.
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.
HORATIO
Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.
HAMLET
Thrift, thrift, Horatio. The funeral baked meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father—methinks I see my father.
HORATIO
Where, my lord?
HAMLET In my mind's eye, Horatio.
HORATIO
I saw him once. He was a goodly king.
HAMLET
He was a man. Take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.
HORATIO
My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.
HAMLET Saw who?
HORATIO
My lord, the King your father.
HAMLET The King my father?
HORATIO
Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver
Upon the witness of these gentlemen
This marvel to you.
HAMLET For God's love, let me hear!
HORATIO
Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch,
In the dead waste and middle of the night,
Been thus encountered: a figure like your father,
Armed at point exactly, cap-à-pie,
Appears before them and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them. Thrice he walked

By their oppressed and fear-surprisèd eyes
Within his truncheon's length, whilst they, distilled
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did,
And I with them the third night kept the watch,
Where, as they had delivered, both in time,
Form of the thing (each word made true and good),
The apparition comes. I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.

HAMLET But where was this?

MARCELLUS

My lord, upon the platform where we watch.

HAMLET

Did you not speak to it?

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

HAMLET 'Tis very strange.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET Indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch tonight?

ALL We do, my lord.

HAMLET

Armed, say you?

ALL Armed, my lord.

HAMLET From top to toe?

ALL My lord, from head to foot.

HAMLET Then saw you not his face?

HORATIO

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

HAMLET What, looked he frowningly?

HORATIO

A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

HAMLET Pale or red?

HORATIO

Nay, very pale.

HAMLET And fixed his eyes upon you?

HORATIO

Most constantly.

HAMLET I would I had been there.

HORATIO It would have much amazed you.

HAMLET Very like. Stayed it long?

HORATIO

While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

BARNARDO/MARCELLUS Longer, longer.

HORATIO

Not when I saw 't.

HAMLET His beard was grizzled, no?
HORATIO
It was as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silvered.
HAMLET I will watch tonight.
Perchance 'twill walk again.
HORATIO I warrant it will.
HAMLET
If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto concealed this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsomever else shall hap tonight,
Give it an understanding but no tongue.
I will requite your loves. So fare you well.
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.
ALL Our duty to your Honor.
HAMLET
Your loves, as mine to you. Farewell.
All but Hamlet exit.
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.
He exits.

Scene 3

Enter Laertes and Ophelia, his sister.

LAERTES
My necessaries are embarked. Farewell.
And, sister, as the winds give benefit
And convey is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.
OPHELIA Do you doubt that?
LAERTES
For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favor,
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute,
No more.
OPHELIA No more but so?
LAERTES Think it no more.
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews and 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 weighed, 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 the health of this whole state.
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Then, if he says he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed, which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honor may sustain
If with too credent ear you list his songs
Or lose your heart or your chaste treasure open
To his unmastered importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia; fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough
If she unmask her beauty to the moon.
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes.
The canker galls the infants of the spring
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,
And, in the morn and liquid dew of youth,
Contagious blastments are most imminent.
Be wary, then; best safety lies in fear.
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPHELIA

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

LAERTES 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.

POLONIUS

Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stayed for. There, my blessing with thee.
And these few precepts in thy memory
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel,
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatched, unfledged courage. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,
Bear 't that th' opposèd may beware of thee.

Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice.
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not expressed in fancy (rich, not gaudy),
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine 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.

LAERTES

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POLONIUS

The time invests you. Go, your servants tend.

LAERTES

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

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

LAERTES Farewell. *Laertes exits.*

POLONIUS

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

OPHELIA

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

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

OPHELIA

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

POLONIUS

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

OPHELIA

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

POLONIUS

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

OPHELIA

My lord, he hath importuned me with love

In honorable fashion—
POLONIUS
Ay, “fashion” you may call it. Go to, go to!
OPHELIA
And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.
POLONIUS
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 parle. For Lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him that he is young,
And with a larger tether may he walk
Than may be given you. In few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers,
Not of that dye which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,
Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds
The better to beguile. This is for all:
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth
Have you so slander any moment leisure
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to ’t, I charge you. Come your ways.
OPHELIA I shall obey, my lord.
They exit.

Scene 4

Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.

HAMLET
The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.
HORATIO
It is a nipping and an eager air.
HAMLET What hour now?
HORATIO I think it lacks of twelve.
MARCELLUS No, it is struck.
HORATIO
Indeed, I heard it not. It then draws near the season
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.
A flourish of trumpets and two pieces goes off.
What does this mean, my lord?
HAMLET
The King doth wake tonight 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.
HORATIO Is it a custom?
HAMLET Ay, marry, is ’t,
But, to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom

More honored in the breach than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations.
They clepe us drunkards and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition. And, indeed, it takes
From our achievements, though performed at height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So oft it chances 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,
His 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 evil
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
To his own scandal.

Enter Ghost.

HORATIO Look, my lord, it comes.

HAMLET
Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,
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 canonized bones, hearsèd in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulcher,
Wherein we saw thee quietly interred,
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws
To cast thee up again. What may this mean
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel,
Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous, and we fools of nature
So horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?

Ghost beckons.

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

MARCELLUS Look with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removèd ground.

But do not go with it.
HORATIO No, by no means.
HAMLET
It will not speak. Then I will follow it.
HORATIO
Do not, my lord.
HAMLET Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee.
And for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again. I'll follow it.
HORATIO
What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord?
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other horrible form
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness? Think of it.
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to the sea
And hears it roar beneath.
HAMLET
It waves me still.—Go on, I'll follow thee.
MARCELLUS
You shall not go, my lord. *They hold back Hamlet.*
HAMLET Hold off your hands.
HORATIO
Be ruled. You shall not go.
HAMLET My fate cries out
And makes each petty arture in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
Still am I called. Unhand me, gentlemen.
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!
I say, away!—Go on. I'll follow thee.
Ghost and Hamlet exit.
HORATIO
He waxes desperate with imagination.
MARCELLUS
Let's follow. 'Tis not fit thus to obey him.
HORATIO
Have after. To what issue will this come?
MARCELLUS
Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.
HORATIO
Heaven will direct it.
MARCELLUS Nay, let's follow him.
They exit.

Scene 5

Enter Ghost and Hamlet.

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

GHOST
Mark me.
HAMLET I will.
GHOST My hour is almost come
When I to sulf'rous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.
HAMLET Alas, poor ghost!
GHOST
Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.
HAMLET Speak. I am bound to hear.
GHOST
So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.
HAMLET What?
GHOST I am thy father's spirit,
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night
And for the day confined to fast in fires
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combinèd locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand an end,
Like quills upon the fearful porpentine.
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—
HAMLET O God!
GHOST
Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.
HAMLET Murder?
GHOST
Murder most foul, as in the best it is,
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.
HAMLET
Haste me to know 't, that I, with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.
GHOST I find thee apt;
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots 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 forgèd process of my death
Rankly abused. But know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.
HAMLET O, my prophetic soul! My uncle!
GHOST
Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wits, with traitorous gifts—
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power

So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.
O Hamlet, what a falling off was there!
From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage, and to decline
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine.
But virtue, as it never will be moved,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So, lust, though to a radiant angel linked,
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 cursèd hebona in a vial
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leprous distilment, whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
And with a sudden vigor it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine,
And a most instant tetter barked 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 dispatched,
Cut off, even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled,
No reck'ning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.
O horrible, O horrible, most horrible!
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damnèd incest.
But, howsomever thou pursues this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once.
The glowworm shows the matin to be near
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire.
Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me. *He exits.*

HAMLET
O all you host of heaven! O Earth! What else?
And shall I couple hell? O fie! Hold, hold, my heart,
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee?
Ay, thou poor ghost, whiles 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,
Unmixed with baser matter. Yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd 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.

He writes.

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

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

HORATIO My lord, my lord!
MARCELLUS Lord Hamlet.
HORATIO Heavens secure him!
HAMLET So be it.
MARCELLUS Illo, ho, ho, my lord!
HAMLET Hillo, ho, ho, boy! Come, bird, come!
MARCELLUS
How is 't, my noble lord?
HORATIO What news, my lord?
HAMLET O, wonderful!
HORATIO
Good my lord, tell it.
HAMLET No, you will reveal it.
HORATIO
Not I, my lord, by heaven.
MARCELLUS Nor I, my lord.
HAMLET
How say you, then? Would heart of man once think it?
But you'll be secret?
HORATIO/MARCELLUS Ay, by heaven, my lord.
HAMLET
There's never a villain dwelling in all Denmark
But he's an arrant knave.
HORATIO
There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave
To tell us this.
HAMLET Why, right, you are in the right.
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part,
You, as your business and desire shall point you
(For every man hath business and desire,
Such as it is), and for my own poor part,
I will go pray.
HORATIO
These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.
HAMLET
I am sorry they offend you, heartily;
Yes, faith, heartily.

HORATIO There's no offense, my lord.
HAMLET
Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,
And much offense, too. Touching this vision here,
It is an honest ghost—that let me tell you.
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster 't as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.
HORATIO What is 't, my lord? We will.
HAMLET
Never make known what you have seen tonight.
HORATIO/MARCELLUS My lord, we will not.
HAMLET Nay, but swear 't.
HORATIO In faith, my lord, not I.
MARCELLUS Nor I, my lord, in faith.
HAMLET
Upon my sword.
MARCELLUS We have sworn, my lord, already.
HAMLET Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.
GHOST *cries under the stage* Swear.
HAMLET
Ha, ha, boy, sayst thou so? Art thou there,
truepenny?
Come on, you hear this fellow in the cellarage.
Consent to swear.
HORATIO Propose the oath, my lord.
HAMLET
Never to speak of this that you have seen,
Swear by my sword.
GHOST*, beneath* Swear.
HAMLET
Hic et ubique? Then we'll shift our ground.
Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword.
Swear by my sword
Never to speak of this that you have heard.
GHOST*, beneath* Swear by his sword.
HAMLET
Well said, old mole. Canst work i' th' earth so fast?—
A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends.
HORATIO
O day and night, but this is wondrous strange.
HAMLET
And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come.
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
How strange or odd some'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 encumbered thus, or this headshake,
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 do swear,
So grace and mercy at your most need help you.
GHOST, *beneath* Swear.
HAMLET
Rest, rest, perturbèd 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 cursèd spite
That ever I was born to set it right!
Nay, come, let’s go together.

They exit.

ACT 2

Scene 1

Enter old Polonius with his man Reynaldo.

POLONIUS
Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.
REYNALDO I will, my lord.
POLONIUS
You shall do marvelous wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquire
Of his behavior.
REYNALDO My lord, I did intend it.
POLONIUS
Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir,
Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris;
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
What company, at what expense; and finding
By this encompassment and drift of question
That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it.
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him,
As thus: "I know his father and his friends
And, in part, him." Do you mark this, Reynaldo?
REYNALDO Ay, very well, my lord.
POLONIUS
"And, in part, him, but," you may say, "not well.
But if 't be he I mean, he's very wild,
Addicted so and so." And there put on him
What forgeries you please—marry, none so rank
As may dishonor him, take heed of that,
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.
REYNALDO As gaming, my lord.
POLONIUS Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing,
Quarreling, drabbing—you may go so far.
REYNALDO My lord, that would dishonor him.
POLONIUS
Faith, no, as you may season it in the charge.
You must not put another scandal on him
That he is open to incontinency;
That's not my meaning. But breathe his faults so quaintly
That they may seem the taints of liberty,
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unreclaimèd blood,
Of general assault.
REYNALDO But, my good lord—
POLONIUS Wherefore should you do this?
REYNALDO Ay, my lord, I would know that.
POLONIUS Marry, sir, here's my drift,

And I believe it is a fetch of wit.
You, laying these slight sullies on my son,
As 'twere a thing a little soiled 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 assured
He closes with you in this consequence:
"Good sir," or so, or "friend," or "gentleman,"
According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country—
REYNALDO Very good, my lord.
POLONIUS And then, sir, does he this, he does—what was I about to say? By the Mass, I was about to say something. Where did I leave?
REYNALDO At "closes in the consequence," at "friend, or so," and "gentleman."
POLONIUS
At "closes in the consequence"—ay, marry—
He closes thus: "I know the gentleman.
I saw him yesterday," or "th' other day"
(Or then, or then, with such or such), "and as you say,
There was he 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 take this carp of truth;
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlasses and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out.
So by my former lecture and advice
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?
REYNALDO
My lord, I have.
POLONIUS God be wi' you. Fare you well.
REYNALDO Good my lord.
POLONIUS
Observe his inclination in yourself.
REYNALDO I shall, my lord.
POLONIUS And let him ply his music.
REYNALDO Well, my lord.
POLONIUS
Farewell. *Reynaldo exits.*

Enter Ophelia.

How now, Ophelia, what's the matter?
OPHELIA
O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!
POLONIUS With what, i' th' name of God?
OPHELIA
My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,
No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,
Ungartered, and down-gyvèd 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 loosèd out of hell
To speak of horrors—he comes before me.

POLONIUS
Mad for thy love?

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

POLONIUS What said he?

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

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

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

POLONIUS That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not coted him. I feared 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.

They exit.

Scene 2

Flourish. Enter King and Queen, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and Attendants.

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 call it,
Sith nor th' exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was. What it should be,
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
So much from th' understanding of himself
I cannot dream of. I entreat you both
That, being of so young days brought up with him
And sith so neighbored to his youth and havior,
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time, so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
So much as from occasion you may glean,
Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus
That, opened, lies within our remedy.

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

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

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

KING
Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

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

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

QUEEN Ay, amen!

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit with some Attendants.

Enter Polonius.

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

KING
Thou still hast been the father of good news.

POLONIUS

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

KING

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

POLONIUS

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

KING

Thyself do grace to them and bring them in.

Polonius exits.

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 Ambassadors Voltemand and Cornelius with Polonius.

Welcome, my good friends.
Say, Voltemand, what from our brother Norway?

VOLTEMAND

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

He 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 considered time, we'll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.
Meantime, we thank you for your well-took labor.

Go to your rest. At night we'll feast together.
Most welcome home!

Voltemand and Cornelius exit.

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

QUEEN More matter with less art.

POLONIUS
Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he's mad, 'tis true; 'tis true 'tis pity,
And pity 'tis 'tis true—a foolish figure,
But farewell it, for I will use no art.
Mad let us grant him then, and now remains
That we find out the cause of this effect,
Or, rather say, the cause of this defect,
For this effect defective comes by cause.
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
Perpend.
I have a daughter (have while she is mine)
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this. Now gather and surmise.
He reads. To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia—
That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; "beautified" is a vile phrase. But you shall hear. Thus: *He reads.*
In her excellent white bosom, these, etc.—

QUEEN Came this from Hamlet to her?

POLONIUS
Good madam, stay awhile. I will be faithful.
He reads the letter.
Doubt thou the stars are fire,
Doubt that the sun doth move,
Doubt truth to be a liar,
But never doubt I love.
O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers. I have not art to reckon my groans, but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

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

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

KING But how hath she received his love?

POLONIUS What do you think of me?

KING
As of a man faithful and honorable.

POLONIUS
I would fain prove so. But what might you think,
When I had seen this hot love on the wing
(As I perceived it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me), what might you,
Or my dear Majesty your queen here, think,
If I had played the desk or table-book
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,
Or looked 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, repelled (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*, to Queen* Do you think 'tis this?
QUEEN It may be, very like.
POLONIUS
Hath there been such a time (I would fain know
that)
That I have positively said "'Tis so,"
When it proved otherwise?
KING Not that I know.
POLONIUS
Take this from this, if this be otherwise.
If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid, indeed,
Within the center.
KING How may we try it further?
POLONIUS
You know sometimes he walks four hours together
Here in the lobby.
QUEEN So he does indeed.
POLONIUS
At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him.
To the King. Be you and I behind an arras then.
Mark the encounter. If he love her not,
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.
KING We will try it.

Enter Hamlet reading on a book.

QUEEN
But look where sadly the poor wretch comes
reading.
POLONIUS
Away, I do beseech you both, away.

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

King and Queen exit with Attendants.

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

HAMLET Well, God-a-mercy.

POLONIUS Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET Excellent well. You are a fishmonger.

POLONIUS Not I, my lord.

HAMLET Then I would you were so honest a man.

POLONIUS Honest, my lord?

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

POLONIUS That's very true, my lord.

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

POLONIUS I have, my lord.

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

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

HAMLET Words, words, words.

POLONIUS What is the matter, my lord?

HAMLET Between who?

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

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

POLONIUS, *aside* Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't.—Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

HAMLET Into my grave?

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

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

POLONIUS Fare you well, my lord.

HAMLET, *aside* These tedious old fools.

Enter Guildenstern and Rosencrantz.

POLONIUS You go to seek the Lord Hamlet. There he is.
ROSENCRANTZ*, to Polonius* God save you, sir.
Polonius exits.
GUILDENSTERN My honored lord.
ROSENCRANTZ My most dear lord.
HAMLET My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do you both?
ROSENCRANTZ
As the indifferent children of the earth.
GUILDENSTERN
Happy in that we are not overhappy.
On Fortune's cap, we are not the very button.
HAMLET Nor the soles of her shoe?
ROSENCRANTZ Neither, my lord.
HAMLET Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favors?
GUILDENSTERN Faith, her privates we.
HAMLET In the secret parts of Fortune? O, most true! She is a strumpet. What news?
ROSENCRANTZ None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.
HAMLET Then is doomsday near. But your news is not true. Let me question more in particular. What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune that she sends you to prison hither?
GUILDENSTERN Prison, my lord?
HAMLET Denmark's a prison.
ROSENCRANTZ Then is the world one.
HAMLET A goodly one, in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o' th' worst.
ROSENCRANTZ We think not so, my lord.
HAMLET Why, then, 'tis none to you, for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. To me, it is a prison.
ROSENCRANTZ Why, then, your ambition makes it one. 'Tis too narrow for your mind.
HAMLET O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.
GUILDENSTERN Which dreams, indeed, are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.
HAMLET A dream itself is but a shadow.
ROSENCRANTZ Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.
HAMLET Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to th' court? For, by my fay, I cannot reason.
ROSENCRANTZ/GUILDENSTERN We'll wait upon you.
HAMLET No such matter. I will not sort you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at

Elsinore?
ROSENCRANTZ To visit you, my lord, no other occasion.
HAMLET Beggar that I am, I am 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, come, deal justly with me. Come, come; nay, speak.
GUILDENSTERN What should we say, my lord?
HAMLET Anything but to th' purpose. You were sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to color. I know the good king and queen have sent for you.
ROSENCRANTZ To what end, my lord?
HAMLET That you must teach me. But let me conjure you by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer can charge you withal: be even and direct with me whether you were sent for or no.
ROSENCRANTZ*, to Guildenstern* What say you?
HAMLET*, aside* Nay, then, I have an eye of you.—If you love me, hold not off.
GUILDENSTERN My lord, we were sent for.
HAMLET I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen molt no feather. I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises, and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the Earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof, fretted with golden fire—why, it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable; in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god: the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals—and yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me, no, nor women neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.
ROSENCRANTZ My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.
HAMLET Why did you laugh, then, when I said "man delights not me"?
ROSENCRANTZ To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what Lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you. We coted them on the way, and hither are they coming to offer you service.
HAMLET He that plays the king shall be welcome—his Majesty shall have tribute on me. The adventurous knight shall use his foil and target, the lover shall not sigh gratis, the humorous man shall end his

part in peace, the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' th' sear, and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for 't. What players are they?

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

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

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

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

ROSENCRANTZ No, indeed are they not.

HAMLET How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

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

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

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

HAMLET Is 't possible?

GUILDENSTERN O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

HAMLET Do the boys carry it away?

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

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

A flourish for the Players.

GUILDENSTERN There are the players.

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

GUILDENSTERN In what, my dear lord?

HAMLET I am but mad north-north-west. When the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Enter Polonius.

POLONIUS Well be with you, gentlemen.
HAMLET Hark you, Guildenstern, and you too—at each ear a hearer! That great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling clouts.
ROSENCRANTZ Haply he is the second time come to them, for they say an old man is twice a child.
HAMLET I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it.—You say right, sir, a Monday morning, 'twas then indeed.
POLONIUS My lord, I have news to tell you.
HAMLET My lord, I have news to tell you: when Roscius was an actor in Rome—
POLONIUS The actors are come hither, my lord.
HAMLET Buzz, buzz.
POLONIUS Upon my honor—
HAMLET Then came each actor on his ass.
POLONIUS The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.
HAMLET O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!
POLONIUS What a treasure had he, my lord?
HAMLET Why,
One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he lovèd passing well.
POLONIUS, *aside* Still on my daughter.
HAMLET Am I not i' th' right, old Jephthah?
POLONIUS If you call me "Jephthah," my lord: I have a daughter that I love passing well.
HAMLET Nay, that follows not.
POLONIUS What follows then, my lord?
HAMLET Why,
As by lot, God wot
and then, you know,
It came to pass, as most like it was—
the first row of the pious chanson will show you more, for look where my abridgment comes.

Enter the 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 valanced 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 cracked within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to 't like French falconers, fly at anything we see. We'll have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your quality. Come, a passionate speech.

FIRST PLAYER What speech, my good lord?

HAMLET I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted, or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million: 'twas caviary to the general. But it was (as I received it, and others whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine) an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savory, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affection, but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet and, by very much, more handsome than fine. One speech in 't I chiefly loved. 'Twas Aeneas' tale to Dido, and thereabout of it especially when he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line—let me see, let me see:

The rugged Pyrrhus, like 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 couchèd in th' ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smeared
With heraldry more dismal. Head to foot,
Now is he total gules, horridly tricked
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and a damnèd light
To their lord's murder. Roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o'ersizèd with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks.

So, proceed you.

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

FIRST PLAYER *Anon he finds him*
Striking too short at Greeks. His antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command. Unequal matched,
Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide;
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
Th' unnervèd 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, seemed 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,
Arousèd vengeance sets him new a-work,
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armor, forged for proof eterne,
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.
Out, out, thou strumpet Fortune! All you gods
In general synod take away her power,
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven
As low as to the fiends!

POLONIUS This is too long.

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

FIRST PLAYER
But who, ah woe, had seen the moblèd queen—

HAMLET "The moblèd queen"?

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

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

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

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

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

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

POLONIUS Come, sirs.

HAMLET Follow him, friends. We'll hear a play

tomorrow. *As Polonius and Players exit, Hamlet speaks to the First Player.* Dost thou hear me, old friend? Can you play "The Murder of Gonzago"?

FIRST PLAYER Ay, my lord.

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

FIRST PLAYER Ay, my lord.

HAMLET Very well. Follow that lord—and look you mock him not. *First Player exits.* My good friends, I'll leave you till night. You are welcome to Elsinore.

ROSENCRANTZ Good my lord.

HAMLET

Ay, so, good-bye to you. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit.*

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 wanned,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit—and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to 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 appall the free,
Confound the ignorant and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing—no, not for a king
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damned defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me "villain"? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' th' throat
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha! 'Swounds, I should take it! For it cannot be
But I am pigeon-livered 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 murdered,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words
And fall a-cursing like a very drab,

A stallion! Fie upon ’t! Foh!
About, my brains!—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 proclaimed 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 do 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.

He exits.

ACT 3

Scene 1

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

KING
And can you by no drift of conference
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?
ROSENCRANTZ
He does confess he feels himself distracted,
But from what cause he will by no means speak.
GUILDENSTERN
Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,
But with a crafty madness keeps aloof
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.
QUEEN Did he receive you well?
ROSENCRANTZ Most like a gentleman.
GUILDENSTERN
But with much forcing of his disposition.
ROSENCRANTZ
Niggard of question, but of our demands
Most free in his reply.
QUEEN Did you assay him to any pastime?
ROSENCRANTZ
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.
POLONIUS 'Tis most true,
And he beseeched 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 inclined.
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge
And drive his purpose into these delights.
ROSENCRANTZ
We shall, my lord. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and Lords exit.*
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 behaved,

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 honors.
OPHELIA Madam, I wish it may.

Queen exits.

POLONIUS
Ophelia, walk you here.—Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves. *To Ophelia.* Read on this book,
That show of such an exercise may color
Your loneliness.—We are oft to blame in this
('Tis too much proved), that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.
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 burden!
POLONIUS
I hear him coming. Let's withdraw, my lord.

They withdraw.

Enter Hamlet.

HAMLET
To be or not to be—that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And, by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep—
No more—and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to—'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. 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 despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,

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

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

HAMLET I humbly thank you, well.

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

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

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

HAMLET Ha, ha, are you honest?

OPHELIA My lord?

HAMLET Are you fair?

OPHELIA What means your Lordship?

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

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

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

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

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

OPHELIA I was the more deceived.

HAMLET Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offenses at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves

all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

OPHELIA At home, my lord.

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

OPHELIA O, help him, you sweet heavens!

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

OPHELIA Heavenly powers, restore him!

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

OPHELIA

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

KING*, advancing with Polonius*

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

POLONIUS

It shall do well. But yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love.—How now, Ophelia?

You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;
We heard it all.—My lord, do as you please,
But, if you hold it fit, after the play
Let his queen-mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief. Let her be round with him;
And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference. If she find him not,
To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.
KING It shall be so.
Madness in great ones must not unwatched go.

They exit.

Scene 2

Enter Hamlet and three of the Players.

HAMLET Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious, periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant. It out-Herods Herod. Pray you, avoid it.
PLAYER I warrant your Honor.
HAMLET Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature. For anything so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her 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 makes the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theater of others. O, there be players that I have seen play and heard others praise (and that highly), not to speak it profanely, that, neither having th' accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.
PLAYER I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.
HAMLET O, reform it altogether. And let those that play

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

Players exit.

Enter Polonius, Guildenstern, and Rosencrantz.

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

POLONIUS And the Queen too, and that presently.

HAMLET Bid the players make haste. *Polonius exits.*
Will you two help to hasten them?

ROSENCRANTZ Ay, my lord. *They exit.*

HAMLET What ho, Horatio!

Enter Horatio.

HORATIO Here, sweet lord, at your service.

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

HORATIO
O, my dear lord—

HAMLET Nay, do not think I flatter,
For what advancement may I hope from thee
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flattered?
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 sealed thee for herself. For thou hast been
As one in suffering all that suffers nothing,
A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and blessed are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commeddled
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.—
There is a play tonight before the King.
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death.
I prithee, when thou 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 damnèd ghost that we have seen,

And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note,
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And, after, we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.
HORATIO Well, my lord.
If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.
Sound a flourish.
HAMLET They are coming to the play. I must be idle.
Get you a place.

Enter Trumpets and Kettle Drums. Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and other Lords attendant with the King's guard carrying torches.

KING How fares our cousin Hamlet?
HAMLET Excellent, i' faith, of the chameleon's dish. I eat the air, promise-crammed. You cannot feed capons so.
KING I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet. These words are not mine.
HAMLET No, nor mine now. *To Polonius.* My lord, you played once i' th' university, you say?
POLONIUS That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.
HAMLET What did you enact?
POLONIUS I did enact Julius Caesar. I was killed i' th' Capitol. Brutus killed me.
HAMLET It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there.—Be the players ready?
ROSENCRANTZ Ay, my lord. They stay upon your patience.
QUEEN Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.
HAMLET No, good mother. Here's metal more attractive. *Hamlet takes a place near Ophelia.*
POLONIUS*, to the King* Oh, ho! Do you mark that?
HAMLET Lady, shall I lie in your lap?
OPHELIA No, my lord.
HAMLET I mean, my head upon your lap?
OPHELIA Ay, my lord.
HAMLET Do you think I meant country matters?
OPHELIA I think nothing, my lord.
HAMLET That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.
OPHELIA What is, my lord?
HAMLET Nothing.
OPHELIA You are merry, my lord.
HAMLET Who, I?
OPHELIA Ay, my lord.
HAMLET O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? For look you how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within 's two hours.
OPHELIA Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

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

The trumpets sounds. Dumb show follows.

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 lies him down upon a bank of flowers. She, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in another man, takes off his crown, kisses it, pours poison in the sleeper's ears, and leaves him. The Queen returns, finds the King dead, makes passionate action. The poisoner with some three or four come in again, seem to condole with her. The dead body is carried away. The poisoner woos the Queen with gifts. She seems harsh awhile but in the end accepts his love.

Players exit.

OPHELIA What means this, my lord?

HAMLET Marry, this is miching mallecho. It means mischief.

OPHELIA Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue.

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

OPHELIA Will he tell us what this show meant?

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

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

PROLOGUE

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

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

OPHELIA 'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET As woman's love.

Enter the Player King and Queen.

PLAYER KING

Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbèd ground,
And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands

Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

PLAYER QUEEN

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

PLAYER KING

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

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

HAMLET That's wormwood!

PLAYER QUEEN

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

PLAYER KING

I do believe you think what now you speak,
But what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth, but poor validity,
Which now, the fruit unripe, sticks on the tree
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt.
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy
Their own 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 strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change;
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove
Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his favorite flies;
The poor, advanced, makes friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend,
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,
And who in want a hollow friend doth try
Directly seasons him his enemy.

But, orderly to end where I begun:
Our wills and fates do so contrary run
That our devices still are overthrown;
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own.
So think thou wilt no second husband wed,
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

PLAYER QUEEN

Nor Earth to me give food, nor heaven light,
Sport and repose lock from me day and night,
To desperation turn my trust and hope,
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.

HAMLET If she should break it now!

PLAYER KING

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

PLAYER QUEEN *Sleep rock thy brain,*
And never come mischance between us twain.

Player Queen exits.

HAMLET Madam, how like you this play?

QUEEN The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

HAMLET O, but she'll keep her word.

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

HAMLET No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest. No offense i' th' world.

KING What do you call the play?

HAMLET "The Mousetrap." Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna. Gonzago is the duke's name, his wife Baptista. You shall see anon. 'Tis a knavish piece of work, but what of that? Your Majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not. Let the galled jade wince; our withers are unwrung.

Enter Lucianus.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

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

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

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

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

OPHELIA Still better and worse.

HAMLET So you mis-take your husbands.—Begin, murderer. Pox, leave thy damnable faces and begin. Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

LUCIANUS

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.

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

Claudius rises.

OPHELIA The King rises.
HAMLET What, frighted with false fire?
QUEEN How fares my lord?
POLONIUS Give o'er the play.
KING Give me some light. Away!
POLONIUS Lights, lights, lights!

All but Hamlet and Horatio exit.

HAMLET
Why, let the strucken deer go weep,
The hart ungallèd 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 razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players?
HORATIO Half a share.
HAMLET A whole one, I.
For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself, and now reigns here
A very very—pajock.
HORATIO You might have rhymed.
HAMLET O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?
HORATIO Very well, my lord.
HAMLET Upon the talk of the poisoning?
HORATIO I did very well note him.
HAMLET Ah ha! Come, some music! Come, the recorders!
For if the King like not the comedy,
Why, then, belike he likes it not, perdy.
Come, some music!

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

GUILDENSTERN Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.
HAMLET Sir, a whole history.
GUILDENSTERN The King, sir—
HAMLET Ay, sir, what of him?
GUILDENSTERN Is in his retirement marvelous distempered.
HAMLET With drink, sir?
GUILDENSTERN No, my lord, with choler.

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

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

HAMLET I am tame, sir. Pronounce.

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

HAMLET You are welcome.

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

HAMLET Sir, I cannot.

ROSENCRANTZ What, my lord?

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

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

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

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

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

ROSENCRANTZ My lord, you once did love me.

HAMLET And do still, by these pickers and stealers.

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

HAMLET Sir, I lack advancement.

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

HAMLET Ay, sir, but "While the grass grows"—the proverb is something musty.

Enter the Players with recorders.

O, the recorders! Let me see one. *He takes a recorder and turns to Guildenstern.* To withdraw with you: why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

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

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

GUILDENSTERN My lord, I cannot.

HAMLET I pray you.

GUILDENSTERN Believe me, I cannot.
HAMLET I do beseech you.
GUILDENSTERN I know no touch of it, my lord.
HAMLET It is as easy as lying. Govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.
GUILDENSTERN But these cannot I command to any utt'rance of harmony. I have not the skill.
HAMLET Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me, you would seem to know my stops, you would pluck out the heart of my mystery, you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

Enter Polonius.

God bless you, sir.
POLONIUS My lord, the Queen would speak with you, and presently.
HAMLET Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?
POLONIUS By th' Mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.
HAMLET Methinks it is like a weasel.
POLONIUS It is backed like a weasel.
HAMLET Or like a whale.
POLONIUS Very like a whale.
HAMLET Then I will come to my mother by and by. *Aside.* They fool me to the top of my bent.—I will come by and by.
POLONIUS I will say so.
HAMLET "By and by" is easily said. Leave me, friends.

All but Hamlet exit.

'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.

He exits.

Scene 3

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 's as doth hourly grow
Out of his brows.
GUILDENSTERN We will ourselves provide.
Most holy and religious fear it is
To keep those many many bodies safe
That live and feed upon your Majesty.
ROSENCRANTZ
The single and peculiar life is bound
With all the strength and armor of the mind
To keep itself from noyance, but much more
That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests
The lives of many. The cess of majesty
Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw
What's near it with it; or it is a massy wheel
Fixed on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortised and adjoined, 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 this speedy voyage,
For we will fetters put about this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.
ROSENCRANTZ We will haste us.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit.

Enter Polonius.

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

Polonius exits.

O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon 't,
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will.
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,

And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin
And both neglect. What if this cursèd 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 offense?
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
To be forestallèd ere we come to fall,
Or pardoned being down? Then I'll look up.
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? "Forgive me my foul murder"?
That cannot be, since I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder:
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardoned and retain th' offense?
In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offense'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 compelled,
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 limèd soul, that, struggling to be free,
Art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay.
Bow, stubborn knees, and heart with strings of steel
Be soft as sinews of the newborn babe.
All may be well. *He kneels.*

Enter Hamlet.

HAMLET
Now might I do it pat, now he is a-praying,
And now I'll do 't. *He draws his sword.*
And so he goes to heaven,
And so am I revenged. That would be scanned:
A villain kills my father, and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.
Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread,
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven.
But in our circumstance and course of thought
'Tis heavy with him. And am I then revenged
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?
No.
Up sword, and know thou a more horrid hent.
He sheathes his sword.
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed,

At game, a-swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in 't—
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damned and black
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays.
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

Hamlet exits.

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

He exits.

Scene 4

Enter Queen and Polonius.

POLONIUS
He will come straight. Look you lay home to him.
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with
And that your Grace hath screened and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll silence me even here.
Pray you, be round with him.
HAMLET*, within* Mother, mother, mother!
QUEEN I'll warrant you. Fear me not. Withdraw,
I hear him coming.

Polonius hides behind the arras.

Enter Hamlet.

HAMLET Now, mother, what's the matter?
QUEEN
Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.
HAMLET
Mother, you have my father much offended.
QUEEN
Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.
HAMLET
Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.
QUEEN
Why, how now, Hamlet?
HAMLET What's the matter now?
QUEEN
Have you forgot me?
HAMLET No, by the rood, not so.
You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife,
And (would it were not so) you are my mother.
QUEEN
Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.
HAMLET
Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge.
You go not till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.
QUEEN
What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?
Help, ho!

POLONIUS*, behind the arras* What ho! Help!
HAMLET
How now, a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead.
He kills Polonius by thrusting a rapier through the arras.
POLONIUS*, behind the arras*
O, I am slain!
QUEEN O me, what hast thou done?
HAMLET Nay, I know not. Is it the King?
QUEEN
O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!
HAMLET
A bloody deed—almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king and marry with his brother.
QUEEN
As kill a king?
HAMLET Ay, lady, it was my word.
He pulls Polonius' body from behind the arras.
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.
To Queen. Leave wringing of your hands. Peace, sit you down,
And let me wring your heart; for so I shall
If it be made of penetrable stuff,
If damnèd custom have not brazed it so
That it be proof and bulwark against sense.
QUEEN
What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?
HAMLET Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love
And sets a blister there, makes marriage vows
As false as dicers' oaths—O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul, and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words! Heaven's face does glow
O'er this solidity and compound mass
With heated visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.
QUEEN Ay me, what act
That roars so loud and thunders in the index?
HAMLET
Look here upon this picture and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See what a grace was seated on this brow,
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,
An eye like Mars' to threaten and command,
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill,
A combination and a form indeed
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man.
This was your husband. Look you now what follows.

Here is your husband, like a mildewed 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 apoplexed; for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thralled,
But it reserved some quantity of choice
To serve in such a difference. What devil was 't
That thus hath cozened 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 ardor gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will.

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

HAMLET Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamèd bed,
Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty!

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

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

QUEEN No more!

HAMLET A king of shreds and patches—

Enter Ghost.

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

QUEEN Alas, he's mad.

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

GHOST Do not forget. This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But look, amazement on thy mother sits.
O, step between her and her fighting soul.
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.
Speak to her, Hamlet.
HAMLET How is it with you, lady?
QUEEN Alas, how is 't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy
And with th' incorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep,
And, as the sleeping soldiers in th' alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
Start up and stand an end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience! Whereon do you look?
HAMLET
On him, on him! Look you how pale he glares.
His form and cause conjoined, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable. *To the Ghost.* Do not
look upon me,
Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects. Then what I have to do
Will want true color—tears perchance for blood.
QUEEN To whom do you speak this?
HAMLET Do you see nothing there?
QUEEN
Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.
HAMLET Nor did you nothing hear?
QUEEN No, nothing but ourselves.
HAMLET
Why, look you there, look how it steals away!
My father, in his habit as he lived!
Look where he goes even now out at the portal!
Ghost exits.
QUEEN
This is the very coinage of your brain.
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.
HAMLET Ecstasy?
My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time
And makes as healthful music. It is not madness
That I have uttered. 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!
HAMLET
O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half!
Good night. But go not to my uncle's bed.
Assume a virtue if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery
That aptly is put on. Refrain tonight,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence, the next more easy;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature
And either … 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
Pointing to Polonius.
I do repent; but heaven hath pleased it so
To punish me with this and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him and will answer well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.
I must be cruel only to be kind.
This bad begins, and worse remains behind.
One word more, good lady.
QUEEN What shall I do?
HAMLET
Not this by no means that I bid you do:
Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed,
Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse,
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses
Or paddling in your neck with his damned 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 assured, if words be made of breath
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.
HAMLET
I must to England, you know that.
QUEEN Alack,
I had forgot! 'Tis so concluded on.
HAMLET
There's letters sealed; and my two schoolfellows,

Whom I will trust as I will adders fanged,
They 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 petard; and ’t shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below their mines
And blow them at the moon. O, ’tis most sweet
When in one line two crafts directly meet.
This man shall set me packing.
I’ll lug the guts into the neighbor room.
Mother, good night indeed. This counselor
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.—
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.—
Good night, mother.

They exit, Hamlet tugging in Polonius.

ACT 4

Scene 1

Enter King and Queen, with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

KING
There's matter in these sighs; these profound heaves
You must translate; 'tis fit we understand them.
Where is your son?
QUEEN
Bestow this place on us a little while.
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit.
Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen tonight!
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 everyone.
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answered?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrained, 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 killed,
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 dragged him.
Go seek him out, speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit.

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

They exit.

Scene 2

Enter Hamlet.

HAMLET Safely stowed.
GENTLEMEN*, within* Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!
HAMLET But soft, what noise? Who calls on Hamlet?
O, here they come.

Enter Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and others.

ROSENCRANTZ
What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?
HAMLET
Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.
ROSENCRANTZ
Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence
And bear it to the chapel.
HAMLET Do not believe it.
ROSENCRANTZ Believe what?
HAMLET That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge, what replication should be made by the son of a king?
ROSENCRANTZ Take you me for a sponge, my lord?
HAMLET Ay, sir, that soaks up the King's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the King best service in the end. He keeps them like an ape an apple in the corner of his jaw, first mouthed, to be last swallowed. When he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.
ROSENCRANTZ I understand you not, my lord.
HAMLET I am glad of it. A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.
ROSENCRANTZ My lord, you must tell us where the body is and go with us to the King.
HAMLET The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body. The King is a thing—
GUILDENSTERN A "thing," my lord?
HAMLET Of nothing. Bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after!

They exit.

Scene 3

Enter King and two or three.

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 loved of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;
And, where 'tis so, th' offender's scourge is weighed,
But never the offense. To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause. Diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are relieved
Or not at all.

Enter Rosencrantz.

How now, what hath befallen?
ROSENCRANTZ
Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord,
We cannot get from him.
KING But where is he?
ROSENCRANTZ
Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.
KING
Bring him before us.
ROSENCRANTZ Ho! Bring in the lord.

They enter with Hamlet.

KING Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?
HAMLET At supper.
KING At supper where?
HAMLET Not where he eats, but where he is eaten. A certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet. We fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service—two dishes but to one table. That's the end.
KING Alas, alas!
HAMLET A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.
KING What dost thou mean by this?
HAMLET Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.
KING Where is Polonius?
HAMLET In heaven. Send thither to see. If your messenger find him not there, seek him i' th' other place yourself. But if, indeed, you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.
KING*, to Attendants.* Go, seek him there.
HAMLET He will stay till you come. *Attendants exit.*
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.
HAMLET For England?
KING Ay, Hamlet.
HAMLET Good.
KING
So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.
HAMLET
I see a cherub that sees them. But come, for England.
Farewell, dear mother.
KING Thy loving father, Hamlet.
HAMLET
My mother. Father and mother is man and wife,
Man and wife is one flesh, and so, my mother.—
Come, for England. *He exits.*
KING
Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard.
Delay it not. I'll have him hence tonight.
Away, for everything is sealed and done
That else leans on th' affair. Pray you, make haste.
All but the King exit.
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 will ne'er begin.
He exits.

Scene 4

Enter Fortinbras with his army over the stage.

FORTINBRAS
Go, Captain, from me greet the Danish king.
Tell him that by his license Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promised march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
If that his Majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye;
And let him know so.
CAPTAIN I will do 't, my lord.
FORTINBRAS Go softly on. *All but the Captain exit.*

Enter Hamlet, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and others.

HAMLET Good sir, whose powers are these?

CAPTAIN They are of Norway, sir.
HAMLET How purposed, sir, I pray you?
CAPTAIN Against some part of Poland.
HAMLET Who commands them, sir?
CAPTAIN
The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.
HAMLET
Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?
CAPTAIN
Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.
HAMLET
Why, then, the Polack never will defend it.
CAPTAIN
Yes, it is already garrisoned.
HAMLET
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.
CAPTAIN God be wi' you, sir. *He exits.*
ROSENCRANTZ Will 't please you go, my lord?
HAMLET
I'll be with you straight. Go a little before.
All but Hamlet exit.
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 unused. Now whether it be
Bestial oblivion or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th' event
(A thought which, quartered, 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 puffed
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 honor's at the stake. How stand I, then,
That have a father killed, a mother stained,
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!

He exits.

Scene 5

Enter Horatio, Queen, and a Gentleman.

QUEEN I will not speak with her.
GENTLEMAN She is importunate,
Indeed distract; her mood will needs be pitied.
QUEEN What would she have?
GENTLEMAN
She speaks much of her father, says she hears
There's tricks i' th' world, and hems, and beats her heart,
Spurns enviously at straws, speaks things in doubt
That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshapèd use of it doth move
The hearers to collection. They aim at it
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.
HORATIO
'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.
QUEEN Let her come in. *Gentleman exits.*
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.

OPHELIA
Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark?
QUEEN How now, Ophelia?
OPHELIA *sings*
How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff
And his sandal shoon.
QUEEN
Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPHELIA Say you? Nay, pray you, mark.
Sings. *He is dead and gone, lady,*
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.
Oh, ho!
QUEEN Nay, but Ophelia—
OPHELIA Pray you, mark.
Sings. *White his shroud as the mountain snow—*

Enter King.

QUEEN Alas, look here, my lord.
OPHELIA *sings*
Larded all with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the ground did not go
With true-love showers.
KING How do you, pretty lady?
OPHELIA 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.
OPHELIA Pray let's have no words of this, but when they ask you what it means, say you this:
Sings. *Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day,*
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.
Then up he rose and donned his clothes
And dupped the chamber door,
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.
KING Pretty Ophelia—
OPHELIA
Indeed, without an oath, I'll make an end on 't:
Sings. *By Gis and by Saint Charity,*
Alack and fie for shame,
Young men will do 't, if they come to 't;
By Cock, they are to blame.
Quoth she "Before you tumbled me,
You promised me to wed."
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?
OPHELIA I hope all will be well. We must be patient, but I cannot choose but weep to think they would lay him i' th' cold ground. My brother shall know of it. And so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night. *She exits.*
KING
Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you.
Horatio exits.
O, this is the poison of deep grief. It springs
All from her father's death, and now behold!

O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions: first, her father slain;
Next, your son gone, and he most violent author
Of his own just remove; the people muddied,
Thick, and unwholesome in 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 much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France,
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death,
Wherein necessity, of matter beggared,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O, my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murd'ring piece, in many places
Gives me superfluous death.

A noise within.

QUEEN Alack, what noise is this?
KING Attend!
Where is my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

Enter a Messenger.

What is the matter?
MESSENGER Save yourself, my lord.
The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impiteous haste
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him "lord,"
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry "Choose we, Laertes shall be king!"
Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,
"Laertes shall be king! Laertes king!"

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.

LAERTES
Where is this king?—Sirs, stand you all without.
ALL No, let's come in!
LAERTES I pray you, give me leave.
ALL We will, we will.
LAERTES
I thank you. Keep the door. *Followers exit.* O, thou

vile king,
Give me my father!
QUEEN Calmly, good Laertes.
LAERTES
That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard,
Cries "cuckold" to my father, brands the harlot
Even here between the chaste unsmirchèd brow
Of my true mother.
KING What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?—
Let him go, Gertrude. Do not fear our person.
There's such divinity doth hedge a king
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will.—Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incensed.—Let him go, Gertrude.—
Speak, man.
LAERTES Where is my father?
KING Dead.
QUEEN
But not by him.
KING Let him demand his fill.
LAERTES
How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with.
To hell, allegiance! Vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes, only I'll be revenged
Most throughly for my father.
KING Who shall stay you?
LAERTES 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, is 't writ in your revenge
That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?
LAERTES None but his enemies.
KING Will you know them, then?
LAERTES
To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms
And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,
Repast them with my blood.
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 'pear
As day does to your eye.
A noise within: "Let her come in!"
LAERTES 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 with weight
Till our scale turn the beam! O rose of May,
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens, is 't possible a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love, and, where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

OPHELIA *sings*

They bore him barefaced on the bier,
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny,
And in his grave rained many a tear.

Fare you well, my dove.

LAERTES

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

OPHELIA You must sing "A-down a-down"—and you "Call him a-down-a."—O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward that stole his master's daughter.

LAERTES This nothing's more than matter.

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

LAERTES A document in madness: thoughts and remembrance fitted.

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

Sings. For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

LAERTES

Thought and afflictions, passion, hell itself
She turns to favor and to prettiness.

OPHELIA *sings*

And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead.
Go to thy 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 Christians' souls, I pray God. God be wi' you. *She exits.*

LAERTES 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 touched, 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 labor with your soul
To give it due content.
LAERTES Let this be so.
His means of death, his obscure funeral
(No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite nor formal ostentation)
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call 't in question.
KING So you shall,
And where th' offense is, let the great ax fall.
I pray you, go with me.
They exit.

Scene 6

Enter Horatio and others.

HORATIO What are they that would speak with me?
GENTLEMAN Seafaring men, sir. They say they have letters for you.
HORATIO Let them come in. *Gentleman exits.* I do not know from what part of the world I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.

SAILOR God bless you, sir.
HORATIO Let Him bless thee too.
SAILOR He shall, sir, an 't please Him. There's a letter for you, sir. It came from th' ambassador that was bound for England—if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is. *He hands Horatio a letter.*
HORATIO *reads the letter Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the King. They have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valor, and in the grapple I boarded them. On the instant, they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy, but they knew what they did: I am to do a good turn for them. Let the King have the letters I have sent, and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou 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, 30
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.

They exit.

Scene 7

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. 5
LAERTES It well appears. But tell me
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So criminal and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirred up. 10
KING O, for two special reasons,
Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinewed,
But yet to me they're strong. The Queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks, and for myself
(My virtue or my plague, be it either which), 15
She is so conjunctive to my life and soul
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive
Why to a public count I might not go
Is the great love the general gender bear him, 20
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Work like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces, so that my arrows,
Too slightly timbered for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again, 25
But not where I have aimed them.
LAERTES
And so have I a noble father lost,
A sister driven into desp'rate terms,
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age 30
For her perfections. But my revenge will come.
KING
Break not your sleeps for that. You must not think
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull
That we can let our beard be shook with danger
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more. 35
I loved your father, and we love ourself,
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine—

Enter a Messenger with letters.

How now? What news?

MESSENGER Letters, my lord, from
Hamlet.
These to your Majesty, this to the Queen.
KING From Hamlet? Who brought them?
MESSENGER
Sailors, my lord, they say. I saw them not.
They were given me by Claudio. He received them
Of him that brought them.
KING Laertes, you shall hear
them.—
Leave us. *Messenger exits.*
Reads. High and mighty, you shall know I am set
naked on your kingdom. Tomorrow shall I beg leave to
see your kingly eyes, when I shall (first asking your
pardon) thereunto recount the occasion of my sudden
and more strange return. Hamlet.
What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?
Or is it some abuse and no such thing?
LAERTES Know you the hand?
KING 'Tis Hamlet's character. "Naked"—
And in a postscript here, he says "alone."
Can you advise me?
LAERTES
I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come.
It warms the very sickness in my heart
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth
"Thus didst thou."
KING If it be so, Laertes
(As how should it be so? how otherwise?),
Will you be ruled by me?
LAERTES Ay, my lord,
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.
KING
To thine own peace. If he be now returned,
As checking at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall;
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice
And call it accident.
LAERTES My lord, I will be ruled,
The rather if you could devise it so
That I might be the organ.
KING It falls right.
You have been talked of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein they say you shine. Your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him
As did that one, and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.
LAERTES What part is that, my lord?
KING
A very ribbon in the cap of youth—
Yet needful too, for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears

Than settled age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness. Two months since
Here was a gentleman of Normandy.
I have seen myself, and served against, the French,
And they can well on horseback, but this gallant
Had witchcraft in 't. He grew unto his seat,
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse
As had he been encorpsed and demi-natured
With the brave beast. So far he topped my thought
That I in forgery of shapes and tricks
Come short of what he did.
LAERTES A Norman was 't?
KING A Norman.
LAERTES
Upon my life, Lamord.
KING The very same.
LAERTES
I know him well. He is the brooch indeed
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 defense,
And for your rapier most especial,
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 opposed 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—
LAERTES 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?
LAERTES 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 pleurisy,
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 of th' ulcer:
Hamlet comes back; what would you undertake
To show yourself indeed your father's son

More than in words?
LAERTES To cut his throat i' th' church.
KING
No place indeed should murder sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this? Keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet, returned, 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.
LAERTES I will do 't,
And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
That is but scratched 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 fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance,
'Twere better not assayed. 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 prepared him
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venomed stuck,
Our purpose may hold there.—But stay, what noise?

Enter Queen.

QUEEN
One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow. Your sister's drowned, Laertes.
LAERTES Drowned? O, where?
QUEEN
There is a willow grows askant the brook
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.
Therewith fantastic garlands did she make

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 chanted snatches of old lauds,
As one incapable of her own distress
Or like a creature native and endued
Unto that element. But long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

LAERTES Alas, then she is drowned.

QUEEN Drowned, drowned.

LAERTES

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

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

They exit.

ACT 5

Scene 1

Enter Gravedigger and Another.

GRAVEDIGGER Is she to be buried in Christian burial, when she willfully seeks her own salvation?

OTHER I tell thee she is. Therefore make her grave straight. The crowner hath sat on her and finds it Christian burial.

GRAVEDIGGER How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defense?

OTHER Why, 'tis found so.

GRAVEDIGGER It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act hath three branches—it is to act, to do, to perform. Argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

OTHER Nay, but hear you, goodman delver—

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

OTHER But is this law?

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

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

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

OTHER Was he a gentleman?

GRAVEDIGGER He was the first that ever bore arms.

OTHER Why, he had none.

GRAVEDIGGER What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the scripture? The scripture says Adam digged. 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!

GRAVEDIGGER 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.

GRAVEDIGGER I like thy wit well, in good faith. The gallows does well. But how does it well? It does well to those that do ill. Now, thou dost ill to say the

gallows is built stronger than the church. Argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To 't again, come.

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

GRAVEDIGGER Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

OTHER Marry, now I can tell.

GRAVEDIGGER To 't.

OTHER Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter Hamlet and Horatio afar off.

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

The Other Man exits and the Gravedigger 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.

HAMLET Has this fellow no feeling of his business? He sings in grave-making.

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

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

GRAVEDIGGER *sings*

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

He digs up a skull.

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

HORATIO It might, my lord.

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

HORATIO Ay, my lord.

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

GRAVEDIGGER *sings*

A pickax 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.

He digs up more skulls.

HAMLET There's another. Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quillities, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this mad knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum, this fellow might be in 's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries. Is this the fine of his fines and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? Will 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?

HORATIO Not a jot more, my lord.

HAMLET Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

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

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

GRAVEDIGGER Mine, sir.

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

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

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

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

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

HAMLET What man dost thou dig it for?

GRAVEDIGGER For no man, sir.

HAMLET What woman then?

GRAVEDIGGER For none, neither.

HAMLET Who is to be buried in 't?

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

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

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

HAMLET How long is that since?

GRAVEDIGGER Cannot you tell that? Every fool can

tell that. It was that very day that young Hamlet was born—he that is mad, and sent into England.

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

GRAVEDIGGER Why, because he was mad. He shall recover his wits there. Or if he do not, 'tis no great matter there.

HAMLET Why?

GRAVEDIGGER 'Twill not be seen in him there. There the men are as mad as he.

HAMLET How came he mad?

GRAVEDIGGER Very strangely, they say.

HAMLET How "strangely"?

GRAVEDIGGER Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

HAMLET Upon what ground?

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

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

GRAVEDIGGER Faith, if he be not rotten before he die (as we have many pocky corses nowadays that will scarce hold the laying in), he will last you some eight year or nine year. A tanner will last you nine year.

HAMLET Why he more than another?

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

HAMLET Whose was it?

GRAVEDIGGER A whoreson mad fellow's it was. Whose do you think it was?

HAMLET Nay, I know not.

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

HAMLET This?

GRAVEDIGGER E'en that.

HAMLET*, taking the skull* Let me see. Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio—a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath bore me on his back a thousand times, and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning? Quite chapfallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come. Make her laugh at that.—Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HORATIO What's that, my lord?

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

HORATIO E'en so.

HAMLET And smelt so? Pah! *He puts the skull down.*

HORATIO E'en so, my lord.
HAMLET To what base uses we may return, Horatio!
Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of
Alexander till he find it stopping a bunghole?
HORATIO 'Twere to consider too curiously to consider
so.
HAMLET No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither,
with modesty enough and likelihood to lead it, as
thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander
returneth to dust; the dust is earth; of earth
we make loam; and why of that loam whereto he
was converted might they not stop a beer barrel?
Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay,
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!

Enter King, Queen, Laertes, Lords attendant, and the corpse of Ophelia, with a Doctor of Divinity.

But soft, but soft awhile! Here comes the King,
The Queen, the courtiers. Who is this they follow?
And with such maimèd rites? This doth betoken
The corse they follow did with desp'rate hand
Fordo its own life. 'Twas of some estate.
Couch we awhile and mark. *They step aside.*
LAERTES What ceremony else?
HAMLET That is Laertes, a very noble youth. Mark.
LAERTES What ceremony else?
DOCTOR
Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
As we have warranty. Her death was doubtful,
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified been lodged
Till the last trumpet. For charitable prayers
Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on
her.
Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.
LAERTES
Must there no more be done?
DOCTOR No more be done.
We should profane the service of the dead
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.
LAERTES Lay her i' th' earth,
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be
When thou liest howling.
HAMLET*, to Horatio* What, the fair Ophelia?
QUEEN Sweets to the sweet, farewell!
She scatters flowers.
I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,

And not have strewed thy grave.
LAERTES O, treble woe
Fall ten times treble on that cursèd head
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Deprived thee of!—Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.
Leaps in the grave.
Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made
T' o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.
HAMLET*, advancing*
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.
LAERTES*, coming out of the grave*
The devil take thy soul!
HAMLET Thou pray'st not well. *They grapple.*
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!
HORATIO Good my lord, be quiet.
Hamlet and Laertes are separated.
HAMLET
Why, I will fight with him upon this theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag!
QUEEN O my son, what theme?
HAMLET
I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers
Could not with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?
KING O, he is mad, Laertes!
QUEEN For love of God, forbear him.
HAMLET 'Swounds, show me what thou 't do.
Woo't weep, woo't fight, woo't fast, woo't tear
thyself,
Woo't drink up eisel, eat a crocodile?
I'll do 't. Dost 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 awhile the fit will work on him.
Anon, as patient as the female dove
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,
His silence will sit drooping.

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

Hamlet exits.

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

Horatio exits.

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 thereby shall we see.
Till then in patience our proceeding be.

They exit.

Scene 2

Enter Hamlet and Horatio.

HAMLET
So much for this, sir. Now shall you see the other.
You do remember all the circumstance?
HORATIO Remember it, my lord!
HAMLET
Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep. Methought I lay
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly—
And praised 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—
HORATIO That is most certain.
HAMLET Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarfed about me, in the dark
Groped I to find out them; had my desire,
Fingered their packet, and in fine withdrew
To mine own room again, making so bold
(My fears forgetting manners) to unfold
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,
A royal knavery—an exact command,
Larded with many several sorts of reasons
Importing Denmark's health and England's too,
With—ho!—such bugs and goblins in my life,
That on the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the ax,
My head should be struck off.
HORATIO Is 't possible?
HAMLET
Here's the commission. Read it at more leisure.

Handing him a paper.

But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

HORATIO I beseech you.
HAMLET
Being thus benetted round with villainies,
Or I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play. I sat me down,
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair—
I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair, and labored much
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service. Wilt thou know
Th' effect of what I wrote?
HORATIO Ay, good my lord.
HAMLET
An earnest conjuration from the King,
As England was his faithful tributary,
As love between them like the palm might flourish,
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,
And many suchlike *as*es of great charge,
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement further, more or less,
He should those bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving time allowed.
HORATIO How was this sealed?
HAMLET
Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal;
Folded the writ up in the form of th' other,
Subscribed it, gave 't th' impression, placed it safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou knowest already.
HORATIO
So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to 't.
HAMLET
Why, man, they did make love to this employment.
They are not near my conscience. Their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow.
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensèd points
Of mighty opposites.
HORATIO Why, what a king is this!
HAMLET
Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon—
He that hath killed my king and whored my mother,
Popped in between th' election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage—is 't not perfect conscience
To quit him with this arm? And is 't not to be damned
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?

HORATIO
It must be shortly known to him from England
What is the issue of the business there.
HAMLET
It will be short. The interim's mine,
And a man's life's no more than to say "one."
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself,
For by the image of my cause I see
The portraiture of his. I'll court his favors.
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a tow'ring passion.
HORATIO Peace, who comes here?

Enter Osric, a courtier.

OSRIC Your Lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.
HAMLET I humbly thank you, sir. *Aside to Horatio.* Dost know this waterfly?
HORATIO*, aside to Hamlet* No, my good lord.
HAMLET*, 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.
OSRIC Sweet lord, if your Lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his Majesty.
HAMLET I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use: 'tis for the head.
OSRIC I thank your Lordship; it is very hot.
HAMLET No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.
OSRIC It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.
HAMLET But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion.
OSRIC Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry, as 'twere—I cannot tell how. My lord, his Majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, this is the matter—
HAMLET I beseech you, remember. *He motions to Osric to put on his hat.*
OSRIC Nay, good my lord, for my ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes—believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing. Indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.
HAMLET Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you, though I know to divide him inventorially would 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.

OSRIC Your Lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

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

OSRIC Sir?

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

HAMLET*, to Osric* What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

OSRIC Of Laertes?

HORATIO His purse is empty already; all 's golden words are spent.

HAMLET Of him, sir.

OSRIC I know you are not ignorant—

HAMLET I would you did, sir. Yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir?

OSRIC You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

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

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

HAMLET What's his weapon?

OSRIC Rapier and dagger.

HAMLET That's two of his weapons. But, well—

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

HAMLET What call you the "carriages"?

HORATIO I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

OSRIC The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

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

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

HAMLET How if I answer no?

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

HAMLET Sir, I will walk here in the hall. If it please his

Majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me. Let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the King hold his purpose, I will win for him, an I can. If not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

OSRIC Shall I deliver you e'en so?

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

OSRIC I commend my duty to your Lordship.

HAMLET Yours. *Osric exits.* He does well to commend it himself. There are no tongues else for 's turn.

HORATIO This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

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

Enter a Lord.

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

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

LORD The King and Queen and all are coming down.

HAMLET In happy time.

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

HAMLET She well instructs me. *Lord exits.*

HORATIO You will lose, my lord.

HAMLET I do not think so. Since he went into France, I have been in continual practice. I shall win at the odds; but thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart. But it is no matter.

HORATIO Nay, good my lord—

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

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

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

A table prepared. Enter Trumpets, Drums, and Officers with cushions, King, Queen, Osric, and all the state, foils, daggers, flagons of wine, and Laertes.

KING
Come, Hamlet, come and take this hand from me.
He puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's.
HAMLET*, to Laertes*
Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong;
But pardon 't as you are a gentleman. This presence knows,
And you must needs have heard, how I am punished
With a sore distraction. What I have done
That might your nature, honor, and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was 't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet.
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then? His madness. If 't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts
That I have shot my arrow o'er the house
And hurt my brother.
LAERTES I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive in this case should stir me most
To my revenge; but in my terms of honor
I stand aloof and will no reconcilement
Till by some elder masters of known honor
I have a voice and precedent of peace
To keep my name ungored. But till that time
I do receive your offered love like love
And will not wrong it.
HAMLET I embrace it freely
And will this brothers' wager frankly play.—
Give us the foils. Come on.
LAERTES Come, one for me.
HAMLET
I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' th' darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.
LAERTES You mock me, sir.
HAMLET No, by this hand.
KING
Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager?
HAMLET Very well, my lord.
Your Grace has laid the odds o' th' weaker side.
KING
I do not fear it; I have seen you both.
But, since he is better, we have therefore odds.
LAERTES
This is too heavy. Let me see another.

HAMLET
This likes me well. These foils have all a length?
OSRIC Ay, my good lord.
Prepare to play.
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.
Trumpets the while.
HAMLET Come on, sir.
LAERTES Come, my lord.
They play.
HAMLET One.
LAERTES No.
HAMLET Judgment!
OSRIC A hit, a very palpable hit.
LAERTES Well, again.
KING
Stay, give me drink.—Hamlet, this pearl is thine.
Here's to thy health.
He drinks and then drops the pearl in the cup.
Drum, trumpets, and shot.
Give him the cup.
HAMLET
I'll play this bout first. Set it by awhile.
Come. *They play.* Another hit. What say you?
LAERTES
A touch, a touch. I do confess '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.
She lifts the cup.
HAMLET Good madam.
KING Gertrude, do not drink.
QUEEN
I will, my lord; I pray you pardon me.
She drinks.
KING*, aside*
It is the poisoned cup. It is too late.
HAMLET
I dare not drink yet, madam—by and by.
QUEEN Come, let me wipe thy face.
LAERTES*, to Claudius*
My lord, I'll hit him now.
KING I do not think 't.

LAERTES*, aside*
And yet it is almost against my conscience.
HAMLET
Come, for the third, Laertes. You do but dally.
I pray you pass with your best violence.
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.
LAERTES Say you so? Come on. *Play.*
OSRIC Nothing neither way.
LAERTES Have at you now!
Laertes wounds Hamlet. Then in scuffling they change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes.
KING Part them. They are incensed.
HAMLET Nay, come again.
The Queen falls.
OSRIC Look to the Queen there, ho!
HORATIO
They bleed on both sides.—How is it, my lord?
OSRIC How is 't, Laertes?
LAERTES
Why as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric.
He falls.
I am justly killed with mine own treachery.
HAMLET
How does the Queen?
KING She swoons to see them bleed.
QUEEN
No, no, the drink, the drink! O, my dear Hamlet!
The drink, the drink! I am poisoned. *She dies.*
HAMLET
O villainy! Ho! Let the door be locked. *Osric exits.*
Treachery! Seek it out.
LAERTES
It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain.
No med'cine in the world can do thee good.
In thee there is not half an hour's life.
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and envenomed. The foul practice
Hath turned itself on me. Lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again. Thy mother's poisoned.
I can no more. The King, the King's to blame.
HAMLET
The point envenomed too! Then, venom, to thy work. *Hurts the King.*
ALL Treason, treason!
KING
O, yet defend me, friends! I am but hurt.
HAMLET
Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damnèd Dane,
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?
Forcing him to drink the poison.
Follow my mother. *King dies.*
LAERTES He is justly served.
It is a poison tempered by himself.
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me. *Dies.*

HAMLET
Heaven make thee free of it. I follow thee.—
I am dead, Horatio.—Wretched queen, adieu.—
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time (as this fell sergeant, Death,
Is strict in his arrest), O, I could tell you—
But let it be.—Horatio, I am dead.
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.
HORATIO Never believe it.
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane.
Here's yet some liquor left. *He picks up the cup.*
HAMLET As thou 'rt a man,
Give me the cup. Let go! By heaven, I'll ha 't.
O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave 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.
A march afar off and shot within.
What warlike noise is this?

Enter Osric.

OSRIC
Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To th' ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.
HAMLET O, I die, Horatio!
The potent poison quite o'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.
O, O, O, O! *Dies.*
HORATIO
Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.
March within.
Why does the drum come hither?

Enter Fortinbras with the English Ambassadors with Drum, Colors, and Attendants.

FORTINBRAS Where is this sight?
HORATIO What is it you would see?
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.
FORTINBRAS
This quarry cries on havoc. O proud Death,
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck?

AMBASSADOR The sight is dismal,
And our affairs from England come too late.
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing
To tell him his commandment is fulfilled,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.
Where should we have our thanks?
HORATIO 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 arrived, give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view,
And let me speak to th' 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 forced cause,
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on th' inventors' heads. All this can I
Truly deliver.
FORTINBRAS Let us haste to hear it
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune.
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.
HORATIO
Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more.
But let this same be presently performed
Even while men's minds are wild, lest more mischance
On plots and errors happen.
FORTINBRAS Let four captains
Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royal; and for his passage,
The soldier's music and the rite 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.

They exit, marching, after the which, a peal of ordnance are shot off.