

The Tragedy of Hamlet,

Prince of Denmark

By William Shakespeare

Edited by Daniel DP Sheridan

Antioch Classical Theatre Company

Antioch, CA

Draft 2

5 / 03 / 08

I . 1 <May cut this entire first scene.>

(BARNARDO stands sentinel. Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.)

Bar: Stand, ho! Who is there?

Mar: Friends to this ground.

Hor: And liegemen to the Dane.

Mar: Holla, Barnardo!

Bar: Say, what, is Horatio there?

Hor: A piece of him.

Bar: Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.

Hor: What, has this thing appear'd again tonight?

Bar: I have seen nothing.

Mar: Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy.
Therefore I have entreated him along
That if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

Hor: Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

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

Hor: Well, sit we down.
And let us hear Barnardo speak of this.

Bar: Last night of all, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one –

(Enter Ghost)

Mar: Peace, break thee off. Look where it comes again.

Bar: In the same figure like the King that's dead.

Mar: Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.

Bar: It would be spoke to.

Mar: Question it, Horatio.

Hor: What art thou that usurp'st this time of night?
By heaven, I charge thee speak.

Mar: It is offended.

Bar: See, see it stalks away.

Hor: Stay, speak, speak, I charge thee speak.

(Exit GHOST)

Mar: 'Tis gone and will not answer.

Bar: How now, Horatio? You tremble and look pale.
Is not this something more than fantasy?

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

Mar: Is it not like the King?

Hor: As thou art to thyself. 'Tis strange.

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

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

(Enter GHOST)

Hor: But soft, behold. Lo, where it comes again.
I'll cross it though it blast me. Stay, illusion:
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;
Stop it, Marcellus.

Mar: Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

Hor: Do if it will not stand.

Bar: 'Tis here.

Hor: 'Tis here.

Mar: 'Tis gone.

(Exit GHOST)

Bar: It was about to speak when the cock crew.

Hor: 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.

I. 2

(HAMLET enters the empty throne room, it is dark. He moves to the throne, touching the arm. Suddenly enter CLAUDIUS King of Denmark, GERTRUDE the Queen, ATTENDANTS with candles, Court, including VOLTEMAND, CORNELIUS, POLONIUS and his son LAERTES.)

Cla: 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,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,
Taken to wife. Nor have we herein barr'd

Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
Now follows that you know young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
He hath not fail'd 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.
Farewell and let your haste commend your duty.

C&V: In that, and all things, will we show our duty.

Cla: We doubt it nothing. Heartily farewell.

(Exit VOLTEMAND and CORNELIUS.)

Cla: And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
You told us of some suit : What wouldst thou beg?
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instruments to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

Laer: My dread lord,
Your leave and favour to return to France,
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark
To show my duty in your coronation,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France.

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

Pol: He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laboursome petition, and at last
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent.

Cla: Take thy fair hour, Laertes, time be thine.
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son –

Ham: A little more than kin, and less than kind.

Cla: How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Ham: Not so, my lord, I am too much in the sun.

Ger: Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Thou know'st 'tis common : all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

Ham: Ay, madam, it is common.

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

Ham: Seems, madam? Nay, it is. I know not 'seems'.
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eyes,
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,
For they are the actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passes show,
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

Cla: '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. But to persever
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness, 'tis unmanly grief,
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven –
Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault of nature
To reason most absurd. 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.

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

Ham: I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

Cla: Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come.

(Exeunt, but Hamlet)

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

(Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BARNARDO)

Hor: Hail to your lordship.

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

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

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

Mar: My good lord.

Ham: I am very glad to see you. – (*to Bar*) Good even, sir. –
But what in faith make you from Wittenberg?
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

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

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

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

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

Hor: Where, my lord?

Ham: In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Hor: I saw him once ; a was a goodly king.

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

Hor: My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Ham: Saw? Who?

Hor: My lord, the king your father.

Ham: The king my father?

Hor: Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear till I may deliver
This marvel to you.

Ham: For God's love let me hear!

Hor: Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch
Been thus encounter'd : a figure like your father
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them ; This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did,
And I with them the third night kept the watch,
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes.

Ham: But where was this?

Mar: My lord, upon the platform where we watch.

Ham: Did you not speak to it?

Hor: My lord, I did,
But answer made it none.

Ham: 'Tis very strange.

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

Ham: Indeed, sirs; but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch tonight?

All: We do, my lord.

Ham: Arm'd, say you?

All: Arm'd, my lord.

Ham: Stay'd it long?

Hor: While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

**Mar
&**

Bar: Longer, longer

Hor: Not when I saw it.

Ham: Perchance 'twill walk again.

Hor: I war'nt it will.

**Ham: If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it though hell itself should gape
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Give it an understanding but no tongue.
Upon the platform 'twixt eleven and twelve
I'll visit you.**

All: Our duty to your honour.

Ham: Your loves, as mine to you. Farewell.

(Exit HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BARNARDO)

**Ham: 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.**

I. 3

(Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA, his sister.)

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

Oph: Do you doubt that?

**Laer: For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
No more.**

Oph: No more but so?

Laer: Think it no more.
For he himself is subject to his birth:
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own.
He may not, as unvalu'd persons do,
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends
The sanity and health of this whole state;
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaster'd 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.

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

Laer: O fear me not.
I stay too long.

(Enter POLONIUS)

Laer: But here my father comes.
A double blessing is a double grace:
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Pol: Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard for shame.
Know you are stay'd for. There, my blessing with thee.
And these few precepts in thy memory
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar;
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel,
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd courage. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,
Bear't that th'opposed may beware of thee.

Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all : to thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell, my blessing season this in thee.

Laer: Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Pol: The time invest you ; go, your servants tend.

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

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

Laer: Farewell.

(LAERTES exits.)

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

Oph: So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

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

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

Pol: Affection? Pooh, you speak like a green girl.
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

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

Pol: Marry, I will teach you. Tender yourself more dearly
Or – not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Running it thus – you’ll tender me a fool.

Oph: My lord, he hath importun’d me with love
In honourable fashion.

Pol: Ay, fashion you may call it. Go to, go to.

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

Pol: Ay, springes to catch woodcock. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue to vows. As for Lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him that he is young.
Do not believe his vows ; for they are brokers.
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth
Have you so slander any moment leisure
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to’t, I charge you. Come your ways.

Oph: I shall obey, my lord.

I . 4

(Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS)

Ham: What hour now?

Hor: I think it lacks of twelve.

Mar: No, it is struck.

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

(Enter GHOST)

Hor: Look, my lord, it comes.

Ham: Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane. O answer me.
Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements. What may this mean?
Say why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?

Hor: It beckons you to go away with it,
To you alone.

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

Hor: No, by no means.

Ham: It will not speak. Then I will follow it.

Hor: Do not, my lord.

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

Hor: What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
And there assume some other horrible form
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness?

Ham: It waves me still.
Go on, I'll follow thee.

Mar: You shall not go, my lord.

Ham: Hold off your hands.

Hor: Be rul'd ; you shall not go.

Ham: My fate cries out
Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me.
I say away. – Go on, I'll follow thee.

(Exit GHOST and HAMLET)

Hor: He waxes desperate with imagination.

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

Hor: Have after. To what issue will this come?

Mar: Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Hor: Heaven will direct it.

Mar: Nay, let's follow him.

(Exeunt.)

I . 5

Ham: Wither wilt thou lead me? Speak, I'll go no further.

Gho: Mark me.

Ham: I will.

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

Ham: Alas, poor ghost.

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

Ham: Speak, I am bound to hear.

Gho: So art thou to revenge when thou shalt hear.

Ham: What?

Gho: I am thy father's spirit,

Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purg'd away. List, list, O list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love –

Ham: O God!

Gho: Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

Ham: Murder!

Gho: Murder most foul, strange and unnatural.

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

Gho: I find thee apt.
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me – so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abus'd – but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

Ham: O my prophetic soul! My uncle!

Gho: Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts –
O wicked wit, and gifts that have the power
So to seduce! – won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.
O Hamlet, what a falling off was there,
From me, to'a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine.
But soft, methinks I scent the morning air:
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment, whose effect
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,

The thin and wholesome blood.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatch'd,
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
With all my imperfections on my head.
O horrible! O horrible! most horrible!
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But howsomever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven.
Fare thee well at once:
Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me.

(Exit GHOST)

Ham: 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,
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter. Yes, by heaven!*
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling damned villain!
My tables. Meet it is I set it down
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain –
So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word.
It is 'Adieu, adieu, remember me.'
I have sworn't.

(Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.)

Hor: My lord, my lord.

Mar: Lord Hamlet.

Hor: Heaven secure him.

Mar: How is't, my noble lord?

Hor: What news, my lord?

Ham: O, wonderful!

Hor: Good my lord, tell it.

Ham: No, you will reveal it.

Hor: Not I, my lord, by heaven.

Mar: Nor I, my lord.

Ham: How say you then, would heart of man once think it –
But you'll be secret?

Hor

&

Mar: Ay, by heaven.

Ham: 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.

Hor: These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

Ham: I am sorry they offend you, heartily –
Yes faith, heartily.

Hor: There's no offence, my lord.

Ham: Yes by Saint Patrick but there is, Horatio,
And much offence too. And now, good friends,
Give me one poor request.

Hor: What is't, my lord? We will.

Ham: Never make known what you have seen tonight.

Hor

&

Mar: My lord, we will not.

Ham: Nay, but swear't.

Hor: In faith, my lord, not I.

Mar: Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Ham: Upon my sword.

Mar: We have sworn, my lord, already.

Ham: Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Gho: Swear.

Ham: Ah ha, boy, say'st thou so? Art thou there, truepenny?
Come on, you hear this fellow in the cellarage.
Consent to swear.

Hor: Propose the oath, my lord.

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

Gho: Swear.

Ham: Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword.
Swear by my sword
Never to speak of this that you have heard.

Gho: Swear by his sword.

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

Hor: O day and night, but this is wondrous strange.

Ham: There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
*But come,
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 time seeing me, never shall,
With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As 'Well, we know', or 'There be and 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.

Gho: Swear.

Ham: Rest, rest, perturbed spirit. So, gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you;
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint. O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right.
Nay, come, let's go together.

(Exeunt.)

II . 1

(Enter old POLONIUS, with his man REYNALDO.)

Pol: Give my son this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

Rey: I will, my lord.

Pol: You shall do marvelous wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquire
Of his behavior.

Rey: My lord, I did intend it.

Pol: Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir,
So by my former lecture and advice,
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?
By indirections find directions out.

Rey: My lord, I have.

Pol: God by ye, fare ye well.

Rey: Good my lord.

Pol: Observe his inclination in yourself.

Rey: I shall, my lord.

Pol: And let him ply his music.

Rey: Well, my lord.

(Exit REYNALDO. Enter OPHELIA.)

Pol: Farewell. How now, Ophelia, what' the matter?

Oph: O my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted.

Pol: With what, i'th' name of God?

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

Pol: Mad for thy love?

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

Pol: What said he?

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

Pol: 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 passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry –
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

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

Pol: That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted him. I fear'd he did but trifle
And meant to wrack thee. Go we to the King.
This must be known, which, being kept close, might move
More grief to hide than hate to utter love.
Come.

(Exeunt.)

II . 2

(Enter KING and QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)

Cla: Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.
Moreover that we much did long to see you,
The need we have to use you did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation – so I call it,
Sith nor th'exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was. I entreat you both
That, being of so young days brought up with him,
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
To draw him on to pleasures and to gather,
Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

Ger: Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd 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 good will,
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king's remembrance.

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

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

Cla: Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

Ger: Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz.
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son.

Gui: Heavens make our presence and our practices
Pleasant and helpful to him.

Ger: Ay, amen.

(Exit ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN. Enter POLONIUS.)

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

Cla: Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Pol: 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 that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

Cla: O speak of that : that do I long to hear.

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

Cla: Thyself do grace to them and bring them in.

(Exit POLONIUS.)

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

Ger: I doubt it is no other but the main,
His father's death and our o'er-hasty marriage.

Cla: Well, we shall sift him. Welcome, my good friends.

(Enter POLONIUS, VOLTEMAND, and CORNELIUS.)

Cla: Say, Voltemand, what from our brother Norway?

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

Cla: It likes us well;
And at our more consider'd time we'll read.
Meantime, we thank you for your well-took labor.
Go to your rest, at night we'll feast together.
Most welcome home.

(Exit VOLTEMAND and CORNELIUS.)

Pol: 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.

Ger: More matter with less art.

Pol: Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he is mad 'tis true ; 'tis true 'tis pity;
And pity 'tis 'tis true. A foolish figure –
But farewell it, for I will use no art.
Prepend,
I have a daughter – have while she is mine –
Who in her duty and obedience, mark,
Have given me this. Now gather and surmise.
(Reads) To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia –

Ger: Came this from Hamlet to her?

Pol: Good madam, stay awhile, I will be faithful.
(Reads) Doubt thou the stars are fire,
Doubt that the sun doth move,
Doubt truth to be a liar
But never doubt I love.
O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers. I have not art to reckon my
groans. But that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.
This in obedience hath my daughter shown me.

Cla: But how hath she receiv'd his love?

Pol: What do you think of me?

Cla: As of a man faithful and honorable.

Pol: I would fain prove so. 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 report,
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.

Cla: Do you think 'tis this?

Ger: It may be ; very like.

Pol: Hath there been such a time – I would fain know that –

That I have positively said 'tis so',
When it prov'd otherwise?

Cla: Not that I know.

Pol: Take this from this if this be otherwise.
If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid.

Cla: How may we try it further?

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

Ger: So he does indeed.

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

Cla: We will try it.

(Enter HAMLET, reading a book)

Ger: But look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

Pol: Away, I do beseech you both, away.
I'll board him presently. O give me leave.

(Exit KING and QUEEN.)

Pol: How does my good Lord Hamlet?

Ham: Well, God-a-mercy.

Pol: Do you know me, my lord?

Ham: Excellent well. You are a fishmonger.

Pol: Not I, my lord.

Ham: Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol: Honest, my lord?

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

Pol: That's very true, my lord.

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

Pol: I have, my lord.

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

Pol: *(Aside) How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter. A 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?

Ham: Words, words, words.

Pol: What is the matter, my lord?

Ham: Between who?

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

Ham: Slanders, sir. For this satirical rogue says here that old men have gray beards, that their faces are wrinkled, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit – 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.

Pol: *(Aside) Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.* – Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham: Into my grave?

Pol: Indeed, that's out of the air. – *(Aside) How pregnant sometimes his replies are.* – My lord, I will take my leave of you.

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

Pol: Fare you well, my lord.

(Exit POLONIUS. Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)

Gui: My honored lord.

Ros: My most dear lord.

Ham: My excellent good friends. How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz. Good lads, how do you both?

Ros: As the indifferent children of the earth.

Gui: Happy in that we are not over-happy : on Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Ham: Nor the soles of her shoe?

Ros: Neither, my lord.

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

Gui: Faith, her privates we.

Ham: O most true, Fortune is a strumpet. What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune that she sends you to prison hither?

Gui: Prison, my lord?

Ham: Denmark's a prison.

Ros: Then is the world one.

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

Ros: We think not so, my lord.

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

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

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

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

Ham: A dream itself is but a shadow.

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

Ham: Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs beggars' shadows. Shall we to th' court?

Ros

&

Gui: We'll wait upon you.

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

Ros: To visit you, my lord, no other occasion.

Ham: Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks, but I thank you. 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.

Gui: What should we say, my lord?

Ham: 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.

Ros: To what end, my lord?

Ham: That, you must teach me. By the consonancy of our youth, be even and direct with me whether you were sent for or no.

Ros: *(aside to Gui)* What say you?

Ham: Nay, then I have an eye of you. If you love me, hold not off.

Gui: My lord, we were sent for.

Ham: I will tell you why ; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen moults no feather. I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth ; 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, why, it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What piece of

work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god : the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals – and yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me – nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

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

Ham: Why did ye laugh then, when I said man delights not me?

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

Ham: He that plays the king shall be welcome –the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target, the lover shall not sigh gratis, the humorous man shall end his part in peace, and the lady shall say her mind freely – or the blank verse shall halt for't. What players are they?

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

(A flourish or cannon fire.)

Gui: There are the players.

Ham: 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.

Gui: In what, my dear lord?

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

(Enter POLONIUS.)

Pol: Well be with you, gentlemen.

Ham: *Hark you, Guildenstern, and you too – at each ear a hearer. That great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.*

Ros: *Happily he is the second time come to them, for they say an old man is twice a child.*

Ham: I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players. Mark it.

Pol: My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham: My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome –

Pol: The actors are come hither, my lord.

Ham: Buzz, buzz.

Pol: Upon my honor –

Ham: Then came each actor on his ass –

Pol: The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited.

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

Pol: What a treasure had he, my lord?

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

Pol: (Aside) Still harping on my daughter.

(Enter PLAYERS.)

Ham: You are welcome, masters. Welcome, all. – I am glad to see thee well. – Welcome, good friends. – O 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! – Masters, you are all welcome. We'll have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your quality. Come, a passionate speech.

Pla: What speech, my good lord?

Ham: I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted, or if it was, not above once – for the play, I remember, pleased not the million. But it was, as I received it, and excellent play. 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 the Hyrcanian beast –
'Tis not so. It begins with Pyrrhus –

The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble.
Now is he total gules, horridly trick'd
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and a damned light
To their lord's murder. Roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o'ersized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks.

So proceed you.

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

Pla: For lo, his sword,
Which declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i'th' air to stick;
So as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,
And like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing. So that after Pyrrhus' pause
Aroused vengeance sets him new awork,
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mar's armour, forg'd for proof eterne,
With less remorse then Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.

Pol: **This is too long.**

Ham: **Prithee say on. *He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps.* Say on, come to Hecuba.**

Play: But who – ah, woe! – had seen the mobbled queen –

Ham: **'The mobbled queen'.**

Pol: **That's good.**

Play: But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made,
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven
And passion in the gods.

Pol: **Look whe'er he has not turned his color and has tears in's eyes. Prithee no more.**

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

Pol: Come, sirs.

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

Pla: Ay, my lord.

Ham: 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?

Pla: Ay, my lord.

Ham: Very well. (*To all PLAYERS.*) Follow that lord, and look you mock him not.

(Exit POLONIUS and PLAYERS.)

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

Ros: Good my lord.

(Exit ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)

Ham: Ay, so, God buy to you. Now I am alone.
O what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in 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 her,
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,
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 – Am I a coward?
Ha!
‘Swounds, I should take it : Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindles villain!
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder’d,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must like a whore unpack my heart with words
And fall a-cursing like a very drab,
A scullion! Fie upon’t! Foh!
About, my 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 proclaim’d their malefactions.
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I’ll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle. I’ll observe his looks;
I’ll tent him to the quick. If a 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,
Abuses me to damn me. I’ll have grounds
More relative than this. The play’s the thing
Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King.

(Exit HAMLET.)

III . 1

(Enter CLADIUS, GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN.)

Ger: Did you assay him to any pastime?

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

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

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

Ros: We shall, my lord.

(Exit ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)

Cla: Sweet Gertrude, leave us too,
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia.

Ger: 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.

Oph: Madam, I wish it may.

(Exit GERTRUDE.)

Pol: Ophelia, walk you here and read on this book,
That show of such an exercise may color
Your loneliness.
I hear him coming. Let's withdraw, my lord.

(Exit / Hide POLONIUS and CLAUDIUS. Enter HAMLET.)

Ham: To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die – to sleep,
*No more ; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to : 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream – ay, there's the rub:*

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause – there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressor's wrong, the pangs of dispriz'd love,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the 'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No 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 remember'd.

Oph: Good my lord,
How does your honor for this many a day?

Ham: I humbly thank you, well.

Oph: My lord, I have remembrances of yours
That I have longed long to redeliver.
I pray you now receive them.

Ham: No, not I.
I never gave you aught.

Oph: My honour'd lord, you know right well you did.
Take these again; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

Ham: Ha, ha! Are you honest?

Oph: My lord?

Ham: Are you fair?

Oph: What means your lordship?

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

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

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

Oph: Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham: You should not have believed me. I loved you not.

Oph: I was the more deceived.

Ham: Get thee to a nunnery. Why, wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imaginations to give them shape, or time to act them – Where's your father?

Oph: At home, my lord.

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

Oph: O help him, you sweet heavens.

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

Oph: Heavenly powers, restore him.

Ham: I have heard of your paintings well enough. God hath given you one face and you make yourselves another. You 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.

(Exit HAMLET.)

Oph: O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,
Th'expectancy and rose of the fair state,
Th'observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason
Blasted with ecstasy. O woe is me
T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see.

(Enter CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS.)

Cla: Love? His affections do not that way tend,
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger ; which for to prevent,
I have in quick determination
Thus set it down : he shall with speed to England.

Pol: 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 plac'd, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference. If she find him not,
To England send him ; or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

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

III . 2

(Enter HAMLET and three of the PLAYERS.)

Ham: Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue ; but if you mouth it as many of your players do, I had as life the town-crier spoke my line. 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.

Pla: I warrant your honor.

Ham: Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action.

Pla: We shall, my lord.

Ham: 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.

(Exit PLAYERS. Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.)’

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

Pol: And the Queen too, and that presently.

Ham: Bid the players make haste.

(Exit POLONIUS.)

Ham: Will you two help to hasten them?

Ros: Ay, my lord.

(Exit ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)

Ham: What ho, Horatio!

(Enter HORATIO.)

Hor: Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Ham: Horatio, thou art e’en as just a man
As e’er my conversations cop’d withal.

Hor: O my dear lord.

Ham: Nay, do not think I flatter,
For what advancement may I hope from thee?
Why should the poor be flattered? 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,
Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen.
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after, we will both our judgment join
In censure of his seeming.

Hor: Well, my lord.

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

(Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and other Lords, Attendants.)

Cla: How fares our cousin Hamlet?

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

Cla: I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet. These words are not mine.

Ham: No, nor mine now. – *My lord, you played once i'th' university, you say?*

Pol: *That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.*

Ham: *What did you enact?*

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

Ham: Be the players ready?

Ros: Ay, my lord, they stay upon your patience.

Ger: Come hither my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

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

Pol: *(aside to Claudius)* O ho! Do you mark that?

Ham: Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

Oph: No, my lord.

Ham: I mean, my head upon your lap.

Oph: Ay, my lord.

Ham: Do you think I meant country matters?

Oph: I think nothing, my lord.

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

Oph: What is, my lord?

Ham: Nothing.

Oph: You are merry, my lord.

Ham: Who, I?

Oph: Ay, my lord.

Ham: What should a man do but be merry? For look you how cheerfully my mother looks and my father died within's two hours.

Oph: Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham: So long?

(A flourish. A dumb-show follows. Masked? Enter a King and a Queen, 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 comes in again. They 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.)

Oph: What means this, my lord?

(Enter PROLOGUE.)

Ham: We shall know by this fellow.

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

Ham: Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

Oph: 'Tis brief, my lord.

Ham: As a woman's love.

(Enter Player KING and QUEEN)

PKin: Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground,
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

PQue: 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;
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

PKin: 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,
Honor'd, belov'd ; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou –

PQue: 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 kill'd the first.

Ham: That's wormwood.

PKin: I do believe you think what now you speak;
But what we do determine, oft we break.
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
So think thou wilt no second husband wed,
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

PQue: Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light,
Sport and repose lock from me day and night,
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be a wife.

Ham: If she should break it now.

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

PQue: Sleep rock thy brain,
And never come mischance between us twain.

(Player QUEEN exits. Player KING sleeps.)

Ham: Madam, how like you this play?

Ger: The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Ham: O, but she'll keep her word.

Cla: What do you call the play?

Ham: The Mousetrap – 'Tis a knavish piece of work, but what o' that? Your Majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not.

(Enter LUCIANUS.)

Ham: This is one Lucianus, nephew to the King.

Luc: Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing,
Confederate season, else no creature seeing,
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected.

(Pours poison in the sleeper's ear.)

Ham: A poisons him i'th' garden for his estate. His name's Gonzago. You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Oph: The King rises.

Ger: How fares my lord?

Pol: Give o'er the play.

Cla: Give me some light. Away.

Pol: Lights, lights, lights.

(Exeunt but HAMLET and HORATIO.)

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

Hor: Very well, my lord.

Ham: Upon the talk of poisoning?

Hor: I did very well note him.

(Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)

Gui: Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Ham: Sir, a whole history.

Gui: The King, sir –

Ham: Ay, sir, what of him?

Gui: Is in his retirement marvelous distempered.

Ham: With drink, sir?

Gui: No, my lord, with choler.

Ham: Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to the doctor.

Gui: Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame.

Ham: I am tame, sir. Pronounce.

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

Ham: You are welcome.

Gui: Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed.

Ham: Sir, I cannot.

Ros: What, my lord?

Ham: Make you a wholesome answer. My wit's diseased. Therefore no more but to the matter. My mother, you say –

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

Ham: O wonderful son, that can so stonish a mother!

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

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

Ros: My lord, you once did love me.

Ham: And do still.

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

(HAMLET sees recorder left behind onstage.)

Ham: O, the recorder. To withdraw with you, why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would derive me into a toil?

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

Ham: Will you play upon this pipe?

Gui: My lord, I cannot.

Ham: I pray you.

Gui: Believe me, I cannot.

Ham: I do beseech you.

Gui: I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham: It is as easy as lying. Govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth. Look you, these are the stops.

Gui: But these cannot I command. I have not the skill.

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

(Enter POLONIUS.)

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

Ham: Do you see yonder cloud that’s almost in shape of a camel?

Pol: By th’ mass and ‘tis – like a camel indeed.

Ham: Methinks it is like a weasel.

Pol: It is backed like a weasel.

Ham: Or like a whale.

Pol: Very like a whale.

Ham: 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.

Pol: I will say so.

Ham: ‘By and by’ is easily said. – Leave me, friends.

(Exeunt but HAMLET.)

Ham: *‘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.
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 some ever she be shent,
To give them seals never my soul consent.

III . 3

(Enter CLAUDIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.)

Cla: 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.

Gui: We will ourselves provide.

Ros: Never alone
Did the King sigh, but with general groan.

Cla: Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage.

Ros: We will haste us.

(Exit ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN. Enter POLONIUS)

Pol: My lord, he's going to his mother's closet.
Behind the arras I'll convey myself
To hear the process. Fare you well, my liege.
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

Cla: Thanks, dear my lord.

(Exit POLONIUS.)

Cla: O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't –
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood.
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,

To be forestalled ere we come to fall
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up.
My fault is past – but O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder?'
That cannot be, since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder –
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd and retain th' offence??
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
Bow, stubborn kness ; and heart with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe.
All may be well.

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

(Exit HAMLET.)

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

(Exit CLAUDIUS.)

(Enter GERTRUDE and POLONIUS)

Pol: A will come straight. Look you lay home to him.
Pray you be round.

Ger: I'll war'nt you, fear me not.
Withdraw, I hear him coming.

(POLONIUS hides behind arras. HAMLET enters.)

Ham: Now, mother, what's the matter?

Ger: Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Ham: Mother, you have my father much offended.

Ger: Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Ham: Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

Ger: Have you forgot me?

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

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

Ham: 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.

Ger: What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?
Help, ho!

Pol: What ho! Help!

Ham: How now? A rat! Dead for a ducat, dead.

(Thrusts his weapon through the arras.)

Ger: O me, what hast thou done?

Ham: Nay, I know not.
Is it the King?

(Discovers POLONIUS' body.)

Ger: O what a rash and bloody deed is this!

Ham: A bloody deed. Almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king and marry with his brother.

Ger: As kill a king?

Ham: Ay, lady, it was my word. –
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell.
I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune:
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger. –
Leave wringing of your hands. Peace, sit you down,
And let me wring your heart; for so I shall
If it be made of penetrable stuff.

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

Ham: Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, makes marriage vows
As false as dicer's oaths –

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

Ham: 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,
A combination and a form indeed
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man.
This was your husband. Look you now what follows.
Here is your husband, like a mildew'd ear
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
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? O shame, where is thy blush?
Rebellious hell –

Ger: O Hamlet, speak no more.

Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul,
As will not leave their tinct.

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

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

Ham: A murderer and a villain -

Ger: No more.

Ham: A king of shreds and patches -

(Enter GHOST.)

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

Ger: Alas, he's mad.

Ham: Do you not come your tardy son to chide?
O say.

Gho: Do not forget. This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But look, amazement on thy mother sits.
O step between her and her fighting soul.
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham: How is it with you, lady?

Ger: Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy?
To whom do you speak?

Ham: Do you see nothing there?

Ger: Nothing at all ; yet all that is I see.

Ham: Nor did you nothing hear.

Ger: Nothing but ourselves.

Ham: Why look you there, look how it steals away.
My father, in his habit as he liv'd!

(Exit GHOST.)

Ger: This is the very coinage of your brain.

Ham: My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music. It is not madness
That I have utter'd. Bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word, which madness
Would gambol from. 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.

Ger: O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

Ham: O throw away the worser part of it
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night. But go not to my uncle's bed.
Assume a virtue if you have it not,
That 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,
With wondrous potency. For this same lord
I do repent ; but heaven hath pleas'd it so,
To punish me with this and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.
I must be cruel only to be kind.
This bad begins, and worse remains behind.
One word more, good lady.

Ger: What shall I do?

Ham: Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
Let the bloat King temp you again to bed,
Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse,
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
Make you to ravel all this matter out
That I essentially am not in madness,

But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know.

Ger: Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

Ham: I must to England, you know that?

Ger: Alack,
I had forgot. 'Tis so concluded on.

Ham: This man shall set me packing.
I'll lug his 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.

(HAMLET exits bearing POLONIUS. GERTRUDE exits after.)

IV . 1

(Enter GERTRUDE. Enter CLAUDIUS with ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)

Cla: There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves,
You must translate. Where is your son?

Ger: Bestow this place on us a little while.

(Exit ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)

Ger: Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen tonight!

Cla: What, Gertrude, how does Hamlet?

Ger: 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 his brainish apprehension kills
The unseen good old man.

Cla: O heavy deed!

It had been so with us had we been there.
His liberty is full of threats to all –
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
Where is he gone?

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

Cla: 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.)

Cla: Friends both, go join you with some further aid.
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
Go seek him out – speak fair – and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you haste in this.

(Exit ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)

Cla: Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends,
And let them know both what we mean to do
And what's untimely done. O come away,
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

IV . 2 <POSSIBLY CUT WHOLE SCENE, AS MUCH AS I LOVE IT!>

(Enter HAMLET.)

Ham: Safely stowed.
But soft, what noise? Who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

(Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)

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

Ham: Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Ros: Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence and bear it to the chapel.

Ham: Do not believe it.

Ros: Believe what?

Ham: That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge – what replication –

Ros: Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Ham: Ay, sir, that soaks up the King's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. When he needs what you have gleaned, it is but by squeezing you and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

Ros: I understand you not, my lord.

Ham: I am glad of it. A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

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

Ham: The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body. The King is a thing –

Gui: A thing, my lord?

Ham: Of nothing. Bring me to him.

(Exeunt.)

IV. 3

(Enter CLAUDIUS and two or three Lords.)

Cla: I have sent to seek him and to find the body.
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!
Yet must not we put the strong law on him:
He's lov'd of the distracted multitude.
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause. Diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are reliev'd,
Or not at all.

(Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)

Cla: How now, what hath befall'n?

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

Cla: But where is he?

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

Cla: Bring him before us.

Ros: Ho! Bring in the lord.

(Enter HAMLET with Guards.)

Cla: Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Ham: At supper.

Cla: At supper? Where?

Ham: Not where he eats, but where a is eaten. A certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him.

Cla: Alas, alas.

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

Cla: What dost thou mean by this?

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

Cla: Where is Polonius?

Ham: 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.

Cla: Go seek him there.

(Exit Lords.)

Ham: A will stay till you come.

Cla: 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, everything is bent
For England.

Ham: For England?

Cla: Ay, Hamlet.

Ham: Good.

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

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

Cla: Thy loving father, Hamlet.

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

(HAMLET exits, followed by guards.)

Cla: Follow him at foot. Tempt him with speed aboard,
Delay it not – I'll have him hence tonight.

(Exeunt but CLAUDIUS.)

Cla: And England, if my love thou hold'st at aught –
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
By letters congruing to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me. Till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun

IV . 4

(Enter army with CAPTAIN overseeing the march. Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and Guards.)

Ham: Good sir, whose powers are these?

Cap: They are of Norway, sir.

Ham: How purpos'd, sir, I pray you?

Cap: Against some part of Poland.

Ham: Who commands them, sir?

Cap: The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

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

Cap: 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.

Ham: Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

Cap: Yes, it is already garrison'd.

Ham: Two thousand souls and twenty ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw!
This is th'impostume of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks, and shows not cause without
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.

Cap: God buy you, sir.

Ros: Will't please you go, my lord?

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

(Exit all but HAMLET.)

Ham: How all occasions do inform against me
And spur my dull revenge. What is a man
*If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.*
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unus'd. Now whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th'event –
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom

(Exit GENTLEMAN. Enter OPHELIA.)

Oph: Where is the beautiful Majesty of Denmark?

Ger: How now, Ophelia?

Oph: *(Sings)* How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff
And his sandal shoon.

Ger: Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

Oph: Say you? Nay, pray you mark.
(Sings) He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone,
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.

O ho!

Ger: Nay, but Ophelia –

Oph: Pray you mark.
White his shroud as the mountain snow –

(Enter CLAUDIUS.)

Ger: Alas, look here, my lord.

Oph: Larded with sweet flowers
Which bewept to the grave did not go
With true-love showers.

Cla: How do you, pretty lady?

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

Cla: Conceit upon her father.

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

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 donn'd his clo'es.
And dupp'd the chamber door,
Let in the maid that out a maid
Never departed more.

Cla: Pretty Ophelia –

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

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

He answers,

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

Cla: How long hath she been thus?

Oph: 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. Come, my coach. Good night, ladies, good night. Sweet ladies, good night, good night.

(Exit OPHELIA.)

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

(Exit HORATIO.)

Cla: 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.

(A noise from within.)

Cla: Attend!

Where is my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

(Enter a MESSENGER.)

Cla: What is the matter?

Mes: Save yourself, my lord.

The young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord,
They cry, 'Choose we! Laertes shall be king.
Laertes shall be king, Laertes king.'

(MESSENGER exits. Enter LAERTES with Followers.)

Laer: Where is this king? – Sirs, stand you all without.

Foll: No, let's come in.

Lear: I pray you give me leave.

Foll: We will, we will.

Laer: I thank you. Keep the door.

(Exit Followers.)

Laer: O thou vile king,
Give me my father.

Ger: Calmly, good Laertes.

Laer: That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard.

Cla: What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like? –
Let him go, Gertrude. Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incens'd. – Let him go, Gertrude. –

Laer: Where is my father?

Cla: Dead.

Ger: But not by him.

Cla: Let him demand his fill.

Laer: How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with.
I dare damnation. To this point I stand:
Let come what comes, only I'll be reveng'd
Most thoroughly for my father.

Cla: 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?*

Laer: None but his enemies.

Cla: 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 from within. OPHELIA heard singing.)

Laer: How now, what noise is that?

(Enter OPHELIA.)

Laer: 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?

Oph: *(Sings)* They bore him bare-fac'd on the bier,
And in his grave rain'd many a tear –
Fare you well, my dove.

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

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

Laer: This nothing's more than matter.

Oph: There's rosemary, that's for remembrance – pray you, love, remember. And
there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

Laer: A document in madness!

Oph: 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 on Sunday's. You must wear
your rue with a difference. There's daisy. I would give you some violets, but
they withered all when my father died. They say a made a good end.

And will not come again?

And will not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.

God buy you.

(Exit OPEHLIA.)

Laer: Do you see this, O God?

Cla: Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give
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.

Laer: Let it be so.

Cla: And where the offence is, let the great axe fall.
I pray you go with me.

(Exeunt.)

IV . 6

(Enter HORATIO reading letter and two Sailors.)

Hor: 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 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 turn for them. Let the King have the letters I have sent, and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldest fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England ; of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.
Hamlet.

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

(Exeunt.)

IV . 7

(Enter CLAUDIUS and LAERTES.)

Cla: Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend,
Sith he which hath your noble father slain
Pursu'd my life.

Laer: It well appears. But tell me
Why you proceeded not against these feats
As by your safety, wisdom all things else
You mainly were stirr'd up.

Cla: The Queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks, and for myself –
My virtue or my plague, be it either which –
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.

Laer: And so have I a noble father lost,
A sister driven into desp'rate treams –

(Enter a MESSENGER.)

Mess: These to your Majesty, this to the Queen.

Cla: From Hamlet! Who brought them?

Mess: Sailors, my lord, they say. I saw them not.

Cla: Laertes, you shall hear them. – Leave us.

(Exit MESSENGER.)

Cla: *(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.

Laer: Know you the hand?

**Cla: 'Tis Hamlet's character.
Will you be rul'd by me?**

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

**Cla: To thine own peace. 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.**

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

**Cla: It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein they say you shine. Your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him
As did that one –**

Laer: What part is that, my lord?

**Cla: 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.**

Laer: What out of this, my lord?

**Cla: Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow?**

Laer: Why ask you this?

**Cla: What would you undertake
To show yourself in deed your father's son
More than in words?**

Laer: To cut his throat i'th' church.

Cla: Revenge should have no bounds. But good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber;
Hamlet, return'd, shall know you are come home;
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
And wager o'er your heads. He, being remiss,
Will not peruse the foils, so that with ease –
Or with a little shuffling – you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.

Laer: I will do't.
And for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank
So mortal that but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

Cla: Let's further think of this,
Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape. If this should fail,
'Twere better not essay'd. Soft, left me see.
We'll make solemn wager on your cunning –
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 perpar'd him
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?

(Enter QUEEN.)

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

Laer: Drown'd? O, where?

Ger: *There is a willow grows askant the brook
That shows his hoary leaves in the glassy stream.
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,
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay*

To muddy death.

Laer: Alas, then she is drown'd.

Ger: Drown'd, drown'd.

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

(Exit LAERTES.)

Cla: 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 it.

(Exeunt.)

V . 1

(Enter two clowns – the GRAVE DIGGER and OTHER.)

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

Oth: I tell thee she is, *therefore make her grave straight.*

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

Oth: Why, 'tis found so.

Dig: 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.

Oth: Nay, but hear you, Goodman Delver –

Dig: 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.

Oth: But is this law?

Dig: Ay, marry is't.

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

Dig: Why, there thou say'st. And the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even-Christen. Come, my spade. I'll put another question to thee. If thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself –

Oth: Go to.

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

Oth: The gallows-maker, for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

Dig: 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. To't again, come.

Oth: Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

Dig: Ay, tell me that and unyoke.

Oth: Marry, now I can tell.

Dig: To't.

Oth: Mass, I cannot tell.

Dig: 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, fetch me a stoop of liquor.

(Exit OTHER. The GRAVE-DIGGER continues digging. Enter HAMLET and HORATIO. HAMLET and HORATIO speak over GRAVE-DIGGER's song.)

Dig: *(Sings)* In youth when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet:
To contract – o – the time for – a – my behove,

O methought there – a – was nothing – a – meet.

Ham: Has this fellow no feeling of his business a sings in grave-making?

Hor: Custom hath made it in him property of easiness.

Dig: *(Sings)* But age with his stealing steps
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
An hath shipp'd me intil the land,
As if I had never been such.

(He throws up a skull.)

Ham: That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once. How the knave jowls it to th' ground. This might be the pate of a politician which this ass now o'er-offices, one that would circumvent God, might it not?

Hor: It might, my lord.

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

Hor: Ay, my lord.

Dig: *(Sings)* A pickaxe and a spade, a spade,
For and a shrouding-sheet,
O a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.

(Throws up another skull.)

Ham: There's another. 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? Is this the fine of his fines and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? I will speak to this fellow. – Whose grave's this, sirrah?

Dig: Mine, sir.
(Sings) O a pit of clay for to be made –

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

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

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

Dig: 'Tis a quick lie, sir, 'twill away again from me to you.

Ham: What man dost thou dig it for?

Dig: For no man, sir.

Ham: What woman then?

Dig: For none neither.

Ham: Who is to be buried in't?

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

Ham: How absolute the knave is. We must speak by the card or equivocation will undo us. How long hast thou been grave-maker?

Dig: Of all the days i'th' year I came to't that day that our last King Hamlet o'ercame Fortinbras.

Ham: How long is that since?

Dig: 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.

Ham: Ay, marry. Why was he sent into England?

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

Ham: Why?

Dig: There the men are as mad as he.

Ham: How came he mad?

Dig: Very strangely, they say.

Ham: How 'strangely'?

Dig: Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham: Upon what ground?

Dig: Why, here in Denmark.

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

Dig: Faith, if a be not rotten before a die, a will last you some eight year or nine year. Here's a skull now hath lien you i'th' earth three and twenty years.

Ham: Whose was it?

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

Ham: Nay, I know not.

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

Ham: This?

Dig: E'en that.

Ham: 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. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your sons, your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? – Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Hor: What's that, my lord?

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

Hor: E'en so.

Ham: And smelt so? Pah!

Hor: E'en so, my lord.

Ham: To what base uses we may return, Horatio! 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 turn'd to clay,

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.

But soft, but soft awhile. Here comes the King,

Who is this they follow?

(Enter Bearers, a PRIEST, CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, LAERTES, Lords.)

Ham: Couch we awhile and mark.

Laer: What ceremony else?

Ham: That is Laertes, a very noble youth. Mark.

Laer: What ceremony else?

Pri: Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd
As we have warrant. Her death was doubtful.
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

Laer: Must there no more be done?

Pri: No more be done.

Laer: 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.

Ham: What, the fair Ophelia!

Ger: *(Spread flowers.)* Sweets to the sweet. Farewell.
I hop'd thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife.

(Begin to bury body.)

Laer: Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.

(Laertes leaps in grave.)

Laer: Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made.

Ham: What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphases, whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wand'ring stars and makes them stand

Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane.

Laer: The devil take thy soul!

Ham: Thou pray'st not well.
I prithee take thy fingers from my throat.

Cla: Pluck them asunder.

Ger: Hamlet! Hamlet!

All: Gentleman!

Hor: Good my lord, be quiet.

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

Ger: O my son, what theme?

Ham: I lov'd Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers
Could not with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

Cla: O, he is mad, Laertes.

Ger: For love of God forbear him.

Ham: 'Swounds, show me what thou't do.
What is the reason that you use me thus?
I lov'd you ever. But it is no matter.
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.

(Exit HAMLET.)

Cla: I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.

(Exit HORATIO.)

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

Till then in patience our proceeding be.

(Exuent.)

V . 2

(Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.)

Ham: Ah, royal knavery! – an exact command,
Larded with many several sorts of reasons
Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,
That on the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

Hor: Is't possible?

Ham: Here's the commission, read it at more leisure.
But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

Hor: I beseech you.

Ham: Being thus benetted round with villainies –
Or I could make a prologue to my brains,
I sat me down, Devis'd a new commission –
An earnest conjuration from the King,
As England was his faithful tributary,
As love between them like the palm might flourish,
That on the view and knowing of these contents,
He should those bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allow'd.

Hor: So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Ham: Why, man, they did make love to this employment.
They are not near my conscience, their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow.
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.

Hor: Peace, who comes here?

(Enter OSRIC.)

Osr: Your Lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Ham: I humbly thank you sir. – Dost know this waterfly?

Hor: No, my good lord.

Ham: Thy state is the more gracious, for 'tis a vice to know him.

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

Ham: I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Your bonnet to his right : 'tis for the head.

Osr: I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

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

Osr: It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Ham: But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion.

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

Ham: *(Signing him to put on hat)* I beseech you remember –

Osr: 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.

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

Osr: Sir?

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

Ham: What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Osr: Of Laertes?

Hor: His purse is empty already, all's golden words are spent.

Ham: Of him, sir.

Osr: You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is –

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

Osr: I mean, sir, for his weapon ; but in the imputation laid on him he's unfellowed.

Ham: What's his weapon?

Osr: Rapier and dagger.

Ham: That's two of his weapons. But well.

Osr: The King, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses against the which he has impawned, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards.

Ham: *Six Barbary horses against six French swords – That's the French bet against the Danish.* Why is this – impawned, as you call it?

Osr: 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.

Ham: 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 and I can ; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

Osr: Shall I deliver you so?

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

Osr: I commend my duty to your lordship.

Ham: Yours.

(Exit OSRIC.)

Ham: A does well to commend it himself, there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hor: This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head. –

You will lose, my lord.

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

Hor: Nay, good my lord.

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

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

Ham: Not a whit. *We defy augury.* There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come ; if it be not to come, it will be now ; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all. Let be.

(Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, LAERTES, OSRIC, <possibly Court>. Attendants with foils and daggers.)

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

(Puts LAERTES hand in HAMLET'S.)

Ham: Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong;
But pardon't as you are a gentleman.
What I have done I here proclaim as madness.
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet.
Who does it then? His madness. If't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts
That I have shot my arrow o'er the house
And hurt my brother.

Laer: I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive in this case should stir me most
To my revenge ; but in my terms of honor
I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation
Till by some elder masters of known honor
I have a voice and precedent of peace
To keep my name ungor'd. But till that time
I do receive your offer'd love like love

And will not wrong it.

Ham: I embrace it freely,
And will this brothers' wager frankly play. –
Give us the foils.

Laer: Come, one for me.

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

Laer: You mock me, sir.

Ham: No, by this hand.

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

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

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

Laer: This is too heavy. Let me see another.

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

Osr: Ay, my good lord.

Cla: 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.

Ham: Come on, sir.

Laer: Come, my lord.

(They fight.)

Ham: One.

Laer: No.

Ham: Judgment.

Osr: A hit a very palpable hit.

Laer: Well, again.

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

(Battlements fire.)

Cla: Give him the cup.

**Ham: I'll play this bout first. Set it by awhile.
Come.**

(They fight.)

Ham: Another hit. What say you?

Laer: I do confess't.

Cla: Our son shall win.

(Fires the battlements.)

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

Ham: Good madam.

Cla: Gertrude, do not drink.

Ger: I will, my lord.

(She drinks.)

Ham: I dare not drink yet, madam – by and by.

Ger: Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laer: My lord, I'll hit him now.

Cla: I do not think't.

Laer: *(Aside)* And yet it is almost against my conscience.

Ham: 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.

Laer: Say you so? Come on.

(They fight.)

Osr: Nothing neither way.

Laer: Have at you now.

(LAERTES wounds HAMLET and in the scuffling foils are switched.)

Cla: Part them ; they are incensed.

Ham: Nay, come again.

(HAMLET wounds LAERTES. The QUEEN falls.)

Osr: Look to the Queen there, ho!

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

Osr: How is't, Laertes?

Laer: I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

Ham: How does the Queen?

Cla: She swoons to see them bleed.

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

(GERTRUDE falls dead.)

Ham: O villainy! Ho! Let the door be lock'd.
Treachery! Seek it out.

(Exit OSRIC, securing doors.)

Laer: It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain.

No medicine in the world can do thee good;
In thee there is not half an hour's life.
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and evenom'd. The foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me. Thy mother's poison'd.
I can no more. The King – the King's to blame.

Ham: The point evenom'd too! Then, venom, to thy work.

(HAMLET wounds CLAUDIUS.)

Cla: O yet defend me, friends. I am but hurt.

Ham: Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?
Follow my mother.

(CLAUDIUS falls dead.)

Laer: He is justly serv'd.
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me.

Ham: Heaven make thee free of it. I follow thee.

(LAERTES dies.)

Ham: 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 – O, I could tell you –
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead,
Thou livest. Report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

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

Ham: As th'art a man
Give me the cup. Let go, by Heaven I'll ha't.
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. What warlike noise is this?

(Enter OSRIC.)

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

(Exit OSRIC.)

Ham: O, I die, Horatio.
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'occurrences more and less
Which have solicited – the rest is silence.

(HAMLET dies.)

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

<HORATIO REMAINS ALONE ONSTAGE, SURROUNDED BY DEATH AND SILENCE. PERHAPS THE GHOST IS SEEN AGAIN? PERHAPS A SLOW LIGHTS OUT? PERHAPS HORATIO LEAVES AND WE ARE SIMPLY LEFT, AS AN AUDIENCE, WITH THE BODIES ALL STREWN ON THE EMPTY STAGE? PERHAPS, PERHAPS, PERHAPS...>