

**William Shakespeare's**

# **Hamlet**

**Adapted by**

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**February 8, 2011**

## ACT I, SCENE I

*Enter HORATIO and HAMLET, severally.*

**HORATIO**

Hail to your lordship!

Hamlet L, Horatio R, sc

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

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

REGRE

~~**HAMLET**~~

~~I am very glad to see you. Good even.  
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?~~

**HORATIO**

A truant disposition, good my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked meats  
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.  
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!  
My father!--methinks I see my father.

**HORATIO**

Where, my lord?

**HAMLET**

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

**HORATIO**

I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

**HAMLET**

He was a man, take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again.  
We'll have a speech straight: come, give us a taste  
of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

*HAMLET records the speech on a tape-recorder.*

**HORATIO**

To be, or not to be--

**HAMLET**

Aye, there's the point.

**HORATIO**

To Die, to sleep...

**HAMLET**

Is that all?

**HORATIO**

Aye, all.

**HAMLET**

No, to sleep, to dream--

**HORATIO**

Aye, mary, there it goes,  
For in that dream of death, when we awake,  
And borne before an everlasting Judge,  
From whence no passenger ever retur'nd,  
The undiscovered country, at whose sight  
The happy smile, and the accursed damn'd.

**HAMLET**

But for this, the joyful hope of this,  
Whol'd bear the scorns and flattery of the world,  
Scorned by the right rich, the rich cursed of the poor?

**HORATIO**

The widow being oppressed, the orphan wrong'd,  
The taste of hunger, or a tyrant's reign,  
And thousand more calamities besides,  
To grunt and sweat under this weary life,  
When that he may his full Quietus make,  
With a bare bodkin--

**HAMLET**

Who would this endure,  
But for a hope of something after death?

**HORATIO**

Which puzzles the brain, and doth confound the sense,  
Which makes us rather bear those evils we have,  
Than fly to others that we know not of.

**HAMLET**

Aye, that. O, this conscience makes cowards of us all.

UL

**SCENE II.**

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, LAERTES, and OPHELIA.*

R

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Start line on entrance

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,  
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,--  
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage--  
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd  
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.  
And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?  
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,  
And loose your voice: what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,

C

That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?  
The head is not more native to the heart,  
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,  
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.  
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

**LAERTES**

My dread lord,  
Your leave and 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  
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

**HAMLET**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**HAMLET**

Ay, madam, it is common.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

**HAMLET**

Seems, madam! nay it is; I know not 'seems.'  
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,  
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,  
That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,  
For they are actions that a man might play:  
But I have that within which passeth show;  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,  
To give these mourning duties to your father:  
But, you must know, your father lost a father;  
That father lost, lost his: but to persever  
In obstinate condolement is a course  
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief;  
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,  
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      [Applause](#)  
In going back to school in Wittenberg,  
It is most retrograde to our desire:  
And we beseech you, bend you to remain  
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,  
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**HAMLET**

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

*Exeunt all but HAMLET*

R

Hamlet urges Horatio off

**HAMLET**

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

Direct to audience

Walk up the aisle?

*Exit*

L

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

*Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA*

R

**LAERTES**

My necessities are embark'd: farewell:  
And, sister, as the winds give benefit  
And convey is assistant, do not sleep,  
But let me hear from you.

**OPHELIA**

Do you doubt that?

Reading love letters?

**LAERTES**

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

**OPHELIA**

No more but so?

**LAERTES**

Think it no more;  
Perhaps he loves you now, but you must fear,  
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;  
For he himself is subject to his birth:  
He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends  
The safety and health of this whole state;  
Then if he says he loves you,  
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it  
As he in his particular act and place  
May give his saying deed; which is no further  
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.  
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,  
If with too credent ear you list his songs,  
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open  
To his unmaster'd importunity.  
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister.

**OPHELIA**

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

**LAERTES**

O, fear me not.  
I stay too long: but here my father comes.

*Enter POLONIUS*

R

**LORD POLONIUS**

Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!  
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,  
And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!  
And these few precepts in thy memory  
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.  
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.  
Beware of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,  
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.  
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;  
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.  
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;  
For the apparel oft proclaims the man.  
Neither a borrower nor a lender be.  
This above all: to thine ownself be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!

Board?

Cash?

**LAERTES**

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.  
Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well  
What I have said to you.

**OPHELIA**

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

**LAERTES**

Farewell.

*Exit*

L

**LORD POLONIUS**

What is't, Ophelia, ~~be~~ hath said to you?

**OPHELIA**

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Marry, well bethought:

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late

Given private time to you; 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 behoves my daughter and your honour.

What is between you? give me up the truth.

Letters?

**OPHELIA**

He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders

Of his affection to me.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

**OPHELIA**

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

Submissive or unruly?

**LORD POLONIUS**

Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby;

That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,

Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;

Or you'll tender me a fool.

**OPHELIA**

My lord, he hath importuned me with love

In honourable fashion--

**LORD POLONIUS**

Go to, go to.

**OPHELIA**

--And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,

With almost all the holy vows of heaven--

**LORD POLONIUS**

Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,

When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul

Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,

Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,  
 You must not take for fire. From this time  
 Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;  
 Set your entreatments at a higher rate  
 Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,  
 Believe so much in him, that he is young  
 And with a larger tether may he walk  
 Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,  
 Do not believe his vows. This is for all:  
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,  
 Have you so slander any moment leisure,  
 As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.

**OPHELIA**

I shall obey, my lord.

*Exeunt*

R

**SCENE V.**

*Enter HAMLET. Hamlet listens to tape-recorder.*

L

[voice-over]

**HORATIO**

To be, or not to be--

**HAMLET**

Aye, there's the point.

**HORATIO**

To Die, to sleep...

**HAMLET**

Is that all?

**HORATIO**

Aye, all.

**HAMLET**

No, to sleep, to dream--

**HORATIO**

Aye, mary, there it goes,  
 For in that dream of death...

*Static.*

**Ghost**

Mark me.

**HAMLET**

I will.

Response, then reaction

P

[Drop script](#)

**Ghost**

My hour is almost come,  
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames  
Must render up myself.

**HAMLET**

Alas, poor ghost!

**Ghost**

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

**HAMLET**

Speak; I am bound to hear.

**Ghost**

So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

**HAMLET**

What?

**Ghost**

I am thy father's spirit. List, list, list!  
If thou didst ever thy dear father love--

**HAMLET**

O God!

**Ghost**

Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

**HAMLET**

Murder!

**Ghost**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**Ghost**

'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 abused: but know, thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown.

**HAMLET**

O my prophetic soul!

My uncle!

**Ghost**

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
With witchcraft of his 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:  
**Brief let me be.** Sleeping within my orchard,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,  
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,  
And in the porches of my ears did pour  
The leperous distilment.  
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand  
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd,  
No reckoning made, but sent to my account  
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, howsoever thou pursuest this act,  
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven  
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,  
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!  
Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember **me**.

Holding tape recorder; move into audio

**HAMLET**

O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?  
And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my heart;

*Enter HORATIO, unseen.*

R

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,  
 But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee!  
 Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat  
 In this distracted globe. Remember thee!  
 Yea, from the table of my memory  
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,  
 That youth and observation copied there;  
 And thy commandment all alone shall live  
 Within the book and volume of my brain,  
 Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!  
 O most pernicious woman!  
 O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!  
 My tables,—**meet it is I set it down,**  
 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;  
 At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark:

*Writing.*

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

**HORATIO**

What news, my lord?

**HAMLET**

O, wonderful!

**HORATIO**

Good my lord, tell it.

**HAMLET**

No; you'll reveal it.

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.  
 There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
 Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come;  
 Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,  
 How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,

As I perchance hereafter shall think meet  
 To put an antic disposition on,  
 That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,  
 With arms encumber'd thus, or this headshake,  
 Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,  
 As 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, an if we would,'  
 Or 'If we list to speak,' or 'There be, an if they might,'  
 Or such ambiguous giving out, to note  
 That you know aught of me: this not to do,  
 So grace and mercy at your most need help you, Swear.

*HORATIO swears.*

~~Let us go in together;~~  
 And still your finger on your lips, I pray.  
 The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,  
 That ever I was born to set it right!

Horatio L

*Exeunt*

Ophelia enters R. Pantomime c

**ACT II**

**SCENE I. Enter POLONIUS and OPHELIA** Ophelia cries out.

**POLONIUS** R

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

**OPHELIA**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

With what, i' the name of God?

**OPHELIA**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

Mad for thy love?

**OPHELIA**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

What said he?

**OPHELIA**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**OPHELIA**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

That hath made him mad.  
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment  
I had not quoted him: I fear'd he did but trifle,  
And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!  
Come, go we to the king:  
This must be known.

*Exeunt*     L



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

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

R

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!  
 Something have you heard  
 Of Hamlet's transformation; so call it,  
 Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man  
 Resembles that it was. What it should be,  
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him  
 So much from the understanding of himself,  
 I cannot dream of: I entreat you both  
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court  
 Some little time: so by your companies  
 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,  
 Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,  
 That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**GUILDENSTERN**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz:  
 And I beseech you instantly to visit

My too much changed son.

**GUILDENSTERN**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Ay, amen!

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN.*

R

*Enter POLONIUS and OPHELIA.*

L

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Thou still hast been the father of good news?

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

[*Aside*] I doubt it is no other but the main;  
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Well, we shall sift him.

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

More matter, with less art.

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

*Reads*

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

Prop: love note

*Reads*

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

*OPHELIA snatches letter.*

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Came this from Hamlet to her?

**LORD POLONIUS**

Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.

**OPHELIA** [*reading*]

'Doubt thou the stars are fire;  
 Doubt that the sun doth move;  
 Doubt truth to be a liar;  
 But never doubt I love.  
 'O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers;  
 I have not art to reckon my groans: but that  
 I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.  
 'Thine evermore most dear lady, whilst  
 this machine is to him, HAMLET.'

**KING CLAUDIUS**

But how hath she  
Received his love?

**LORD POLONIUS**

What do you think of me?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

As of a man faithful and honourable.

**LORD POLONIUS**

I would fain prove so. But what might you think,  
When I had seen this hot love on the wing--  
If I had play'd the desk or table-book,  
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,  
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;  
What might you think? No, I went round to work,  
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:  
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;  
This must not be:' and then I precepts gave her,  
That she should lock herself from his resort;  
And he, repulsed--a short tale to make--  
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,  
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,  
Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,  
Into the madness wherein now he raves.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Do you think 'tis this?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

It may be, very like.

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Not that I know.

**LORD POLONIUS**

*[Pointing to his head and shoulder]*

Take this from this, if this be otherwise:  
If circumstances lead me, I will find  
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed

Within the centre.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

How may we try it further?

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

So he does indeed.

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

We will try it.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

*Exeunt KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, and Attendants*

R

*Enter HAMLET, reading*

Script

L

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

**HAMLET**

Well, God-a-mercy.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Do you know me, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Not I, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Then I would you were so honest a man.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Honest, my lord!

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

That's very true, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

I have, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

[*Aside*] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter. What do you read, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Words, words, words.

**LORD POLONIUS**

What is the matter, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Between who?

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

Into my grave.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Indeed, that is out o' the air.  
[*Aside*] How pregnant sometimes his replies are!  
My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

**HAMLET**

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

*Exit POLONIUS* R

**HAMLET**

These tedious old fools!

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN* R

**GUILDENSTERN**

My honoured lord!

**ROSENCRANTZ**

My most dear lord!

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

As the indifferent children of the earth.

**GUILDENSTERN**

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

**HAMLET**

Nor the soles of her shoe?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Neither, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**GUILDENSTERN**

'Faith, her privates we.

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**GUILDENSTERN**

Prison, my lord!

**HAMLET**

Denmark's a prison.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Then is the world one.

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

We think not so, my lord.



**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

O God, I could be bounded in a nut shell and count  
myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I  
have bad dreams. But, in the beaten way of  
friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

**HAMLET**

Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks;  
Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining?  
Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me:  
come, come; nay, speak.

**GUILDENSTERN**

What should we say, my lord?

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

To what end, my lord?

**HAMLET**

That you must teach me. Be even and direct with me,  
whether you were sent for, or no?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

*[Aside to GUILDENSTERN]* What say you?

**HAMLET**

*[Aside]* Nay, then, I have an eye of you.--  
If you love me, hold not off.

**GUILDENSTERN**

My lord, we were sent for.

**HAMLET**

I will tell you why; I have of late--but  
wherefore I know not--lost all my mirth, forgone all  
custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily  
with my disposition that this goodly frame, the  
earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most  
excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave  
o'erhanging firmament, this majestic roof fretted  
with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to  
me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.  
What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason!  
how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how  
express and admirable! in action how like an angel!  
in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the  
world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me,  
what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not  
me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling  
you seem to say so.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

He that plays the king shall be welcome. What players are they?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

~~Flourish of trumpets within.~~

**HAMLET**

Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore: but my  
uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

**GUILDENSTERN**

In what, my dear lord?

**HAMLET**

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

*Enter POLONIUS*

R

**LORD POLONIUS**

Well be with you, gentlemen!

**HAMLET**

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

I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. You say right, sir: o' Monday morning; 'twas so indeed.

**LORD POLONIUS**

My lord, I have news to tell you.

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

The actors are come hither, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Buz, buz!

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

What a treasure had he, my lord?

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

[*Aside*] Still on my daughter.

**HAMLET**

Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

Nay, that follows not.

**LORD POLONIUS**

What follows, then, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Why,  
'As by lot, God wot,'  
and then, you know,  
'It came to pass, as most like it was,'--  
the first row of the pious chanson will show you  
more; for look, where my abridgement comes.

*Enter four or five Players*

L

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad  
to see thee well. Welcome, good friends.

We'll have a speech straight: come, give us a taste  
of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

[Record speech?](#)

**First Player**

What speech, my lord?

**HAMLET**

I heard thee speak me a speech once--an excellent play, well  
digested in the scenes, set down with as much  
modesty as cunning. One speech in it I  
chiefly loved: 'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido; and  
thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of  
Priam's slaughter: if it live in your memory, begin

at this line: let me see, let me see--  
 'The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,'--  
 it is not so:--it begins with Pyrrhus:--  
 'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,  
 Black as his purpose, did the night resemble  
 When he lay couched in the ominous horse,  
 Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd  
 With heraldry more dismal; head to foot  
 Now is he total gules; horridly trick'd  
 With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,  
 Baked and impasted with the parching streets,  
 That lend a tyrannous and damned light  
 To their lord's murder: roasted in wrath and fire,  
 And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,  
 With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus  
 Old grandsire Priam seeks.'  
 So, proceed you.

Poorly

Shatneresque?

### **LORD POLONIUS**

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

### **First Player**

'Anon he finds him  
 Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,  
 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,  
 Repugnant to command: unequal match'd,  
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;  
 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword  
 The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,  
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top  
 Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash  
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword,  
 Which was declining on the milky head  
 Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:  
 So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,  
 And like a neutral to his will and matter,  
 Did nothing.  
 But, as we often see, against some storm,  
 A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,  
 The bold winds speechless and the orb below  
 As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder  
 Doth rend the region, so, after Pyrrhus' pause,  
 Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work;  
 And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall  
 On Mars's armour forged for proof eterne

With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
Now falls on Priam.

**LORD POLONIUS**

This is too long.

**HAMLET**

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

**First Player**

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

**HAMLET**

'The mobled queen?'

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**First Player**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

'Tis well: I'll have thee speak out the rest soon.  
Good my lord, will you see the players well  
bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; for  
they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the  
time: after your death you were better have a bad

epitaph than their ill report while you live.

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

Come, sirs.

**HAMLET**

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

*Exit POLONIUS with all the Players but the First*

R

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

**First Player**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**First Player**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

*Exit First Player*

R

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Good my lord!

**HAMLET**

Ay, so, God be wi' ye;

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

R

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!  
 Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
 But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
 Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
 That from her working all his visage wann'd,  
 Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,  
 A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
 With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!  
 For Hecuba!  
 What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,  
 That he should weep for her? What would he do,  
 Had he the motive and the cue for passion  
 That I have? He would drown the stage with tears  
 And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,  
 Make mad the guilty and appal the free,  
 Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed  
 The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,  
 A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,  
 Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,  
 And can say nothing; no, not for a king,  
 Upon whose property and most dear life  
 A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?  
 Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?  
 Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?  
 Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,  
 As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?  
 Ha! 'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be  
 But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall  
 To make oppression bitter, or ere this  
 I should have fatted all the region kites  
 With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!  
 Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!  
 Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,  
 That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,  
 Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
 Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,  
 And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,  
 A scullion! Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain!  
 Hum, I have heard  
 That guilty creatures sitting at a play



Have by the very cunning of the scene  
 Been struck so to the soul that presently  
 They have proclaim'd their malefactions;  
 For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
 With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players  
 Play something like the murder of my father  
 Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;  
 I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,  
 I know my course. The spirit that I have seen  
 May be the devil: and the devil hath power  
 To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps  
 Out of my weakness and my melancholy,  
 As he is very potent with such spirits,  
 Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds  
 More relative than this: the play 's the thing  
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

*Exit*

L

### **ACT III**

#### **SCENE I.**

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

R

#### **KING CLAUDIUS**

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

#### **ROSENCRANTZ**

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

#### **GUILDENSTERN**

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

#### **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Did he receive you well?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Most like a gentleman.

**GUILDENSTERN**

But with much forcing of his disposition.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Did you assay him?  
To any pastime?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

We shall, my lord.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

L

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;  
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,  
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here  
Affront Ophelia: Her father and myself  
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,  
We may of their encounter frankly judge,  
And gather by him, as he is behaved,

If 't be the affliction of his love or no  
That thus he suffers for.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**OPHELIA**

Madam, I wish it may.

*Exit QUEEN GERTRUDE*

R

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

Ophelia at UR; hides behind pillar durin

*To OPHELIA*

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

Book? Love letters hidden inside?

*Exeunt KING CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS*

R

*Enter HAMLET, listening to tape-recorder.*

[voice-over]

**HORATIO**

To be, or not to be--

**HAMLET**

Aye, there's the point.

*HAMLET shuts off tape-recorder.*

**HAMLET**

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

Whiteboard?

**OPHELIA**

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

**HAMLET**

I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

**OPHELIA**

My lord, I have remembrances of yours,

That I have longed long to re-deliver;  
I pray you, now receive them.

**HAMLET**

No, not I;  
I never gave you aught.

**OPHELIA**

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

**HAMLET**

Ha, ha! are you honest?

**OPHELIA**

My lord?

**HAMLET**

Are you fair?

**OPHELIA**

What means your lordship?

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

I was the more deceived.

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

At home, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

O, help him, you sweet heavens!

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

O heavenly powers, restore him!

**HAMLET**

I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves

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

*Exit* L

### **OPHELIA**

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

*Re-enter KING CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS* R

### **KING CLAUDIUS**

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

### **LORD POLONIUS**

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

Of all their conference. If she find him not,  
To England send him, or confine him where  
Your wisdom best shall think.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

*Exeunt*

R

**SCENE II.**

*Enter HAMLET and Players*

L

**HAMLET**

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to  
you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it,  
as many of your players do, I had as lief the  
town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air  
too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently;  
for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say,  
the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget  
a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it  
offends me to the soul to hear a robustious  
periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to  
very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who  
for the most part are capable of nothing but  
inexplicable dumbshows and noise: pray you, avoid it.

Pedantic advice delivered DC; actor

**First Player**

I warrant your honour.

**HAMLET**

Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion  
be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the  
word to the action; with this special o'erstep not  
the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is  
from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the  
first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the  
mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature,  
scorn her own image, and the very age and body of  
the time his form and pressure. O, there be  
players that I have seen play, and heard others  
praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely,  
that, neither having the accent of Christians nor  
the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so



strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

**First Player**

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

**HAMLET**

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

*Exeunt Players*

L

*Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN*

R

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

And the queen too, and that presently.

**HAMLET**

Bid the players make haste.

*Exit POLONIUS*

L

Will you two help to hasten them?

**ROSENCRANTZ GUILDENSTERN**

We will, my lord.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

L

**HAMLET**

What ho! Horatio!

*Enter HORATIO*

R

**HORATIO**

Here, sweet lord, at your service.

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

O, my dear lord,--

**HAMLET**

Nay, do not think I flatter;  
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.  
There is a play to-night before the king;  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
Which I have told thee of my father's death:  
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,  
Observe mine uncle: if his occulted guilt  
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,  
It is a damned ghost that I have heard,  
And my imaginations are as foul  
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;  
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,  
And after we will both our judgments join  
In censure of his seeming.

**HORATIO**

Well, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

How fares our cousin Hamlet?

R or L; take seats in audience; noble

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words  
are not mine.

**HAMLET**

No, nor mine now.

*To POLONIUS*

My lord, you played once i' the university, you say?

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

What did you enact?

**LORD POLONIUS**

I did enact Julius Caesar: I was killed i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me.

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

*Lying down at OPHELIA's feet*

**OPHELIA**

No, my lord.

**HAMLET**

I mean, my head upon your lap?

**OPHELIA**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Do you think I meant country matters?

**OPHELIA**

I think nothing, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

What is, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Nothing.

**OPHELIA**

You are merry, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Who, I?

**OPHELIA**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

What should a man do  
but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my  
mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

**OPHELIA**

Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

**HAMLET**

So long? O heavens! die two months ago,  
and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope  
a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year!

*Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters*     **L**

**Music? Joey on Mandolin?**

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

**Props: poison bottle, crown, gi**

**Masks?**

*Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love*

*Exeunt*

L

**OPHELIA**

What means this, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

**OPHELIA**

Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

*Enter Prologue*

L

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

Will he tell us what this show meant?

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

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

**Prologue (Lucianus)**

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

*Exit*

L

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

'Tis brief, my lord.

**HAMLET**

As woman's love.

*Enter two Players, King and Queen* L

**Player King**

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

**Player Queen**

So many journeys may the sun and moon  
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!  
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,  
So far from cheer and from your former state,  
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,  
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:  
For women's fear and love holds quantity;  
In neither aught, or in extremity.

**Player King**

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

**Player Queen**

O, confound the rest!

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

**HAMLET**

*[Aside]* Wormwood, wormwood.

**Player Queen**

A second time I kill my husband dead,  
When second husband kisses me in bed.

**Player King**

I do believe you think what now you speak;  
But what we do determine oft we break.  
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.

**Player Queen**

Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!  
Sport and repose lock from me day and night!  
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy  
Meet what I would have well and it destroy!  
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,  
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

**HAMLET**

If she should break it now!

**Player King**

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

*Sleeps*

**Player Queen**

Sleep rock thy brain,  
And never come mischance between us twain!

*Exit*

L

**HAMLET**

Madam, how like you this play?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

The lady protests too much, methinks.

**HAMLET**

O, but she'll keep her word.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

What do you call the play?

**HAMLET**

The Mouse-trap. This play  
is the image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is  
the duke's name; his wife, Baptista: you shall see  
anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: but what o'  
that? your majesty and we that have free souls, it  
touches us not.

*Enter LUCIANUS*

L

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

**OPHELIA**

You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

**HAMLET**

I could interpret between you and your love, if I  
could see the puppets dallying. Begin, murderer;  
pox, leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come:  
'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.'

**LUCIANUS**

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

*[Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears]*

**HAMLET**

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

**OPHELIA**

The king rises.

**HAMLET**

What, frightened with false fire!

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

How fares my lord?



**LORD POLONIUS**

Give o'er the play.

Players react

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Give me some light: away!

Servant turns on house lights, lower

**All**

Lights, lights, lights!

*Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO*

Players L and nobles R

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

Very well, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Upon the talk of the poisoning?

**HORATIO**

I did very well note him.

**HAMLET**

Ah, ha! Come, some music! come, the recorders!

For if the king like not the comedy,

Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music!

Grab recorder

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

R

**GUILDENSTERN**

Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

**HAMLET**

Sir, a whole history.

**GUILDENSTERN**

The king, sir,--

**HAMLET**

Ay, sir, what of him?

**GUILDENSTERN**

Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

**HAMLET**

With drink, sir?

**GUILDENSTERN**

No, my lord, rather with choler.

**HAMLET**

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

**GUILDENSTERN**

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

**HAMLET**

I am tame, sir: pronounce.

**GUILDENSTERN**

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

**HAMLET**

You are welcome.

**GUILDENSTERN**

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

**HAMLET**

Sir, I cannot.

**GUILDENSTERN**

What, my lord?

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Then thus she says; your behavior hath struck her

into amazement and admiration.

**HAMLET**

O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother!

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

My lord, you once did love me.

**HAMLET**

So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

Sir, I lack advancement.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

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

*HAMLET picks up a pipe.*      Pipe!!!

Will you play upon this pipe?

**GUILDENSTERN**

My lord, I cannot.

**HAMLET**

I pray you.

**GUILDENSTERN**

Believe me, I cannot.

**HAMLET**

I do beseech you.

**GUILDENSTERN**

I know no touch of it, my lord.

**HAMLET**

'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

**GUILDENSTERN**

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

**HAMLET**

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

*Enter POLONIUS*

R

God bless you, sir!

**LORD POLONIUS**

My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

**HAMLET**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

Methinks it is like a weasel.

**LORD POLONIUS**

It is backed like a weasel.

**HAMLET**

Or like a whale?

**LORD POLONIUS**

Very like a whale.

**HAMLET**

Then I will come to my mother by and by.

**LORD POLONIUS**

I will say so.

**HAMLET**

By and by is easily said.

*Exit POLONIUS*

R

Leave me, friends.

*Exeunt all but HAMLET*

R

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

*Exit*

L

**SCENE III.**

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN* R

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**GUILDENSTERN**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Never alone  
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN* R

*Enter POLONIUS* R

**LORD POLONIUS**

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.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Thanks, dear my lord.

*Exit POLONIUS* R

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

*Retires and kneels*

UC; board? Or DC?

*Enter HAMLET*

L; armed

**HAMLET**

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

*Exit* R

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

*Exit* L

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

*Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE and POLONIUS* R

**LORD POLONIUS**

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



**HAMLET**

[*Within*] Mother, mother, mother!

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

*POLONIUS hides behind the arras* **Pillar R**

*Enter HAMLET* **R**

**HAMLET**

Now, mother, what's the matter?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

**HAMLET**

Mother, you have my father much offended.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

**HAMLET**

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Why, how now, Hamlet!

**HAMLET**

What's the matter now?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Have you forgot me?

**HAMLET**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**HAMLET**

Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;  
You go not till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**LORD POLONIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

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

[*Makes a pass through the arras*]

*Polonius falls and dies.* Stumbles out right

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

O me, what hast thou done?

**HAMLET**

Nay, I know not: is it the king?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

**HAMLET**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

As kill a king!

**HAMLET**

Ay, lady, 'twas my word.

*Lifts up the array and discovers POLONIUS* Closely inspects body

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!  
I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune.  
Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you down,  
And let me wring your heart.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**HAMLET**

Look here, upon this picture, and on this,  
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
See, what a grace was seated on this brow;  
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;  
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;  
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 hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,  
And waits upon the judgment: and what judgment  
Would step from this to this? What devil was't  
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?  
O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,  
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,  
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,  
And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame  
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,  
Since frost itself as actively doth burn  
And reason panders will.

Props??? Cash???

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**HAMLET**

A murderer and a villain;  
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe  
Of your precedent lord--

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

No more!

**HAMLET**

--A king of shreds and patches,--  
Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,  
You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alas, he's mad!

**HAMLET**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**HAMLET**

On him, on him! Look you, how pale he glares!  
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,  
Would make them capable. Do not look upon me.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

To whom do you speak this?

**HAMLET**

Do you see nothing there?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

**HAMLET**

Nor did you nothing hear?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

No, nothing but ourselves.

**HAMLET**

Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!  
My father, in his habit as he lived!  
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

This the very coinage of your brain:  
This bodiless creation ecstasy  
Is very cunning in.

**HAMLET**

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. Mother, for love of grace,  
Lay not that mattering unction to your soul,  
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks.  
Confess yourself to heaven;  
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;  
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,  
To make them ranker.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

**HAMLET**

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

[*Pointing to POLONIUS*]

I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,  
 To punish me with this and this with me,  
 That I must be their scourge and minister.  
 I must be cruel, only to be kind:  
 Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.  
 One word more, good lady.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

What shall I do?

**HAMLET**

Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:  
 Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed;  
 Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse;  
 And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,  
 Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,  
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,  
 That I essentially am not in madness,  
 But mad in craft.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**HAMLET**

I must to England; you know that?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alack,

I had forgot: 'tis so concluded on.

**HAMLET**

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

Who was in life a foolish prating knave.  
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.  
Good night, mother.

*Exit HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS*

R, shut door

## ACT IV

### SCENE I.

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS.*

L

#### KING CLAUDIUS

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

#### QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

#### KING CLAUDIUS

What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

#### QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

#### KING CLAUDIUS

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?

#### QUEEN GERTRUDE

To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:  
He weeps for what is done.

#### KING CLAUDIUS

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*

R

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

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

R

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.

*Exeunt*

L

## SCENE II.

*Enter HAMLET*

R

**HAMLET**

Safely stowed.

**ROSENCRANTZ: GUILDENSTERN:**

[*Within*] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

**HAMLET**

What noise? who calls on Hamlet?  
O, here they come.

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

R

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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



**HAMLET**

Do not believe it.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Believe what?

**HAMLET**

That I can keep your counsel and not mine own.

Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! what replication should be made by the son of a king?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

I understand you not, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**ROSENCRANTZ**

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

**HAMLET**

The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing--

**GUILDENSTERN**

A thing, my lord!

**HAMLET**

Of nothing: bring me to him.

**SCENE III.**

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, attended*

L

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

**HAMLET**

At supper.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

At supper! where?

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Alas, alas!

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

What dost you mean by this?

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Where is Polonius?

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Go seek him there.

*To some Attendants*      *Alex?*

**HAMLET**

He will stay till ye come.

*Exeunt Attendants*      *R*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

For England!

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Ay, Hamlet.

**HAMLET**

Good.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Thy loving father, Hamlet.

**HAMLET**

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

*Exeunt HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*      *L*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,

thou mayst not coldly set  
 Our sovereign process; which imports at full,  
 By letters congruing to that effect,  
 The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England.

*Exit* R

## SCENE V.

*Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE and HORATIO* L

### QUEEN GERTRUDE

I will not speak with her.

### HORATIO

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

### QUEEN GERTRUDE

What would she have?

### HORATIO

She speaks much of her father.  
 'Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew  
 Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

### QUEEN GERTRUDE

Let her come in.

*Exit HORATIO* L

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

*Re-enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA* L

### OPHELIA

Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

### QUEEN GERTRUDE

How now, Ophelia!

**OPHELIA**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

**OPHELIA**

Say you? nay, pray you, mark.  
He is dead and gone, lady,  
He is dead and gone;  
At his head a grass-green turf,  
At his heels a stone.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Nay, but, Ophelia,--

**OPHELIA**

Pray you, mark.  
White his shroud as the mountain snow,--

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS*     **R**

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alas, look here, my lord.

**OPHELIA**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

How do you, pretty lady?

**OPHELIA**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Conceit upon her father.

**OPHELIA**

Pray you, let's have no words of this; but when they

ask you what it means, say you this:

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Pretty Ophelia!

**OPHELIA**

Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on't:  
 By Gis and by Saint Charity,  
 Alack, and fie for shame!  
 Young men will do't, if they come to't;  
 By cock, they are to blame.  
 Quoth she, before you tumbled me,  
 You promised me to wed.  
 So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,  
 An thou hadst not come to my bed.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

How long hath she been thus?

**OPHELIA**

I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I  
 cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him  
 i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it:  
 and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my  
 coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies;  
 good night, good night.

*Exit*      L

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

*Exit HORATIO*      L

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs  
 All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,  
 When sorrows come, they come not single spies

But in battalions. First, her father slain:  
 Next, your son gone; and he most violent author  
 Of his own just remove: the people muddied,  
 Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,  
 For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly,  
 In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia  
 Divided from herself and her fair judgment.  
 Last, and as much containing as all these,  
 Her brother is in secret come from France;  
 Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,  
 And wants not buzzers to infect his ear  
 With pestilent speeches of his father's death.

*A noise within*      *Crashing (slammed door?) stage l*

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alack, what noise is this?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Where are my soldiers? Let them guard the door.

*Noise within*

*Enter LAERTES, armed.*

*L*

**LAERTES**

Where is this king? Give me my father!

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Calmly, good Laertes.

**LAERTES**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

What is the cause, Laertes,  
 That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?  
 Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person:  
 There's such divinity doth hedge a king,  
 That treason can but peep to what it would,  
 Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,  
 Why thou art thus incensed. Let him go, Gertrude.  
 Speak, man.

**LAERTES**

Where is my father?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Dead.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

But not by him.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Let him demand his fill.

**LAERTES**

How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:  
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!  
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,  
Let come what comes; only I'll be revenged  
Most thoroughly for my father.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Good Laertes, Is't writ in your revenge,  
That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,  
Winner and loser?

**LAERTES**

None but his enemies.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Will you know them then?

**LAERTES**

To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms.

Lower guard, hand on shoulc

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

Visibly mad?

*Re-enter OPHELIA*

L

**LAERTES**

O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt,  
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!  
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?



**OPHELIA**

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

**LAERTES**

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

**OPHELIA**

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

**LAERTES**

This nothing's more than matter.

**OPHELIA**

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray,  
love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

Props

**LAERTES**

A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

**OPHELIA**

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

*Sings*

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

**LAERTES**

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

**OPHELIA**

And will he not come again?  
 And will he not come again?  
 No, no, he is dead:  
 Go to thy death-bed:  
 He never will come again.  
 His beard was as white as snow,  
 All flaxen was his poll:  
 He is gone, he is gone,  
 And we cast away moan:  
 God ha' mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' ye.

*Exit*

L

**LAERTES**

Do you see this, O God?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**LAERTES**

Let this be so;  
 His means of death, his obscure funeral,  
 Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,  
 That I must call't in question.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

*Exeunt*

R

**SCENE VI.***Enter HAMLET, led by ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

L Alone or led?

**HAMLET**

How all occasions do inform against me,  
 And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,  
 If his chief good and market of his time  
 Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.  
 Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,  
 Looking before and after, gave us not  
 That capability and god-like reason  
 To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be  
 Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple  
 Of thinking too precisely on the event,  
 A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom  
 And ever three parts coward, I do not know  
 Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do;'  
 Sith I have cause and will and strength and means  
 To do't. O, from this time forth,  
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

*Exeunt.*

L

**SCENE VII.***Enter KING CLAUDIUS and LAERTES*

R

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**LAERTES**

It well appears: but tell me  
 Why you proceeded not against these feats,  
 So crimeful and so capital in nature.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

O, for two special reasons;  
 The queen his mother  
 Lives almost by his looks; and for myself,  
 She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,  
 That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,

I could not but by her. The other motive,  
Is the great love the general gender bear him;  
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,  
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,  
Convert his gyves to graces.

**LAERTES**

And so have I a noble father lost;  
A sister driven into desperate terms:  
but my revenge will come.

*Enter SERVANT*     L, with Prop: note

**SERVANT**

Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:  
This to your majesty; this to the queen.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

From Hamlet! who brought them?

**SERVANT**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Laertes, you shall hear them. Leave us.

*Exit SERVANT*     L

*Reads*

'High and mighty, You shall know I am set naked on  
your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see  
your kingly eyes: when I shall, first asking your  
pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden  
and more strange return. 'HAMLET.'  
What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?  
If it be so, Laertes--  
Will you be ruled by me?

**LAERTES**

Ay, my lord;

So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,  
As checking at his voyage, and that he means

No more to undertake it, I will work him  
 To an exploit, now ripe in my device,  
 Under the which he shall not choose but fall:  
 And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,  
 But even his mother shall uncharge the practice  
 And call it accident.

**LAERTES**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

It falls right.  
 You have been talk'd of since your travel much:  
 One made confession of you,  
 And gave you such a masterly report  
 For art and exercise in your defence  
 And for your rapier most especially,  
 That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,  
 If one could match you. Sir, this report of his  
 Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy  
 That he could nothing do but wish and beg  
 Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.  
 Now, out of this,--

**LAERTES**

What out of this, my lord?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**LAERTES**

Why ask you this?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**LAERTES**

To cut his throat i' the church.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;  
 Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,  
 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,  
 bring you in fine together  
 And wager on your heads: he, being remiss,  
 Most generous and free from all contriving,  
 Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,  
 Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
 A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice  
 Requite him for your father.

**LAERTES**

I will do't:

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Let's further think of this. Soft! let me see:  
 We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings: I ha't.  
 When in your motion you are hot and dry,  
 And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him  
 A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,  
 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,  
 Our purpose may hold there.

*Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE*

L

How now, sweet queen!

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**LAERTES**

Drown'd! O, where?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**LAERTES**

Alas, then, she is drown'd?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Drown'd, drown'd.

**LAERTES**

Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,  
 And therefore I forbid my tears: Adieu, my lord:  
 I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,  
 But that this folly douts it.

*Exit*

R

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

*Exeunt*

R

## ACT V

### SCENE I.

*Enter two Clowns, with spades.* L, spades, bones!

#### First Clown

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

#### Second Clown

I tell thee she is: and therefore make her grave straight.

#### First Clown

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

#### Second Clown

Why, 'tis found so.

#### First Clown

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

Props?

#### Second Clown

Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,--

#### First Clown

Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good; if the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes,--mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

#### Second Clown

But is this law?

#### First Clown

Ay, marry, is't.



**Second Clown**

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

**First Clown**

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 Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentleman but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession.

**Second Clown**

Was he a gentleman?

**First Clown**

He was the first that ever bore arms.

**Second Clown**

Why, he had none.

**First Clown**

What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says 'Adam digged:' could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself--

**Second Clown**

Go to.

**First Clown**

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

**Second Clown**

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

**First Clown**

I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do in: now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.

**Second Clown**

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

**First Clown**

Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

**Second Clown**

Marry, now I can tell.

**First Clown**

To't.

**Second Clown**

Mass, I cannot tell.

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance* L

**First Clown**

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 that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee in and fetch me a stoup of liquor.

*Exit Second Clown* R

*He digs and sings*

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

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

**HAMLET**

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

**First Clown**

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

*Throws up a skull*

**Bones and skulls!**

**HAMLET**

That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once:  
how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were  
Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It  
might be the pate of a politician, which this ass  
now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God,  
might it not?

**HORATIO**

It might, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Or of a courtier; which could say 'Good morrow,  
sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?'

**First Clown**

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

*Throws up another skull*

**HAMLET**

There's another: why may not that be the skull of a  
lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quilllets,  
his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he  
suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the  
sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of  
his action of battery? Hum! I will speak to this  
fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

**First Clown**

Mine, sir.

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

**HAMLET**

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

**First Clown**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**First Clown**

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

**HAMLET**

What man dost thou dig it for?

**First Clown**

For no man, sir.

**HAMLET**

What woman, then?

**First Clown**

For none, neither.

**HAMLET**

Who is to be buried in't?

**First Clown**

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

**HAMLET**

How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

**First Clown**

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

**HAMLET**

How long is that since?

**First Clown**

Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it

was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he that is mad, and sent into England.

**HAMLET**

Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

**First Clown**

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

**HAMLET**

Why?

**First Clown**

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

**HAMLET**

How came he mad?

**First Clown**

Very strangely, they say.

**HAMLET**

How strangely?

**First Clown**

Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

**HAMLET**

Upon what ground?

**First Clown**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**First Clown**

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

**HAMLET**

Why he more than another?

**First Clown**

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

**HAMLET**

Whose was it?

**First Clown**

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

**HAMLET**

Nay, I know not.

**First Clown**

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

**HAMLET**

This?

**First Clown**

E'en that.

**HAMLET**

Let me see.

*Takes the skull*

Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rims at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen? Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

**HORATIO**

What's that, my lord?

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

E'en so.

**HAMLET**

And smelt so? pah!

*Puts down the skull*

**HORATIO**

E'en so, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

**HAMLET**

No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel? Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay, Might stop a hole to keep the wind away: O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe, Should patch a wall to expel the winter flaw! But soft! but soft! ~~aside~~: here comes the king.

*Enter Priest, & c. in procession; the Corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following; KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, their trains, & c*

R

The queen, the courtiers: who is this they follow?  
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken  
The corse they follow did with desperate hand  
Fordo its own life: 'twas of some estate.

Urn

Couch we awhile, and mark.

*Retiring with HORATIO*

*Audience aisle L*

**LAERTES**

What ceremony else?

**HAMLET**

That is Laertes,  
A very noble youth: mark.

**LAERTES**

What ceremony else?

**First Priest**

Her obsequies have been as far enlarged  
As we have warrantise: her death was doubtful;  
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,  
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged  
Till the last trumpet.

**LAERTES**

Must there no more be done?

**First Priest**

No more be done:  
We should profane the service of the dead  
To sing a requiem and such rest to her  
As to peace-parted souls.

**LAERTES**

Lay her i' the earth:  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,  
A ministering angel shall my sister be,  
When thou liest howling.

**HAMLET**

What, the fair Ophelia!

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

*Scattering flowers*

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;



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

**LAERTES**

O, treble woe

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

*Leaps into the grave*

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

**HAMLET**

[*Advancing*] What is he whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow  
Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand  
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,  
Hamlet the Dane.

*Leaps into the grave*

**LAERTES**

The devil take thy soul!

*Grappling with him*

**HAMLET**

Thou pray'st not well.

I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Pluck them asunder.

Shovel?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Hamlet, Hamlet!

**All**

Gentlemen,--

**HORATIO**

Good my lord, be quiet.

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

?

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

O my son, what theme?

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

O, he is mad, Laertes.

For love of God, forbear him.

'Swords, show me what thou'lt do:  
 Woul't weep? woul't fight? woul't fast? woul't tear thyself?  
 Woul't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile?  
 I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?  
 To outface me with leaping in her grave?  
 Be buried quick with her, and so will I:  
 I'll rant as well as thou.

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

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

*Exit HAMLET and HORATIO*

[*To LAERTES*]  
Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;  
We'll put the matter to the present push.  
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.

*Exeunt*      **R**

## **SCENE II.**

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO*      **L**

### **HAMLET**

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

### **HORATIO**

Remember it, my lord?

### **HAMLET**

In my heart there was a kind of fighting,  
That would not let me sleep: methought I lay  
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,  
And praised be rashness for it, let us know,  
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,  
When our deep plots do pall: and that should teach us  
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will.

### **HORATIO**

That is most certain.

### **HAMLET**

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

### **HORATIO**

Is't possible?

**HAMLET**

I sat me down,  
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair:  
An earnest conjuration from the king,  
As England was his faithful tributary,  
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,  
Without debatement further, more or less,  
He should the bearers put to sudden death,  
Not shriving-time allow'd.

**HORATIO**

So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

Why, what a king is this!

**HAMLET**

Does it not, think'st thee, stand me now upon--  
He that hath kill'd my king and whored my mother,  
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,  
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,  
And with such cozenage--is't not perfect conscience,  
To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be damn'd,  
To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil?

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

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

Into a towering passion.

**HORATIO**

Peace! who comes here?

*Enter Messenger, who hands a letter to Horatio.*

R

*Reads.*

Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.  
You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is.  
The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes  
between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you  
three hits: he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it  
would come to immediate trial, if your lordship  
would vouchsafe the answer.

**HAMLET**

I will walk here in the hall: if it please his  
majesty, 'tis the breathing time of day with me; let  
the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the  
king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can;  
if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

**HORATIO**

You will lose this wager, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

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

*Horatio calls in the others.*

R

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, LAERTES, Lords, SERVANT, and Attendants with foils, & c*

R

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

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

**HAMLET**

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

**LAERTES**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**LAERTES**

Come, one for me.

**HAMLET**

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

**LAERTES**

You mock me, sir.

**HAMLET**

No, by this hand.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**LAERTES**

This is too heavy, let me see another.

**HAMLET**

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

*They prepare to play*

**SERVANT**

Ay, my good lord.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Set me the stoops of wine upon that table.  
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,  
~~Let all the battlements their ordnance fire:~~  
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;  
And in the cup an union shall he throw,  
Richer than that which four successive kings  
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups.  
'Now the king drinks to Hamlet.' Come, begin:

Prop

**HAMLET**

Come on, sir.

**LAERTES**

Come, my lord.

*They play.*

**HAMLET**

One.

**LAERTES**

No.

**HAMLET**

Judgment.

**SERVANT**

A hit, a very palpable hit.

**LAERTES**

Well; again.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

~~Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within~~

Give him the cup.

**HAMLET**

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

*They play*

Another hit; what say you?

**LAERTES**

A touch, a touch, I do confess.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Our son shall win.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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



**HAMLET**

Good madam!

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Gertrude, do not drink.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Come, let me wipe thy face.

**LAERTES**

My lord, I'll hit him now.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

I do not think't.

**LAERTES**

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

**HAMLET**

Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally.

**LAERTES**

Say you so? come on.

*They play*

**SERVANT**

Nothing, neither way.

**LAERTES**

Have at you now!

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

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Part them; they are incensed.

**HAMLET**

Nay, come, again.

*QUEEN GERTRUDE falls*

**SERVANT**

Look to the queen there, ho!

**HORATIO**

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

**SERVANT**

How is't, Laertes?

**LAERTES**

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

**HAMLET**

How does the queen?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

She swounds to see them bleed.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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

*Dies*

**HAMLET**

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

**LAERTES**

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

**HAMLET**

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



**HAMLET**

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

*Dies.*

**HORATIO**

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