

FIRST PLAYER: Aye, my lord.

HAMLET: Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. 495

[Exit FIRST PLAYER.] My good friends, I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

ROSENCRANTZ: Good my lord!

HAMLET: Aye, so, God be wi' ye! [Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.] Now I am alone. 500

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<sup>9</sup> working all his visage wanned;

Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,

A broken voice, and his whole function<sup>1</sup> suiting

With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!

For Hecuba!<sup>2</sup>

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 air 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,<sup>3</sup>

Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,<sup>4</sup> 520

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-livered and lack gall

To make oppression bitter, or ere this

I should have fatted all the region kites<sup>5</sup>

With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!

Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless<sup>6</sup> villain!

O, vengeance!

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,

That I, the son of a dear father murdered,

9. His soul's. 1. Bodily action. 2. Queen of Troy, Priam's wife. *Conceit*: imagination, conception of the role played. 3. Mope. *Muddy-mettled*: of poor metal (spirit, temper), dull-spirited. 4. Not really conscious of my cause, unquicken'd by it. *John-a-dreams*: a dreamy, absentminded character. 5. Kites (hawks) of the air. 6. Unnatural.

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! About,<sup>7</sup> 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 proclaimed their malefactions;

For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak

With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players

Play something like the murder of my father

Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;

I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> than this. The play's the thing

Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

[Exit.]

### Act III

#### SCENE 1

*A room in the castle.*

[Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.]

KING: And can you, by no drift of circumstance,<sup>1</sup>

Get from him why he puts on this confusion,

Grating so harshly all his days of quiet

With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

ROSENCRANTZ: He does confess he feels himself distracted,

But from what cause he will by no means speak.

GUILDENSTERN: Nor do we find him forward to be sounded;

But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,

When we would bring him on to some confession

Of his true state.

QUEEN: Did he receive you well?

ROSENCRANTZ: Most like a gentleman.

GUILDENSTERN: But with much forcing of his disposition.

ROSENCRANTZ: Niggard of question, but of our demands

Most free in his reply.

7. To work! 8. Flinch. *Tent*: probe. 9. Relevant. 1. Turn of talk, or roundabout way.



QUEEN: Did you assay<sup>2</sup> him  
To any pastime? 15

ROSENCRANTZ: Madam, it so fell out that certain players  
We o'er-raught<sup>3</sup> 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 20  
This night to play before him.

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

KING: With all my heart; and it doth much content me  
To hear him so inclined. 25  
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,<sup>4</sup>  
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

ROSENCRANTZ: We shall, my lord.  
[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

KING: Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;  
For we have closely<sup>5</sup> sent for Hamlet hither,  
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here 30  
Affront Ophelia:  
Her father and myself, lawful espials,  
Will so bestow<sup>6</sup> ourselves that, seeing unseen,  
We may of their encounter frankly judge,  
And gather by him, as he is behaved, 35  
If 't be the affliction of his love or no  
That thus he suffers for.

QUEEN: I shall obey you:  
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish  
That your good beauties be the happy cause  
Of Hamlet's wildness: so shall I hope your virtues 40  
Will bring him to his wonted way again,  
To both your honors.

OPHELIA: Madam, I wish it may.  
[*Exit QUEEN.*]

POLONIUS: Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,  
We will bestow ourselves. [To OPHELIA.] Read on this book;  
That show of such an exercise may color<sup>7</sup> 45  
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,—  
'Tis too much proved—that with devotion's visage  
And pious action we do sugar o'er  
The devil himself.

KING: [*Aside.*] O, 'tis too true!  
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience! 50  
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,  
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it

2. Try to attract him. 3. Overtook. 4. Incitement. 5. Privately. 6. Place. *Affront*: confront. *Espials*: spies. 7. Excuse.

Than is my deed to my most painted word:  
O heavy burthen!

POLONIUS: I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord. 55  
[*Exeunt KING and POLONIUS. — Enter HAMLET.*]

HAMLET: To be, or not to be: that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them. To die: to sleep;  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end 60  
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation<sup>8</sup>  
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep: perchance to dream: aye, there's the rub;<sup>9</sup>  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come, 65  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,<sup>1</sup>  
Must give us pause: there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life;<sup>2</sup>  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, 70  
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<sup>3</sup> bear, 75  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscovered country from whose bourn<sup>4</sup>  
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have 80  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pitch<sup>5</sup> and moment 85  
With this regard their currents turn awry  
And lose the name of action. Soft you now!  
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons<sup>6</sup>  
Be all my sins remembered.

OPHELIA: Good my lord, 90  
How does your honor 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 to re-deliver;  
I pray you, now receive them.

8. Final settlement. 9. The impediment (a bowling term). 1. Have rid ourselves of the turmoil of mortal life. 2. So long-lived. *Respect*: consideration. 3. Burdens. *Bodkin*: poniard, dagger. 4. Boundary. 5. Height. 6. Prayers.



HAMLET: No, not I; 95  
 I never gave you aught.  
 OPHELIA: My honored lord, you know right well you did;  
 And with them words of so sweet breath composed  
 As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,  
 Take these again; for to the noble mind 100  
 Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.  
 There, my lord.  
 HAMLET: Ha, ha! are you honest?  
 OPHELIA: My lord?  
 HAMLET: Are you fair? 105  
 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<sup>7</sup> than with  
 honesty? 110  
 HAMLET: Aye, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform hon-  
 esty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate  
 beauty into his<sup>8</sup> likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the  
 time gives it proof.<sup>9</sup> I did love you once.  
 OPHELIA: Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so. 115  
 HAMLET: You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inocu-  
 late our old stock, but we shall relish<sup>1</sup> 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 120  
 of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I  
 am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offenses at my  
 beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them  
 shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do  
 crawling between heaven and earth! We are arrant knaves all; believe 125  
 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! 130  
 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 cal-  
 umny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs  
 marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters<sup>2</sup>  
 you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell. 135  
 OPHELIA: O heavenly powers, restore him!  
 HAMLET: I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God hath  
 given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you  
 amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make

7. Intercourse. 8. Its. 9. In his mother's adultery. 1. Retain the flavor of. *Inoculate*: graft itself onto. 2. Cuckolds bear imaginary horns and "a horned man's a monster" (*Othello* IV.1).

your wantonness your ignorance.<sup>3</sup> 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.*]

OPHELIA: O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!  
 The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword: 145  
 The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
 The glass of fashion and the mould of form.<sup>4</sup>  
 The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!  
 And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,  
 That sucked the honey of his music vows, 150  
 Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,  
 Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;  
 That unmatched form and feature of blown<sup>5</sup> youth  
 Blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me,  
 To have seen what I have seen, see what I see! 155  
 [*Re-enter KING and POLONIUS.*]  
 KING: Love! his affections do not that way tend;  
 Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little,  
 Was not like madness. There's something in his soul  
 O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,  
 And I do doubt<sup>6</sup> the hatch and the disclose 160  
 Will be some danger: which for to prevent,  
 I have in quick determination  
 Thus set it down:—he shall with speed to England,  
 For the demand of our neglected tribute:  
 Haply the seas and countries different 165  
 With variable objects shall expel  
 This something-settled matter in his heart,  
 Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus  
 From fashion of himself.<sup>7</sup> What think you on 't?  
 POLONIUS: It shall do well: but yet do I believe 170  
 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, 175  
 Let his queen mother all alone entreat him  
 To show his grief: let her be round<sup>8</sup> 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 180  
 Your wisdom best shall think.

KING: It shall be so:

3. Misname (out of affectation) the most natural things, and pretend that this is due to ignorance instead of affectation. 4. The mirror of fashion and the model of behavior. 5. In full bloom. 6. Fear. 7. Makes him behave unusually. 8. Direct.



Madness in great ones must not unwatched go.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE 2

*A hall in the castle.*

[*Enter HAMLET and PLAYERS.*]

HAMLET: Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of 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, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings,<sup>9</sup> who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'er doing Termagant;<sup>1</sup> it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.

FIRST PLAYER: I warrant your honor.

HAMLET: Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty<sup>2</sup> of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.<sup>3</sup> Now this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theater of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely,<sup>4</sup> 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<sup>5</sup> 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<sup>6</sup> spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.

[*Exeunt PLAYERS. — Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*]

9. Spectators in the pit, where admission was cheapest. 1. God of the Mohammedans in old romances and morality plays; he was portrayed as being noisy and excitable. 2. Moderation. 3. Impress, shape. *Feature*: form. *His*: its. 4. Hamlet apologizes for the profane implication that there could be men not of God's making. 5. Pretty well. 6. Silly.

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

POLONIUS: And the queen too, and that presently.

HAMLET: Bid the players make haste.

[*Exit POLONIUS.*]

Will you two help to hasten them?

ROSENCRANTZ: } We will, my lord.  
GUILDENSTERN: }

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

HAMLET: What ho! Horatio!

[*Enter HORATIO.*]

HORATIO: Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAMLET: Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man

As e'er my conversation coped withal.<sup>7</sup>

HORATIO: O, my dear lord,—

HAMLET: Nay, do not think I flatter;

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

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd/pomp,  
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee  
Where thrift may follow fawning.<sup>8</sup> Dost thou hear?

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,

And could of men distinguish, her election

Hath sealed thee for herself: for thou hast been

As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;

A man that fortune's buffets and rewards

Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are those

Whose blood and judgment<sup>9</sup> are so well commingled

That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger

To sound what stop she please.<sup>1</sup> Give me that man

That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him

In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,

As I do thee. Something too much of this.

There is a play 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 sees that act a-foot,

Even with the very comment of thy soul<sup>2</sup>

Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt

Do not itself unkennel in one speech

It is a damned ghost that we have seen,

And my imaginations are as foul

As Vulcan's stithy.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

7. As I ever associated with. 8. Material profit may be derived from cringing. *Pregnant hinges*: supple joints. 9. Passion and reason. 1. For Fortune to put her finger on any windhole of the pipe she wants. 2. With all your powers of observation. 3. Smithy. 4. To judge his behavior.



HORATIO:

Well, my lord:

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

HAMLET: They are coming to the play: I must be idle:<sup>5</sup>  
Get you a place.

[*Danish march. A flourish. Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and other LORDS attendant, with the GUARD carrying torches.*]

KING: How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAMLET: Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish: I eat the air,<sup>6</sup>  
promise-crammed: you cannot feed capons so.

KING: I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not  
mine.<sup>7</sup>

HAMLET: No, nor mine now. [*To POLONIUS.*] My lord, you played  
once i' the university, you say?

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

HAMLET: What did you enact?

POLONIUS: I did enact Julius Cæsar: 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: Aye, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

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

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

POLONIUS: [*To the KING.*] 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: Aye, 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.<sup>8</sup>

OPHELIA: You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET: Who, I?

OPHELIA: Aye, my lord.

HAMLET: O God, your only jig-maker.<sup>9</sup> What should a man do but be  
merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my  
father died within 's two hours.

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

HAMLET: So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a  
suit of sables.<sup>1</sup> O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten  
yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life  
half a year: but, by 'r lady, he must build churches then; or else

5. Crazy. 6. The chameleon was supposed to feed on air. 7. Have nothing to do with my question. 8. A sexual pun: no thing. 9. Maker of comic songs. 1. Hamlet notes sarcastically the lack of mourning for his father in the fancy dress of court and king.

shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse,<sup>2</sup> whose epitaph is, 'For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.'

[*Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters. — Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly; the Queen embracing him and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck; 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 exits. 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 Poisoner woos the Queen with gifts: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love. — Exeunt.*]

OPHELIA: What means this, my lord?

HAMLET: Marry, this is miching mallecho;<sup>3</sup> it means mischief.

OPHELIA: Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

[*Enter PROLOGUE.*]

HAMLET: We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel;<sup>4</sup> they'll tell all.

OPHELIA: Will he tell us what this show meant?

HAMLET: Aye, 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,<sup>5</sup> you are naught: I'll mark the play.

PROLOGUE: For us, and for our tragedy,

Here stooping to your clemency,

We beg your hearing patiently.

HAMLET: Is this a prologue, or the posy<sup>6</sup> of a ring?

OPHELIA: 'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET: As woman's love.

[*Enter two PLAYERS, KING and QUEEN.*]PLAYER KING: Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart<sup>7</sup> gone round

Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground,

And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen

About the world have times twelve thirties been,

Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands

Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

PLAYER QUEEN: So many journeys may the sun and moon

Make us again count o'er ere love be done!

But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,

So far from cheer and from your former state,

That I distrust you.<sup>8</sup> Yet, though I distrust,

Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:

For women's fear and love holds quantity,<sup>9</sup>

In neither aught, or in extremity.

Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know,

And as my love is sized, my fear is so:

2. A figure in the old May Day games and Morris dances. 3. Sneaking misdeed. 4. A secret. 5. Naughty, improper. 6. Motto, inscription. 7. The chariot of the sun. 8. I am worried about you. 9. Maintain mutual balance.



Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear,  
 Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.  
 PLAYER KING: Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;  
 My operant powers their functions leave<sup>1</sup> to do:  
 And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,  
 Honored, beloved; and haply one as kind  
 For husband shalt thou—

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

HAMLET: [*Aside.*] Wormwood, wormwood.

PLAYER QUEEN: The instances that second marriage move  
 Are base respects of thrift,<sup>2</sup> but none of love:  
 A second time I kill my husband dead,  
 When second husband kisses me in bed.

PLAYER KING: I do believe you think what now you speak,  
 But what we do determine oft we break.  
 Purpose is but the slave to memory,  
 Of violent birth but poor validity:  
 Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree,  
 But fall unshaken when they mellow be.  
 Most necessary 'tis that we forget  
 To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:  
 What to ourselves in passion we propose,  
 The passion ending, both the purpose lose.  
 The violence of either grief or joy  
 Their own enactures<sup>3</sup> with themselves destroy:  
 Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;  
 Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.  
 This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange  
 That even our loves should with our fortunes change,  
 For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,  
 Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love.  
 The great man down, you mark his favorite flies;  
 The poor advanced makes friends of enemies:  
 And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;  
 For who not needs shall never lack a friend,  
 And who in want a hollow friend doth try  
 Directly seasons<sup>4</sup> him his enemy.  
 But, orderly to end where I begun,  
 Our wills and fates do so contrary run,  
 That our devices still are overthrown,  
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:  
 So think thou wilt no second husband wed,  
 But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

PLAYER QUEEN: Nor earth to me give food nor heaven light!

1. Cease. 2. Considerations of material profit. *Instances*: motives. 3. Their own fulfillment in action. 4. Matures.

Sport and repose lock from me day and night!  
 To desperation turn my trust and hope!  
 An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!  
 Each opposite, that blanks<sup>5</sup> 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 a while;  
 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.*]

HAMLET: Madam, how like you this play?

QUEEN: The lady doth protest<sup>6</sup> too much, methinks.

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

KING: Have you heard the argument?<sup>7</sup> Is there no offense in 't?

HAMLET: No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offense i' the world.

KING: What do you call the play?

HAMLET: The Mouse-Trap. Marry, how? Tropically.<sup>8</sup> 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: let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.<sup>9</sup>

[*Enter LUCIANUS.*]

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

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

HAMLET: I could interpret<sup>1</sup> between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

OPHELIA: You are keen,<sup>2</sup> my lord, you are keen.

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

OPHELIA: Still better and worse.

HAMLET: So you must take<sup>3</sup> your husbands. Begin, murderer; pox, leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come: the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

LUCIANUS: Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;

Confederate season, else no creature seeing;

Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,

With Hecate's ban<sup>4</sup> thrice blasted, thrice infected,

Thy natural magic and dire property,

On wholesome life usurp immediately.

5. Makes pale. *Anchor's cheer*: hermit's, or anchorite's, fare. 6. Promise. 7. Plot of the play in outline. 8. By a trope, figuratively. 9. Not wrenched. *Galled jade*: injured horse. *Withers*: the area between a horse's shoulders. 1. Act as interpreter (regular feature in puppet shows). 2. Bitter, but Hamlet chooses to take the word sexually. 3. That is, for better or for worse, as in the marriage service—but in fact you "mis-take," deceive them. 4. Goddess of witchcraft's curse. *Confederate*: favorable.



[Pours the poison into the sleeper's ear.]

HAMLET: He poisons him i' the garden for his estate. His name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and written in very choice Italian: you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife. 240

OPHELIA: The king rises.

HAMLET: What, frightened with false fire!<sup>5</sup>

QUEEN: How fares my lord?

POLONIUS: Give o'er the play.

KING: Give me some light. Away! 245

POLONIUS: Lights, lights, lights!

[Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.]

HAMLET: Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungallèd play;

For some must watch, while some must sleep:

Thus runs the world away. 250

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers—if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me—with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry<sup>6</sup> of players, sir?

HORATIO: Half a share.

HAMLET: A whole one, I. 255

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,

This realm dismantled was

Of Jove himself; and now reigns here

A very, very—pajock. 260

HORATIO: You might have rhymed.<sup>7</sup>

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. 265

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.<sup>8</sup>

Come, some music!

[Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

GUILDENSTERN: Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you. 270

HAMLET: Sir, a whole history.

GUILDENSTERN: The king, sir—

HAMLET: Aye, sir, what of him?

GUILDENSTERN: Is in his retirement marvelous distempered.

HAMLET: With drink, sir? 275

GUILDENSTERN: No, my lord, rather with choler.<sup>9</sup>

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

GUILDENSTERN: Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, 280

5. Blank shot. 6. Company; a term generally used with hounds. *Turk with*: betray. *Razed shoes*: sometimes worn by actors. 7. Ass would have rhymed. *Pajock*: peacock. 8. By God (*per Dieu*). 9. Bile, anger.

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. 285

GUILDENSTERN: Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome<sup>1</sup> answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

HAMLET: Sir, I cannot. 290

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,— 295

ROSENCRANTZ: Then thus she says; your behavior hath struck her into amazement and admiration.<sup>2</sup>

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

ROSENCRANTZ: She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed. 300

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.<sup>3</sup> 305

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.<sup>4</sup>

ROSENCRANTZ: How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark? 310

HAMLET: Aye, sir, but 'while the grass grows,'<sup>5</sup>—the proverb is something musty.

[Re-enter PLAYERS with recorders.]

O, the recorders! let me see one. To withdraw with you:—why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?<sup>6</sup> 315

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

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

GUILDENSTERN: My lord, I cannot. 320

HAMLET: I pray you.

GUILDENSTERN: Believe me, I cannot.

HAMLET: I do beseech you.

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

HAMLET: It is as easy as lying: govern these ventages<sup>7</sup> with your fingers 325

1. Sensible. 2. Confusion and surprise. 3. The hands. 4. Hamlet pretends that the cause of his "distemper" is frustrated ambition. 5. The proverb ends: "oft starves the silly steed." 6. Snare. *Withdraw*: retire, talk in private. *Recover the wind of*: get to the windward. 7. Windholes.



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! 330  
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 335  
pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret<sup>8</sup> me, yet you cannot play upon me.

[*Re-enter* POLONIUS.]

God bless you, sir!

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

HAMLET: Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel? 340

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

HAMLET: Methinks it is like a weasel.

POLONIUS: It is backed like a weasel.

HAMLET: Or like a whale?

POLONIUS: Very like a whale. 345

HAMLET: Then I will come to my mother by and by. They fool me to the top of my bent. I will come by and by.

POLONIUS: I will say so.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

HAMLET: 'By and by' is easily said. Leave me, friends.

[*Exeunt all but* HAMLET.]

'tis now the very witching time of night, 350  
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 355  
The soul of Nero<sup>9</sup> 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, 360  
To give them seals<sup>1</sup> never, my soul, consent!  
[*Exit.*]

### SCENE 3

*A room in the castle.*

[*Enter* KING, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.]

KING: I like him not, nor stands it safe with us

8. Vex, with a pun on *frets*, meaning the ridges placed across the finger board of a guitar to regulate the fingering. 9. A Roman emperor (A.D. 37-68) who murdered his mother. 1. Ratify them by action. *Shent*: reproached.

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<sup>2</sup> may not endure 5  
Hazard so near us 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. 10

ROSENCRANTZ: The single and peculiar<sup>3</sup> life is bound

With all the strength and armor of the mind

To keep itself from noyance; but much more

That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests

The lives of many. The cease<sup>4</sup> of majesty 15

Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw

What's near it with it; it is a massy wheel,

Fixed on the summit of the highest mount,

To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things

Are mortised<sup>5</sup> and adjoined; which, when it falls, 20

Each small annexment, petty consequence,

Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone

Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

KING: Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage,

For we will fetters put about this fear, 25

Which now goes too free-footed.

ROSENCRANTZ: } We will haste us.

GUILDENSTERN: }

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN. — *Enter* POLONIUS.]

POLONIUS: My lord, he's going to his mother's closet:

Behind the arras I'll convey myself,

To hear the process: I'll warrant she'll tax him home:<sup>6</sup> 30

And, as you said, and wisely was it said

'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,

Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear

The speech, of vantage.<sup>7</sup> Fare you well, my liege!

I'll call upon you ere you go to bed, 35

And tell you what I know.

KING: Thanks, dear my lord.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven;

It hath the primal eldest curse<sup>8</sup> upon 't,

A brother's murder. Pray can I not,

Though inclination be as sharp as will: 40

My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,

And like a man to double business bound,

I stand in pause where I shall first begin,

2. My position as king. 3. Individual. 4. Decease, extinction. 5. Fastened. 6. Take him to task thoroughly. 7. From a vantage point. 8. The curse of Cain.



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 offense?<sup>9</sup>  
 And what's in prayer but this twofold force,  
 To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
 Or pardoned being down? Then I'll look up;  
 My fault is past. But O, what form of prayer  
 Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder?'  
 That cannot be, since I am still possessed  
 Of those effects for which I did the murder,  
 My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.  
 May one be pardoned and retain the offense?<sup>1</sup>  
 In the corrupted currents of this world  
 Offense's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
 And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself  
 Buys out the law:<sup>2</sup> but 'tis not so above;  
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies  
 In his<sup>3</sup> true nature, and we ourselves compelled  
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults  
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?<sup>4</sup>  
 Try what repentance can: what can it not?  
 Yet what can it when one can not repent?  
 O wretched state! O bosom black as death!  
 O limed soul, that struggling to be free  
 Art more engaged! Help, angels! make assay!<sup>5</sup>  
 Bow, stubborn knees, and, heart with strings of steel,  
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!  
 All may be well.

[Retires and kneels. —Enter HAMLET.]

HAMLET: Now might I do it pat,<sup>6</sup> now he is praying  
 And now I'll do 't: and so he goes to heaven:  
 And so am I revenged. That would be scanned;<sup>7</sup>  
 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<sup>8</sup> stands who knows save heaven?  
 But in our circumstance and course of thought,  
 'Tis heavy with him: and am I then revenged,  
 To take him in the purging of his soul,  
 When he is fit and seasoned<sup>9</sup> for his passage?

9. Guilt. 1. The things obtained through the offense. 2. The wealth unduly acquired is used for bribery. 3. Its. 4. What remains? 5. Make the attempt! *Limed*: caught as with birdlime.  
 6. Conveniently. 7. Would have to be considered carefully. 8. Account. *Broad blown*: in full bloom. 9. Ripe, ready.

No.

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent:<sup>1</sup>  
 When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,  
 Or, in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;  
 At game, a-swearing, or about some act  
 That has no relish of salvation in 't;  
 Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven  
 And that his soul may be as damned and black  
 As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays:  
 This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

[Exit.]

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

[Exit.]

#### SCENE 4

#### *The Queen's closet.*

[Enter QUEEN and POLONIUS.]

POLONIUS: He will come straight. Look you lay home to him:  
 Tell him his pranks have been too broad<sup>2</sup> to bear with,  
 And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between  
 Much heat and him. I'll scone me even here.  
 Pray you, be round<sup>3</sup> with him.

HAMLET: [Within.] Mother, mother, mother!

QUEEN: I'll warrant you; fear me not. Withdraw,  
 I hear him coming.

[POLONIUS hides behind the arras. —Enter HAMLET.]

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

QUEEN: Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET: Mother, you have my father much offended.

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

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

QUEEN: Why, how now, Hamlet!

HAMLET: What's the matter now?

QUEEN: Have you forgot me?

HAMLET: No, by the rood,<sup>4</sup> not so:

You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;

And—would it were not so!—you are my mother.

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

HAMLET: Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge:

You go not till I set you up a glass<sup>5</sup>

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

QUEEN: What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?

Help, help, ho!

POLONIUS: [Behind.] What, ho! help, help, help!

1. Grip. 2. Unrestrained. *Lay home*: give him a stern lesson. 3. Straightforward. 4. Cross.  
 5. Mirror.



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

[*Makes a pass through the arras.*]

POLONIUS: [*Behind.*] O, I am slain!

[*Falls and dies.*]

QUEEN:

O me, what hast thou done?

HAMLET: Nay, I know not: is it the king?

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

HAMLET: A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,

As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

QUEEN: As kill a king!

HAMLET:

Aye, lady, 'twas my word.

[*Lifts up the arras and discovers* POLONIUS.]

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;

Thou find'st to be too busy<sup>6</sup> is some danger.

Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you down,

And let me wring your heart: for so I shall,

If it be made of penetrable stuff;

If damned custom have not brass'd it so,

That it be proof and bulwark against sense.<sup>7</sup>

QUEEN: What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue

In noise so rude against me?

HAMLET:

Such an act

That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,

Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose

From the fair forehead of an innocent love,

And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows

As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed

As from the body of contraction<sup>8</sup> plucks

The very soul, and sweet religion makes

A rhapsody of words: heaven's face doth glow;<sup>9</sup>

Yea, this solidity and compound mass,

With tristful visage, as against the doom,<sup>1</sup>

Is thought-sick at the act.

QUEEN: Aye me, what act,

That roars so loud and thunders in the index?<sup>2</sup>

HAMLET: Look here, upon this picture, and on this,

The counterfeit presentment<sup>3</sup> of two brothers.

See what a grace was seated on this brow;

Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,

An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;

A station<sup>4</sup> like the herald Mercury

New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;

A combination and a form indeed,

Where every god did seem to set his seal

To give the world assurance of a man:

This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:

Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,<sup>5</sup>

Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?

Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,

And batten<sup>6</sup> on this moor? Ha! 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<sup>7</sup> the judgment: and what judgment

Would step from this to this? Sense sure you have,

Else could you not have motion: but sure that sense

Is apoplex'd: for madness would not err,

Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd

But it reserved some quantity of choice,

To serve in such a difference. What devil was 't

That thus hath cozened you at hoodman-blind?<sup>8</sup>

Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,

Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans<sup>9</sup> all,

Or but a sickly part of one true sense

Could not so mope.<sup>1</sup>

O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,

If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,

To flaming youth let virtue be as wax

And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame

When the compulsive ardor gives the charge,<sup>2</sup>

Since frost itself as actively doth burn,

And reason panders<sup>3</sup> will.

QUEEN:

O Hamlet, speak no more:

Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,

And there I see such black and grained spots

As will not leave their tinct.<sup>4</sup>

HAMLET:

Nay, but to live

In the rank sweat of an enseam'd<sup>5</sup> bed,

Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love

Over the nasty sty, —

QUEEN:

O, speak to me no more;

These words like daggers enter in my ears;

No more, sweet Hamlet!

HAMLET:

A murderer and a villain;

A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe<sup>6</sup>

Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings;

A cutpurse<sup>7</sup> of the empire and the rule,

That from a shelf the precious diadem stole

And put it in his pocket!

QUEEN:

No more!

HAMLET: A king of shreds and patches —

6. Too much of a busybody. 7. Feeling. 8. Duty to the marriage contract. 9. Blush with shame. 1. Doomsday. *Tristful*: sad. 2. Prologue, table of contents. 3. Portrait. 4. Posture.

5. Of corn. 6. Gorge, fatten. *Leave*: cease. 7. Is subordinated to. 8. Blindman's buff. *Cozened*: tricked. 9. Without. 1. Be stupid. 2. Attack. 3. Becomes subservient to. 4. Lose their color. *Grained*: dyed in. 5. Greasy. 6. Tenth. 7. Pickpocket. *Vice*: clown, from the custom in the old morality plays of having a buffoon take the part of Vice or of a particular vice.



[Enter GHOST.]

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

105

QUEEN: 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!

GHOST: Do not forget: this visitation  
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.  
But look, amazement on thy mother sits:  
O, step between her and her fighting soul:  
Conceit<sup>8</sup> in weakest bodies strongest works:  
Speak to her, Hamlet.

110

HAMLET: How is it with you, lady?

115

QUEEN: Alas, how is 't with you,  
That you do bend your eye on vacancy  
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?  
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;  
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,  
Your bedded hairs, like life in excrements,<sup>9</sup>  
Start up and stand on end. O gentle son,  
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper  
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

120

HAMLET: On him, on him! Look you how pale he glares!  
His form and cause conjoined, preaching to stones,  
Would make them capable.<sup>1</sup> Do not look upon me,  
Lest with this piteous action you convert  
My stern effects:<sup>2</sup> then what I have to do  
Will want true color; tears perchance for<sup>3</sup> blood.

125

130

QUEEN: To whom do you speak this?

HAMLET: Do you see nothing there?

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

HAMLET: Nor did you nothing hear?

QUEEN: No, nothing but ourselves.

HAMLET: Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!

135

My father, in his habit as he lived!

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[Exit GHOST.]

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

HAMLET: Ecstasy!

140

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,  
And makes as healthful music: it is not madness  
That I have uttered: bring me to the test,  
And I the matter will re-word, which madness

Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,  
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,  
That not your trespass but my madness speaks:

145

It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,  
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,  
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;  
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,  
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,  
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue,  
For in the fatness of these pursy<sup>4</sup> times  
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg.

150

Yea, curb<sup>5</sup> and woo for leave to do him good.

155

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

HAMLET: O, throw away the worser part of it,  
And live the purer with the other half.

Good night: but go not to my uncle's bed;

Assume a virtue, if you have it not.

160

That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,  
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,

That to the use of actions fair and good

He likewise gives a frock or livery,

That aptly is put on.<sup>6</sup> Refrain to-night,

165

And that shall lend a kind of easiness

To the next abstinence; the next more easy;

For use almost can change the stamp<sup>7</sup> of nature,

And either curb the devil, or throw him out

With wondrous potency. Once more, good night:

170

And when you are desirous to be blest,

I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,

[Pointing to POLONIUS.]

I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,

To punish me with this, and this with me,

That I must be their scourge and minister.

175

I will bestow<sup>8</sup> him, and will answer well

The death I gave him. So, again, good night.

I must be cruel, only to be kind:

Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.

One word more, good lady.

QUEEN: What shall I do?

180

HAMLET: Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:

Let the bloat<sup>9</sup> king tempt you again to bed;

Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse;

And let him, for a pair of reechy<sup>1</sup> kisses,

Or paddling in your neck with his damned fingers,

185

Make you to ravel all this matter out,

That I essentially am not in madness,

8. Imagination. 9. Outgrowths. Alarm: call to arms. 1. Of feeling. 2. You make me change my purpose. 3. Instead of.

4. Swollen from pampering. 5. Bow. 6. That is, habit, although like a devil in establishing evil ways in us, is like an angel in doing the same for virtues. Aptly: easily. 7. Cast, form. Use: habit. 8. Stow away. Minister: agent of punishment. 9. Bloated with drink. 1. Fetid.



But mad in craft.<sup>2</sup> 'Twere good you let him know;  
 For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,  
 Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,  
 Such dear concernings<sup>3</sup> hide? who would do so? 190  
 No, in despite of sense and secrecy,  
 Unpeg the basket on the house's top,  
 Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape,<sup>4</sup>  
 To try conclusions, in the basket creep 195  
 And break your own neck down.

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

HAMLET: I must to England; you know that?

QUEEN: Alack, 200  
 I had forgot: 'tis so concluded on.

HAMLET: There's letters sealed: and my two schoolfellows,  
 Whom I will trust as I will adders fanged,  
 They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,  
 And marshal me to knavery. Let it work; 205  
 For 'tis the sport to have the engineer  
 Hoist with his own petar;<sup>5</sup> and 't shall go hard  
 But I will delve one yard below their mines,  
 And blow them at the moon: I, 'tis most sweet  
 When in one line two crafts directly meet. 210  
 This man shall set me packing:  
 I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room.  
 Mother, good night. Indeed this counselor  
 Is now most still, most secret and most grave,<sup>6</sup>  
 Who was in life a foolish prating knave. 215  
 Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.  
 Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally; HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS.*]

## Act IV

### SCENE I

*A room in the castle.*

[*Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN*]

KING: There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves:

You must translate: 'tis fit we understand them.

Where is your son?

QUEEN: Bestow this place on us<sup>7</sup> a little while.

2. Simulation. 3. Matters with which one is closely concerned. *Paddock*: toad. *Gib*: tomcat.  
 4. The ape in the unidentified animal fable to which Hamlet alludes; apparently the animal saw birds fly out of a basket and drew the conclusion that by placing himself in a basket he could fly too.  
 5. Petard, a variety of bomb. *Marshal*: lead. *Engineer*: military engineer. *Hoist*: blow up. 6. Hamlet is punning on the word. 7. Leave us alone.

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen to-night!

KING: What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

QUEEN: Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend

Which is the mightier: in his lawless fit,

Behind the arras hearing something stir,

Whips out his rapier, cries 'A rat, a rat!' 10

And in this brainish apprehension<sup>8</sup> kills

The unseen good old man.

KING: O heavy deed!

It had been so with us, had we been there:

His liberty is full of threats to all,

To you yourself, to us, to every one. 15

Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answered?

It will be laid to us, whose providence

Should have kept short,<sup>9</sup> restrained and out of haunt,

This mad young man: but so much was our love,

We would not understand what was most fit, 20

But, like the owner of a foul disease,

To keep it from divulging, let it feed

Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

QUEEN: To draw apart the body he hath killed:

O'er whom his very madness, like some ore 25

Among a mineral<sup>1</sup> of metals base,

Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

KING: O Gertrude, come away!

The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,

But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed 30

We must, with all our majesty and skill,

Both countenance<sup>2</sup> and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

[*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:

Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,

And from his mother's closet hath he dragged him: 35

Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body

Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;

And let them know, both what we mean to do,

And what's untimely done. 40

Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter

As level as the cannon to his blank<sup>4</sup>

Transports his poisoned shot, may miss our name

And hit the woundless air. O, come away!

My soul is full of discord and dismay. 45

[*Exeunt.*]

8. Imaginary notion. 9. Under close watch. 1. Mine. Ore: gold. 2. Recognize. 3. This gap in the text has been guessingly filled in with "So envious slander." 4. His target.



## SCENE 2

*Another room in the castle.*

[Enter HAMLET.]

HAMLET: Safely stowed.

ROSENCRANTZ: } [Within.] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

GUILDENSTERN: }  
HAMLET: But soft, what noise? who calls on Hamlet?

O, here they come.

[Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

ROSENCRANTZ: What have you done, my lord, with the dead body? 5

HAMLET: Compounded<sup>5</sup> 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? 10

HAMLET: That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! what replication<sup>6</sup> should be made by the son of a king?

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

HAMLET: Aye, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance,<sup>7</sup> his rewards, 15 his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end: he keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed: when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and sponge, you shall be dry again.

ROSENCRANTZ: I understand you not, my lord. 20

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. 25

The king is a thing—

GUILDENSTERN: A thing, my lord?

HAMLET: Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.<sup>8</sup>

[Exeunt.]

## SCENE 3

*Another room in the castle.*

[Enter KING, attended.]

KING: I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.

How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!

Yet must not we put the strong law on him:

He's loved of the distracted multitude,

Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes; 5

And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weighed,

But never the offense. To bear<sup>9</sup> all smooth and even,

5. Mixed. 6. Formal reply. Demanded: questioned by. 7. Favor. 8. A children's game. 9. Conduct. Scourge: punishment.

This sudden sending away must seem  
Deliberate pause: diseases desperate grown  
By desperate appliance<sup>1</sup> are relieved,  
Or not at all. 10

[Enter ROSENCRANTZ.]

How now! what hath befall'n?

ROSENCRANTZ: Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord,  
We cannot get from him.

KING: But where is he?

ROSENCRANTZ: Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

KING: Bring him before us. 15

ROSENCRANTZ: Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

[Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.]

KING: Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAMLET: At supper.

KING: At supper! where?

HAMLET: Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain convo- 20 cation of public worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet:<sup>2</sup> 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,<sup>3</sup> two dishes, but to one table: that's the end.

KING: Alas, alas! 25

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

KING: What dost thou mean by this?

HAMLET: Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress<sup>4</sup> 30 through the guts of a beggar.

KING: Where is Polonius?

HAMLET: In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose<sup>5</sup> him as you go up the stairs into the lobby. 35

KING: [To some ATTENDANTS.] Go seek him there.

HAMLET: He will stay till you come.

[Exeunt ATTENDANTS.]

KING: Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,  
Which we do tender,<sup>6</sup> as we dearly grieve  
For that which thou hast done, must send thee hence 40  
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: Aye, Hamlet.

HAMLET: Good.

1. Treatment. Deliberate pause: the result of careful argument. 2. Possibly a punning reference to the Diet (assembly) of the Holy Roman Empire at Worms. 3. That is, the service varies, not the food. 4. Royal state journey. 5. Smell. 6. Care for.



KING: So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes. 45  
 HAMLET: I see a cherub that sees them. But, come; for England!  
 Farewell, dear mother.  
 KING: Thy loving father, Hamlet.  
 HAMLET: My mother: father and mother is man and wife; man and  
 wife is one flesh, and so, my mother. Come, for England! 50  
 [Exit.]  
 KING: Follow him at foot;<sup>7</sup> tempt him with speed aboard;  
 Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night:  
 Away! for every thing is sealed and done  
 That else leans on<sup>8</sup> the affair: pray you, make haste.  
 [Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]  
 And, England,<sup>9</sup> if my love thou hold'st at aught— 55  
 As my great power thereof may give thee sense,  
 Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red  
 After the Danish sword, and thy free awe  
 Pays homage to us—thou mayst not coldly set<sup>1</sup>  
 Our sovereign process; which imports at full, 60  
 By letters conjuring<sup>2</sup> to that effect,  
 The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;  
 For like the hectic<sup>3</sup> in my blood he rages,  
 And thou must cure me; till I know 'tis done,  
 Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun. 65  
 [Exit.]

## SCENE 4

## A plain in Denmark.

[Enter FORTINBRAS, a CAPTAIN and SOLDIERS, marching.]  
 FORTINBRAS: Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;  
 Tell him that by his license Fortinbras  
 Craves the conveyance<sup>4</sup> of a promised march  
 Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.  
 If that his majesty would aught with us, 5  
 We shall express our duty in his eye;<sup>5</sup>  
 And let him know so.  
 CAPTAIN: I will do 't, my lord.  
 FORTINBRAS: Go softly on.  
 [Exeunt FORTINBRAS and SOLDIERS. — Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ,  
 GUILDENSTERN, and others.]  
 HAMLET: Good sir, whose powers<sup>6</sup> are these?  
 CAPTAIN: They are of Norway, sir. 10  
 HAMLET: How purposed, sir, I pray you?  
 CAPTAIN: Against some part of Poland.  
 HAMLET: Who commands them, sir?

CAPTAIN: The nephew to Old Norway, Fortinbras.  
 HAMLET: Goes it against the main<sup>7</sup> of Poland, sir, 15  
 Or for some frontier?  
 CAPTAIN: Truly to speak, and with no addition,  
 We go to gain a little patch of ground  
 That hath in it no profit but the name.  
 To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it; 20  
 Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole  
 A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.<sup>8</sup>  
 HAMLET: Why, then the Polack never will defend it.  
 CAPTAIN: Yes, it is already garrisoned.  
 HAMLET: Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats 25  
 Will not debate the question of this straw!  
 This is the imposthume<sup>9</sup> of much wealth and peace,  
 That inward breaks, and shows no cause without  
 Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.  
 CAPTAIN: God be wi' you, sir.  
 [Exit.]  
 ROSENCRANTZ: Will 't please you go, my lord? 30  
 HAMLET: I'll be with you straight. Go a little before.  
 [Exeunt all but HAMLET.]  
 How all occasions do inform against<sup>1</sup> me,  
 And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,  
 If his chief good and market<sup>2</sup> of his time  
 Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more. 35  
 Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,<sup>3</sup>  
 Looking before and after, gave us not  
 That capability and god-like reason  
 To fust<sup>4</sup> in us unused. Now, whether it be  
 Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple 40  
 Of thinking too precisely on the event,<sup>5</sup>—  
 A thought which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom  
 And ever three parts coward,—I do not know  
 Why yet I live to say 'this thing's to do,'  
 Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means, 45  
 To do 't. Examples gross as earth exhort me:  
 Witness this army, of such mass and charge,<sup>6</sup>  
 Led by a delicate and tender prince,  
 Whose spirit with divine ambition puffed  
 Makes mouths<sup>7</sup> at the invisible event, 50  
 Exposing what is mortal and unsure  
 To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,  
 Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great  
 Is not to stir without great argument,  
 But greatly to find quarrel in a straw 55  
 When honor's at the stake. How stand I then,

7. At his heels. 8. Pertains to. 9. The king of England. 1. Regard with indifference.  
 2. Enjoining. 3. Fever. 4. Convoy. 5. Presence. 6. Armed forces.

7. The whole of. 8. For absolute possession. Ranker: higher. 9. Ulcer. 1. Denounce.  
 2. Payment for, reward. 3. Reasoning power. 4. Become moldy, taste of the cask. 5. Out-  
 come. 6. Cost. 7.Laughs at.



That have a father killed, a mother stained,  
 Excitements of my reason and my blood,  
 And let all sleep, while to my shame I see  
 The imminent death of twenty thousand men,  
 That for a fantasy and trick<sup>8</sup> of fame  
 Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot  
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,<sup>9</sup>  
 Which is not tomb enough and continent<sup>1</sup>  
 To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,  
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!  
 [Exit.]

## SCENE 5

*Elsinore. A room in the castle.*

[Enter QUEEN, HORATIO, and a GENTLEMAN.]

QUEEN: I will not speak with her.

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

QUEEN: What would she have?

GENTLEMAN: She speaks much of her father, says she hears  
 There's tricks i' the world, and hems and beats her heart,  
 Spurns enviously at straws;<sup>2</sup> speaks things in doubt,  
 That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,  
 Yet the unshapèd use of it doth move  
 The hearers to collection; they aim<sup>3</sup> at it,  
 And botch<sup>4</sup> the words up fit to their own thoughts;  
 Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,  
 Indeed would make one think there might be thought,  
 Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

HORATIO: 'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may strew  
 Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.<sup>5</sup>

QUEEN: Let her come in.

[Exit GENTLEMAN.]

[Aside.] To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,  
 Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:  
 So full of artless jealousy<sup>6</sup> is guilt,  
 It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

[Re-enter GENTLEMAN, with OPHELIA.]

OPHELIA: Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN: How now, Ophelia!

OPHELIA: [Sings.] How should I your true love know  
 From another one?  
 By his cockle hat and staff  
 And his sandal shoon.<sup>7</sup>

8. Trifle of. 9. So small that it cannot hold the men who fight for it. 1. Container. 2. Gets angry at trifles. 3. Guess. Collection: gathering up her words and trying to make sense of them. 4. Patch. 5. Minds breeding evil thoughts. 6. Uncontrolled suspicion. Toy: trifle. Amis: misfortune. 7. Shoes. These are all typical signs of pilgrims traveling to places of devotion.

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

OPHELIA: Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

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

Oh, oh!

QUEEN: Nay, but Ophelia,—

OPHELIA: Pray you, mark.

[Sings.] White his shroud as the mountain snow,—  
 [Enter KING.]

QUEEN: Alas, look here, my lord.

OPHELIA: [Sings.] Larded<sup>8</sup> with sweet flowers;  
 Which bewept to the grave did—not—go  
 With true-love showers.

KING: How do you, pretty lady?

OPHELIA: Well, God 'ild<sup>9</sup> you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be.<sup>1</sup>  
 God be at your table!

KING: 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:

[Sings.] 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 donned his clothes,  
 And dugged<sup>2</sup> the chamber-door;  
 Let in the maid, that out a maid  
 Never departed more.

KING: Pretty Ophelia!

OPHELIA: Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on 't:

[Sings.] By Gis<sup>3</sup> and by Saint Charity,  
 Alack, and fie for shame!  
 Young men will do 't, if they come to 't;  
 By Cock,<sup>4</sup> they are to blame.  
 Quoth she, before you tumbled me,  
 You promised me to wed.

He answers:

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

KING: How long hath she been thus?

OPHELIA: I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot  
 choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground.  
 My brother shall know of it: and so I thank you for your good coun-

8. Garnished. 9. Yield—that is, repay. 1. An allusion to a folk tale about a baker's daughter changed into an owl for having shown no charity to those in need. 2. Opened. 3. By Jesus. 4. Corruption of God, but with a sexual undermeaning.



sel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies;  
good night, good night.

[Exit.]

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

[Exit HORATIO.]

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs  
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,  
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,  
But in battalions! First, her father slain:  
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author  
Of his own just remove: the people muddled,<sup>5</sup>  
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,  
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly  
In hugger-mugger<sup>6</sup> to inter him: poor Ophelia  
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,  
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts:  
Last, and as much containing as all these,  
Her brother is in secret come from France,  
Feeds on his wonder,<sup>7</sup> keeps himself in clouds,  
And wants not buzzers<sup>8</sup> to infect his ear  
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;  
Wherein necessity, of matter beggared,<sup>9</sup>  
Will nothing stick our person to arraign<sup>1</sup>  
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,  
Like to a murdering-piece,<sup>2</sup> in many places  
Gives me superfluous death.

[A noise within.]

QUEEN: Alack, what noise is this?

KING: Where are my Switzers?<sup>3</sup> Let them guard the door.

[Enter another GENTLEMAN.]

What is the matter?

GENTLEMAN: Save yourself, my lord:

The ocean, overpeering of his list,<sup>4</sup>  
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste  
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,<sup>5</sup>  
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;  
And, as the world were now but to begin,  
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,  
The ratifiers and props of every word,  
They cry 'Choose we; Laertes shall be king!'  
Caps, hands and tongues applaud it to the clouds,  
'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!'

QUEEN: How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!

5. Confused, their thoughts made turbid (as water by mud). 6. Hasty secrecy. *Greenly*: foolishly.  
7. Broods, keeps wondering. 8. Lacks not tale-bearers. 9. The necessity to build up a story without the materials for doing so. 1. Will not hesitate to accuse me. 2. A variety of cannon that scattered its shot in many directions. 3. Swiss guards. 4. Overflowing above the high-water mark.  
5. Group of rebels.

O, this is counter,<sup>6</sup> you false Danish dogs!

[Noise within.]

KING: The doors are broke.

[Enter LAERTES, armed; DANES following.]

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

DANES: No, let's come in.

LAERTES: I pray you, give me leave.

DANES: We will, we will.

[They retire without the door.]

LAERTES: I thank you: keep the door. O thou vile king,

Give me my father!

QUEEN: Calmly, good Laertes.

LAERTES: That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard;

Cries cuckold to my father; brands the harlot

Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brows

Of my true mother.

KING: What is the cause, Laertes,

That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?

Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear<sup>7</sup> our person:

There's such divinity doth hedge a king,

That treason can but peep to what it would,<sup>8</sup>

Acts little of his<sup>9</sup> will. Tell me, Laertes,

Why thou art thus incensed: let him go, Gertrude:

Speak, man.

LAERTES: Where is my father?

KING: Dead.

QUEEN: But not by him.

KING: Let him demand his fill.

LAERTES: How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:

To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!

Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit

I dare damnation: to this point I stand,

That both the worlds I give to negligence,<sup>1</sup>

Let come what comes; only I'll be revenged

Most thoroughly for my father.

KING: Who shall stay you?

LAERTES: My will, not all the world:

And for my means, I'll husband them so well,

They shall go far with little.

KING: Good Laertes,

If you desire to know the certainty

Of your dear father's death, is 't writ in your revenge

That, swoopstake,<sup>2</sup> you will draw both friend and foe,

Winner and loser?

LAERTES: None but his enemies.

KING: Will you know them then?

6. Following the scent in the wrong direction. 7. Fear for. 8. Look from a distance at what it desires. 9. Its. 1. I don't care what may happen to me in either this world or the next. 2. Without making any distinction, as the winner takes the whole stake in a card game.



LAERTES: To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms;  
And, like the kind life-rendering pelican,<sup>3</sup>  
Repast them with my blood.

KING: Why, now you speak

Like a good child and a true gentleman.  
That I am guiltless of your father's death, 145  
And am most sensibly in grief for it,  
It shall as level to your judgment pierce  
As day does to your eye.

DANES: [*Within.*] Let her come in.

LAERTES: How now! what noise is that?

[*Re-enter OPHELIA.*]

O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt, 150  
Burn out the sense and virtue<sup>4</sup> of mine eye!  
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,  
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!  
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!  
O heavens! is 't possible a young maid's wits 155  
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?  
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine  
It sends some precious instance<sup>5</sup> of itself  
After the thing it loves.

OPHELIA: [*Sings.*] They bore him barefaced on the bier: 160  
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny:  
And in his grave rained many a tear,—

Fare you well, my dove!

LAERTES: Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,  
It could not move thus. 165

OPHELIA: [*Sings.*] You must sing down a-down,  
An you call him a-down-a.

O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward,<sup>6</sup> that stole his  
master's daughter.

LAERTES: This nothing's more than matter.<sup>7</sup> 170

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

LAERTES: A document<sup>8</sup> 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 herbs of grace o' Sundays: 175

O, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy: I  
would give you some violets,<sup>9</sup> but they withered all when my father  
died: they say he made a good end,—

[*Sings.*] For bonnie sweet Robin is all my joy.

LAERTES: Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself, 180

3. In myth, the pelican is supposed to feed its young with its own blood. 4. Power, faculty.  
5. Sample, token. *Fine*: refined. 6. An allusion (probably to a lost ballad) further expressing Ophelia's preoccupation with betrayal, lost love, and death. *How the wheel becomes it*: that is, how well the refrain fits. 7. This nonsense is more indicative than sane speech. 8. Lesson. Traditionally, flowers and herbs have symbolic meanings. Here rosemary is the symbol for remembrance and pansies symbolize thoughts. 9. Violets symbolize faithfulness. Fennel stands for flattery, columbines for cuckoldom, and rue for sorrow and repentance (compare the verb *rue*).

She turns to favor<sup>1</sup> and to prettiness.

OPHELIA: [*Sings.*] And will he not come again?  
And will he not come again?

No, no, he is dead,  
Go to thy death-bed, 185

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: 190

God ha' mercy on his soul!

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

[*Exit.*]

LAERTES: Do you see this, O God?

KING: Laertes, I must commune with your grief,  
Or you deny me right. Go but apart, 195

Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will.

And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:

If by direct or by collateral hand

They find us touched,<sup>2</sup> we will our kingdom give,

Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours, 200

To you in satisfaction; but if not,

Be you content to lend your patience to us,

And we shall jointly labor with your soul

To give it due content.

LAERTES: Let this be so;

His means of death, his obscure funeral, 205

No trophy, sword, nor hatchment<sup>3</sup> o'er his bones,

No noble rite nor formal ostentation,

Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,

That I must call 't in question.

KING: So you shall;

And where the offense is let the great axe fall.

I pray you, go with me. 210

[*Exeunt.*]

#### SCENE 6

*Another room in the castle.*

[*Enter HORATIO and a SERVANT.*]

HORATIO: What are they that would speak with me?

SERVANT: Sea-faring men, sir: they say they have letters for you.

HORATIO: Let them come in.

[*Exit SERVANT.*]

I do not know from what part of the world

I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet. 5

[*Enter SAILORS.*]

1. Charm. 2. Involved (in the murder). *Collateral*: indirect. 3. Coat of arms.



FIRST SAILOR: God bless you, sir.

HORATIO: Let him bless thee too.

FIRST SAILOR: He shall, sir, an 't please him.

There's a letter for you, sir; it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is. 10

HORATIO: [*Reads.*] 'Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked<sup>4</sup> this, give these fellows some means to the king: they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valor, and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy:<sup>5</sup> but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore<sup>6</sup> of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell. 15 20 25

'He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.'  
Come, I will make you way for these your letters;  
And do 't the speedier, that you may direct me  
To him from whom you brought them.  
[*Exeunt.*]

# SCENE 7

*Another room in the castle.*

[*Enter KING and LAERTES.*]

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

LAERTES: It well appears: but tell me 5  
Why you proceeded not against these feats,  
So crimeful and so capital in nature,  
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,  
You mainly<sup>7</sup> were stirred up.

KING: O, for two special reasons, 10  
Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinewed,<sup>8</sup>  
But yet to me they're strong. The queen his mother  
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself—  
My virtue or my plague, be it either which—  
She's so conjunctive<sup>9</sup> to my life and soul,

4. Read over. 5. Merciful. 6. Caliber, that is, importance. 7. Powerfully. 8. Weak.  
9. Closely joined.

That, as the star moves not but in his sphere, 15  
I could not but by her. The other motive,  
Why to a public count I might not go,  
Is the great love the general gender<sup>1</sup> bear him;  
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,  
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone, 20  
Convert his gyves<sup>2</sup> to graces; so that my arrows,  
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,  
Would have reverted to my bow again  
And not where I had aim'd them.

LAERTES: And so have I a noble father lost; 25  
A sister driven into desperate terms,  
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,  
Stood challenger on mount of<sup>3</sup> all the age  
For her perfections: but my revenge will come.

KING: Break not your sleeps for that: you must not think 30  
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull  
That we can let our beard be shook with danger  
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more:  
I loved your father, and we love ourself;  
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine— 35

[*Enter a MESSENGER, with letters.*]

How now! what news?

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

KING: From Hamlet! who brought them?

MESSENGER: Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not: 40  
They were given me by Claudio; he received them  
Of him that brought them.

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

[*Exit MESSENGER.*]

[*Reads.*] 'High and mighty, you shall know I am set naked on your 45  
kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes: when  
I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of  
my sudden and more strange return. HAMLET.'  
What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?  
Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?<sup>4</sup>

LAERTES: Know you the hand?

KING: 'Tis Hamlet's character.<sup>5</sup> 'Naked!' 50  
And in a postscript here, he says 'alone.'  
Can you advise me?

LAERTES: I'm lost in it, my lord. But let him come;  
It warms the very sickness in my heart,  
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth, 55  
'Thus diddest thou.'

1. Common people. Count: accounting, trial. 2. Leg irons (shames). 3. Above. Go back: to what she was before her madness. 4. A delusion, not a reality. 5. Handwriting.



KING: If it be so, Laertes, —  
 As how should it be so? how otherwise? —  
 Will you be ruled by me?

LAERTES: Aye, my lord;  
 So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

KING: To thine own peace. If he be now returned,  
 As checking<sup>6</sup> 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;<sup>7</sup>  
 call it accident.

LAERTES: My lord, I will be ruled;  
 The rather, if you could devise it so  
 That I might be the organ.<sup>8</sup>

KING: It falls right.  
 You have been talked of since your travel much,  
 And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality  
 Wherein, they say, you shine; your sum of parts<sup>9</sup>  
 Did not together pluck such envy from him,  
 As did that one, and that in my regard  
 Of the unworthiest siege.<sup>1</sup>

LAERTES: What part is that, my lord?

KING: A very riband in the cap of youth,  
 Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes<sup>2</sup>  
 The light and careless livery that it wears  
 Than settled age his sables and his weeds,<sup>3</sup>  
 Importing health and graveness. Two months since  
 Here was a gentleman of Normandy: —  
 I've seen myself, and served against, the French,  
 And they can well on horseback: but this gallant  
 Had witchcraft in 't; he grew unto his seat,  
 And to such wondrous doing brought his horse  
 As had he been incorpsed and demi-natured<sup>4</sup>  
 With the brave beast: so far he topped my thought  
 That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,<sup>5</sup>  
 Come short of what he did.

LAERTES: A Norman was 't?

KING: A Norman.

LAERTES: Upon my life, Lamord.

KING: The very same.

LAERTES: I know him well: he is the brooch<sup>6</sup> indeed  
 And gem of all the nation.

KING: He made confession of you,

6. Changing the course of, refusing to continue. 7. Not recognize it as a plot. 8. Instrument.  
 9. The sum of your gifts. 1. Seat, that is, rank. 2. Is the appropriate age for. *Riband*: ribbon,  
 ornament. 3. Furs (also meaning "blacks," dark colors) and robes. 4. Incorporated and split his  
 nature in two. 5. In imagining methods and skills of horsemanship. 6. Ornament.

And gave you such a masterly report,  
 For art and exercise in your defense,<sup>7</sup>  
 And for your rapier most especial,  
 That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed  
 If one could match you: the scrimers<sup>8</sup> of their nation,  
 He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,  
 If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his  
 Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy  
 That he could nothing do but wish and beg  
 Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.  
 Now, out of this —

LAERTES: What out of this, my lord?

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

LAERTES: Why ask you this?

KING: Not that I think you did not love your father,  
 But that I know love is begun by time,  
 And that I see, in passages of proof,<sup>9</sup>  
 Time qualifies<sup>1</sup> the spark and fire of it.  
 There lives within the very flame of love  
 A kind of wick or snuff<sup>2</sup> that will abate it;  
 And nothing is at a like goodness still,  
 For goodness, growing to a pluriy,<sup>3</sup>  
 Dies in his own too much: that we would do  
 We should do when we would; for this 'would' changes  
 And hath abatements and delays as many  
 As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents,  
 And then this 'should' is like a spendthrift sigh,  
 That hurts by easing.<sup>4</sup> But, to the quick o' the ulcer:  
 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: No place indeed should murder sanctuarize;  
 Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,  
 Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.  
 Hamlet returned shall know you are come home:  
 We'll put on<sup>5</sup> those shall praise your excellence  
 And set a double varnish on the fame  
 The Frenchman gave you; bring you in fine together  
 And wager on your heads: he, being remiss,<sup>6</sup>  
 Most generous and free from all contriving,  
 Will not peruse<sup>7</sup> the foils, so that with ease,

7. Report of your mastery in the theory and practice of fencing. 8. Fencers. 9. Instances that  
 prove it. 1. Weakens. 2. Charred part of the wick. 3. Excess. *Still*: constantly. 4. A sigh that  
 gives relief but is harmful (according to an old notion that it draws blood from the heart). 5. Instigate.  
 6. Careless. *In fine*: finally. 7. Examine closely.



Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice<sup>8</sup>  
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,<sup>9</sup>  
So mortal that but dip a knife in it,  
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,  
Collected from all simples<sup>1</sup> that have virtue  
Under the moon, can save the thing from death  
That is but scratched withal: I'll touch my point  
With this contagion, that, if I gall<sup>2</sup> him slightly,  
It may be death.

KING: Let's further think of this;  
Weigh what convenience both of time and means  
May fit us to our shape: if this should fail,  
And that our drift look through<sup>3</sup> our bad performance,  
'Twere better not assayed: therefore this project  
Should have a back or second, that might hold  
If this did blast in proof.<sup>4</sup> Soft! let me see:  
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings:  
I ha 't:  
When in your motion you are hot and dry—  
As make your bouts more violent to that end—  
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him  
A chalice for the nonce;<sup>5</sup> whereon but sipping,  
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,<sup>6</sup>  
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?  
[Enter QUEEN.]

How now, sweet queen!

QUEEN: One woe doth tread upon another's heel,  
So fast they follow: your sister's drowned, Laertes.

LAERTES: Drowned! O, where?

QUEEN: There is a willow grows aslant<sup>7</sup> 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<sup>8</sup> broke;  
When down her weedy trophies and herself  
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,  
And mermaid-like a while they bore her up:

8. Treacherous thrust. *Unbated*: not blunted (as a rapier for exercise ordinarily would be). 9. Ointment of a peddler of quack medicines. 1. Healing herbs. *Cataplasm*: plaster. 2. Scratch. 3. Our design should show through. *Shape*: plan. 4. Burst (like a new firearm) once it is put to the test. 5. For that particular occasion. 6. Thrust. 7. Across. 8. Malicious bough.

Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,  
As one incapable of<sup>9</sup> her own distress,  
Or like a creature native and indued<sup>1</sup>  
Unto that element: but long it could not be  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
To muddy death.

LAERTES: Alas, then she is drowned!

QUEEN: Drowned, drowned.

LAERTES: Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,  
And therefore I forbid my tears: but yet  
It is our trick;<sup>2</sup> nature her custom holds,  
Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,  
The woman<sup>3</sup> will be out. Adieu, my lord:  
I have a speech of fire that fain would blaze,  
But that this folly douts<sup>4</sup> it.

[Exit.]

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

[Exeunt.]

## Act V

### SCENE 1

A churchyard.

[Enter two CLOWNS, with spades, etc.]

FIRST CLOWN: Is she to be buried in Christian burial that willfully  
seeks her own salvation?

SECOND CLOWN: I tell thee she is; and therefore make her grave  
straight: the crowner<sup>5</sup> hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

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

SECOND CLOWN: Why, 'tis found so.

FIRST CLOWN: It must be 'se offendendo';<sup>6</sup> 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,<sup>7</sup> she  
drowned herself wittingly.

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,<sup>8</sup> he goes; mark you that; but if the water come to

9. Insensitive to. 1. Adapted, in harmony with. 2. Peculiar trait. 3. The softer qualities, the woman in me. 4. Extinguishes. 5. Coroner. *Straight*: right away. 6. The Clown's blunder for *se defendendo*: "in self-defense" (Latin). 7. Blunder for *ergo*: "therefore" (Latin). 8. Willy-nilly.



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: Aye, marry, is 't; crowner's quest<sup>9</sup> law.

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. 20

FIRST CLOWN: Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance<sup>1</sup> in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even<sup>2</sup> Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers and gravemakers: 25 they hold up Adam's profession.

SECOND CLOWN: Was he a gentleman?

FIRST CLOWN: A' 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— 30

SECOND CLOWN: Go to.

FIRST CLOWN: What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter? 35

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 ill: now, thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To 't again, come. 40

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

FIRST CLOWN: Aye, tell me that, and unyoke.<sup>3</sup> 45

SECOND CLOWN: Marry, now I can tell.

FIRST CLOWN: To 't.

SECOND CLOWN: Mass, I cannot tell.

[Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, afar off.]

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 to Yaughan; fetch me a stoup<sup>4</sup> of liquor. 50

[Exit SECOND CLOWN. — FIRST CLOWN digs and sings.]

In youth, when I did love, did love,

Methought it was very sweet,

To contract, O, the time, for-a my behove, 55

O, methought, there-a was nothing-a meet.<sup>5</sup>

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

9. Inquest. 1. Sanction. 2. Fellow. 3. Call it a day. 4. Mug. Yaughan: apparently a tavern keeper's name. 5. Fitting. Contract: shorten. Behove: profit.

HORATIO: Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.<sup>6</sup>

HAMLET: 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier<sup>7</sup> 60 sense.

FIRST CLOWN: [*Sings.*] But age, with his stealing steps,  
Hath clowd me in his clutch,  
And hath shipped me intil<sup>8</sup> the land,  
As if I had never been such. 65

[Throws up a skull.]

HAMLET: That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It might be the pate of a politician,<sup>9</sup> which this ass now o'er-reaches;<sup>1</sup> one that would circumvent God, might it not?

HORATIO: It might, my lord. 70

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

HORATIO: Aye, my lord. 75

HAMLET: Why, e'en so: and now my Lady Worm's; chapless, and knocked about the mazzard<sup>2</sup> with a sexton's spade: here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see 't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats<sup>3</sup> with 'em? mine ache to think on 't. 80

FIRST CLOWN: [*Sings.*] A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,

For 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? 85 Where be his quiddities now, his quilllets, his cases, his tenures,<sup>4</sup> 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?<sup>5</sup> Hum! This fellow might be in 's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances,<sup>6</sup> his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: is this the fine<sup>7</sup> of his fines and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances<sup>8</sup> of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the 95 inheritor himself have no more, ha?

HORATIO: Not a jot more, my lord.

HAMLET: Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

6. Has made it a matter of indifference to him. 7. Finer sensitivity. Of little employment: that does little labor. 8. Into. 9. In a pejorative sense. Jowls: knocks. First murder: possibly an allusion to the legend that Cain slew Abel with an ass's jawbone. 1. Outwits. 2. Pate. Chapless: the lower jawbone missing. 3. A game resembling bowls. Trick: faculty. 4. Real estate holdings. Quiddities: subtle definitions. Quilllets: quibbles. 5. Assault. Sconce: head. 6. Varieties of bonds. This passage contains legal terms relating to the transfer of estates. 7. End. Hamlet is punning on the legal and nonlegal meanings of the word. 8. Deeds. Indentures: contracts drawn in duplicate on the same piece of parchment; the two copies were separated by an indented line.



HORATIO: Aye, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

HAMLET: They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance<sup>9</sup> in that. 100

I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

FIRST CLOWN: Mine, sir.

[Sings.] O, a pit of clay for to be made

For such a guest is meet.

HAMLET: I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in 't. 105

FIRST CLOWN: You lie out on 't, sir, and therefore 'tis 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;<sup>1</sup> therefore thou liest.

FIRST CLOWN: 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again, from me to you. 110

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? 115

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,<sup>2</sup> or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked<sup>3</sup> that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe.<sup>4</sup> How long hast thou been a grave-maker? 120

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

HAMLET: How long is that since? 125

FIRST CLOWN: Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it was that very day that young Hamlet was born: he that is mad, and sent into England.

HAMLET: Aye, marry, why was he sent into England?

FIRST CLOWN: Why, because a' was mad; a' shall recover his wits there: 130 or, if a' do not, 'tis no great matter there.

HAMLET: Why?

FIRST CLOWN: 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

HAMLET: How came he mad? 135

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 140 and boy, thirty years.

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

FIRST CLOWN: I' faith, if a' be not rotten before a' die—as we have many pocky corpses now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying

9. Security; another pun, because the word is also a legal term. 1. Living. 2. By the chart, that is, exactness. *Absolute*: positive. 3. Choice, fastidious. 4. Hurts the chilblain on the courtier's heel.

in<sup>5</sup>—a' will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last 145 you nine year.

HAMLET: Why he more than another?

FIRST CLOWN: Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade that a' will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now: this skull has lain in 150 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. 155

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. 160

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 rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your 165 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 chop-fallen?<sup>6</sup> Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor<sup>7</sup> she must come; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing. 170

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. 175

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 180 enough<sup>8</sup> 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 turned to clay,

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:

O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,

Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!

5. Hold together till they are buried. *Pocky*: with marks of disease (from "pox"). 6. The lower jaw fallen down, hence dejected. 7. Appearance. 8. Without exaggeration.



But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the king.

[*Enter PRIESTS etc., in procession; the Corpse of Ophelia, LAERTES and MOURNERS following; KING, QUEEN, their trains, etc.*]

The queen, the courtiers: who is this they follow? 190

And with such maimèd rites?<sup>9</sup> This doth betoken

The corse they follow did with desperate hand

Fordo its own life: 'twas of some estate.<sup>1</sup>

Couch we awhile, and mark.

[*Retiring with HORATIO.*]

LAERTES: What ceremony else? 195

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 warranty: her death was doubtful;

And, but that great command o'ersways the order<sup>2</sup> 200

She should in ground unsanctified have lodged

Till the last trumpet; for<sup>3</sup> charitable prayers,

Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her:

Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants,

Her maiden strewments and the bringing home<sup>4</sup> 205

Of bell and burial.

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: 210

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: [*Scattering flowers.*] Sweets to the sweet: farewell! 215

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

I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,

And not have strewed thy grave.

LAERTES: O, treble woe

Fall ten times treble on that cursed head

Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense 220

Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth a while,

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

To o'ertop old Pelion<sup>5</sup> or the skyish head

Of blue Olympus. 225

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, 230

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;

For, though I am not splenitive<sup>6</sup> and rash,

Yet have I in me something dangerous, 235

Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand.

KING: Pluck them asunder.

QUEEN: Hamlet, Hamlet!

ALL: Gentlemen,—

HORATIO: Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The ATTENDANTS part them, and they come out of the grave.*]

HAMLET: Why, I will fight with him upon this theme

Until my eyelids will no longer wag. 240

QUEEN: O my son, what theme?

HAMLET: I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers

Could not, with all their quantity of love,

Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

KING: O, he is mad, Laertes. 245

QUEEN: For love of God, forbear him.

HAMLET: 'Swords, show me what thou 'lt do:

Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear thyself?

Woo't drink up eisel?<sup>7</sup> eat a crocodile?

I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine? 250

To outface me with leaping in her grave?

Be buried quick with her, and so will I:

And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw

Millions of acres on us, till our ground,

Singeing his pate against the burning zone, 255

Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou 'lt mouth,

I'll rant as well as thou.

QUEEN: This is mere madness:

And thus a while the fit will work on him;

Anon, as patient as the female dove

When that her golden couplets are disclosed,<sup>8</sup> 260

His silence will sit drooping.

HAMLET: Hear you, sir;

9. Incomplete, mutilated ritual. 1. Rank. *Fordo*: destroy. 2. The king's command prevails against ordinary rules. *Doubtful*: of uncertain cause (that is, accident or suicide). 3. Instead of. 4. Laying to rest. *Crants*: garlands. *Strewments*: strews the grave with flowers.

5. The mountain on which the Aloadae, two rebellious giants in Greek mythology, piled up Mount Ossa in their attempt to reach Olympus. 6. Easily moved to anger. 7. Vinegar (the bitter drink given to Christ). *Woo't*: wilt thou. 8. Twins are hatched.



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.]

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

[Exit HORATIO.]

[To LAERTES.] Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;  
 We'll put the matter to the present push.<sup>9</sup>

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.

This grave shall have a living monument:

An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;

Till then, in patience our proceeding be.

[Exeunt.]

## SCENE 2

*A hall in the castle.*

[Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.]

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

HORATIO: Remember it, my lord?

HAMLET: Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,  
 That would not let me sleep: methought I lay  
 Worse than the mutines in the bilboes.<sup>1</sup> Rashly,  
 And praised be rashness for it, let us know,  
 Our indiscretion sometime serves us well  
 When our deep plots do pall;<sup>2</sup> and that should learn us  
 There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
 Rough-hew them how we will.

HORATIO: That is most certain.

HAMLET: Up from my cabin,  
 My sea-gown scarfed about me, in the dark  
 Gropped I to find out them; had my desire,  
 Fingered their packet, and in fine withdrew  
 To mine own room again; making so bold,  
 My fears forgetting manners, to unseal  
 Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,—  
 O royal knavery!—an exact command,  
 Larded with many several sorts of reasons,  
 Importing<sup>3</sup> Denmark's health and England's too,  
 With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,  
 That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,<sup>4</sup>  
 No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,  
 My head should be struck off.

9. We'll push the matter on immediately. 1. Mutineers in iron fetters. 2. Become useless.  
 3. Concerning. 4. As soon as the message was read, with no time subtracted for leisure. *Bugs*: imaginary horrors to be expected if I lived.

HORATIO: Is't possible?

HAMLET: Here's the commission: read it at more leisure.

But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

HORATIO: I beseech you.

HAMLET: Being thus be-netted round with villainies,—

Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,

They had begun the play,—I sat me down;

Devised a new commission; wrote it fair:

I once did hold it, as our statist<sup>5</sup> do,

A baseness to write fair, and labored much

How to forget that learning; but, sir, now

It did me yeoman's service:<sup>6</sup> wilt thou know

The effect of what I wrote?

HORATIO: Aye, good my lord.

HAMLET: An earnest conjuration from the king,

As England was his faithful tributary,

As love between them like the palm might flourish,

As peace should still her wheaten garland wear

And stand a comma<sup>7</sup> 'tween their amities,

And many such-like 'As'es of great charge,<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> allowed.

HORATIO: How was this sealed?

HAMLET: Why, even in that was heaven ordinaunt.<sup>1</sup>

I had my father's signet in my purse,

Which was the model of that Danish seal:

Folded the writ up in the form of the other;

Subscribed it; gave 't the impression;<sup>2</sup> placed it safely,

The changeling never known. Now, the next day

Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent

Thou know'st already.

HORATIO: So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to 't.

HAMLET: Why, man, they did make love to this employment;

They are not near my conscience; their defeat

Does by their own insinuation<sup>3</sup> grow:

'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes

Between the pass and fell<sup>4</sup>-incensed points

Of mighty opposites.

HORATIO: Why, what a king is this!

HAMLET: Does it not, think'st thee, stand me now upon<sup>5</sup>—

He that hath killed my king, and whored my mother;

Popped in between the election and my hopes;

5. Statesmen. 6. Excellent service. 7. Connecting element. 8. As'es: a pun on *as* and *ass*, which extends to *of great charge*, signifying both "moral weight" and "ass's burden." 9. Time for confession and absolution. 1. Ordaining. 2. Of the seal. 3. Meddling. *Defeat*: destruction. 4. Fiercely. *Baser*: lower in rank than the king and Prince Hamlet. *Pass*: thrust. 5. Is it not my duty now?



Thrown out his angle for my proper life,<sup>6</sup>  
 And with such cozenage—is't not perfect conscience,  
 To quit<sup>7</sup> him with this arm? and is't not to be damned,  
 To let this canker of our nature come  
 In further evil?

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

HAMLET: It will be short: the interim 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 favors:  
 But, sure, the bravery<sup>8</sup> of his grief did put me  
 Into a towering passion.

HORATIO: Peace! who comes here?

[Enter OSRIC.]

OSRIC: Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

HAMLET: I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this waterfly?

HORATIO: No, my good lord.

HAMLET: Thy state is the more gracious, for 'tis a vice to know him.  
 He hath much land, and fertile: let a beast be lord of beasts, and  
 his crib shall stand at the king's mess: 'tis a chough,<sup>9</sup> but, as I say,  
 spacious in the possession of dirt.

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

HAMLET: I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your  
 bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

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

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

OSRIC: It is indifferent<sup>1</sup> cold, my lord, indeed.

HAMLET: But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot, or my complex-  
 ion—

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

HAMLET: I beseech you, remember—

[HAMLET moves him to put on his hat.]

OSRIC: Nay, good my lord; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is  
 newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman,  
 full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great  
 showing:<sup>2</sup> indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calen-  
 dar of gentry,<sup>3</sup> for you shall find in him the continent of what part<sup>4</sup>  
 a gentleman would see.

HAMLET: Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you; though, I

6. An angling line for my own life. 7. Pay back. 8. Ostentation, bravado. 9. Jackdaw. Mess: table. 1. Fairly. 2. Agreeable company, handsome in appearance. Differences: distinctions. 3. Chart and model of gentlemanly manners. 4. Whatever quality. Continent: container.

know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic<sup>5</sup> of  
 memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail.<sup>6</sup> But  
 in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article,  
 and his infusion<sup>7</sup> of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true dic-  
 tion of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace  
 him, his umbrage,<sup>8</sup> nothing more.

OSRIC: Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

HAMLET: The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman<sup>9</sup> in  
 our more rawer breath?

OSRIC: Sir?

HORATIO: Is 't not possible to understand in another tongue?<sup>1</sup> You will  
 do 't, sir, really.

HAMLET: What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

OSRIC: Of Laertes?

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

HAMLET: Of him, sir.

OSRIC: I know you are not ignorant—

HAMLET: I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not  
 much approve me.<sup>2</sup> Well, sir?

OSRIC: You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

HAMLET: I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in  
 excellence; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.<sup>3</sup>

OSRIC: I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him  
 by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.<sup>4</sup>

HAMLET: What's his weapon?

OSRIC: Rapier and dagger.

HAMLET: That's two of his weapons: but, well.

OSRIC: The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses: against  
 the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and pon-  
 iards, with their assigns,<sup>5</sup> as girdle, hanger, and so: three of the  
 carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive<sup>6</sup> to the  
 hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.<sup>7</sup>

HAMLET: What call you the carriages?

HORATIO: I knew you must be edified by the margent<sup>8</sup> ere you had  
 done.

OSRIC: The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

HAMLET: The phrase would be more germane to the matter if we could  
 carry a cannon by our sides:<sup>9</sup> I would it might be hangers till then.  
 But, on: six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns,  
 and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against  
 the Danish. Why is this 'imponed,' as you call it?

5. Arithmetical power. Definement: definition. Perdition: loss. Inventorially: make an inventory of his virtues. 6. And yet would only be able to steer unsteadily (unable to catch up with the sail of Laertes's virtues). 7. The virtues infused into him. Verity of extolment: to prize Laertes truthfully. Article: importance. 8. Keep pace with him, his shadow. 9. Laertes. Concernancy: meaning. 1. In a less affected jargon or in the same jargon when spoken by another (that is, Hamlet's) tongue. 2. Be to my credit. 3. To know others one has to know oneself. 4. In the reputation given him by his weapons, his merit is unparalleled. 5. Appendages. Imponed: wagered. 6. Closely matched. Carriages: ornamented straps by which the rapiers hung from the belt. Very dear to fancy: agreeable to the taste. 7. Elegant design. 8. Instructed by the marginal note. 9. Hamlet is playfully criticizing Osric's affected application of the term carriage, more properly used to mean "gun carriage."



OSRIC: The king, sir, hath laid, sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits: he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.<sup>1</sup>

HAMLET: How if I answer 'no'?

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

HAMLET: Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his majesty, it is the breathing time<sup>2</sup> of day with me; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

OSRIC: Shall I redeliver you e'en so?<sup>3</sup>

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

OSRIC: I commend my duty to your lordship.

HAMLET: Yours, yours. [*Exit OSRIC.*] He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

HORATIO: This lapwing<sup>4</sup> runs away with the shell on his head.

HAMLET: He did comply with his dug before he sucked it. Thus has he—and many more of the same breed that I know the drossy<sup>5</sup> age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty<sup>6</sup> collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions;<sup>7</sup> and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

[*Enter a LORD.*]

LORD: My lord, his majesty commended him<sup>8</sup> to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

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

LORD: The king and queen and all are coming down.

HAMLET: In happy time.

LORD: The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment<sup>9</sup> to Laertes before you fall to play.

HAMLET: She well instructs me.

[*Exit LORD.*]

HORATIO: You will lose this wager, my lord.

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

HORATIO: Nay, good my lord,—

HAMLET: It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gaingiving<sup>1</sup> as would perhaps trouble a woman.

HORATIO: If your mind dislike anything, obey it. I will forestall their repair<sup>2</sup> hither, and say you are not fit.

HAMLET: Not a whit; we defy augury: there is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all; since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?<sup>3</sup> Let be.

[*Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, and LORDS, OSRIC and other ATTENDANTS with foils and gauntlets; a table and flagons of wine on it.*]

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

[*The KING puts LAERTES' hand into HAMLET's.*]

HAMLET: Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong;

But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.

This presence<sup>4</sup> knows,

And you must needs have heard, how I am punished

With sore distraction. What I have done,

That might your nature, honor and exception<sup>5</sup>

Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

Was't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet:

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,

Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

Who does it then? His madness: if't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir, in this audience,

Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,

That I have shot 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 honor<sup>6</sup>

I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation,

Till by some elder masters of known honor

I have a voice and precedent of peace,

To keep my name ungored.<sup>7</sup> But till that time

I do receive your offered love like love

And will not wrong it.

HAMLET: I embrace it freely,

And will this brother's wager frankly play.

Give us the foils. Come on.

LAERTES: Come, one for me.

HAMLET: I'll be your foil,<sup>8</sup> Laertes: in mine ignorance

1. The terms of this wager have never been satisfactorily clarified. 2. Time for exercise. 3. Is that the reply you want me to carry back? 4. Audience. 5. Objection. 6. Laertes answers separately each of the two points brought up by Hamlet in line 86. *Nature* is Laertes's natural feeling toward his father. *Honor* is the code of honor with its conventional rules. 7. Unwounded. A *voice and*: an opinion based on. 8. A pun, because *foil* means both "rapier" and "a thing that sets off another to advantage" (as gold leaf under a jewel).

2. Coming. 3. What is wrong with dying early (leaving *betimes*), because man knows nothing of life (what he leaves)? 4. Audience. 5. Objection. 6. Laertes answers separately each of the two points brought up by Hamlet in line 86. *Nature* is Laertes's natural feeling toward his father. *Honor* is the code of honor with its conventional rules. 7. Unwounded. A *voice and*: an opinion based on. 8. A pun, because *foil* means both "rapier" and "a thing that sets off another to advantage" (as gold leaf under a jewel).



Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,  
Stick fiery off<sup>9</sup> indeed.

LAERTES: You mock me, sir.

HAMLET: No, by this hand.

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

HAMLET: Very well, my lord;  
Your grace has laid the odds o' the weaker side.

KING: I do not fear it; I have seen you both:

But since he is bettered, 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.*]

OSRIC: Aye, my good lord.

KING: Set me the stoups<sup>1</sup> of wine upon that table.

If Hamlet give the first or second hit,  
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,<sup>2</sup>  
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;  
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;  
And in the cup an union<sup>3</sup> shall he throw,  
Richer than that which four successive kings  
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;  
And let the kettle<sup>4</sup> to the trumpet speak,  
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,  
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,  
'Now the king drinks to Hamlet.' Come, begin;  
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

HAMLET: Come on, sir.

LAERTES: Come, my lord.

[*They play.*]

HAMLET: One.

LAERTES: No.

HAMLET: Judgment.

OSRIC: A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAERTES: Well; again.

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

[*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: Our son shall win.

QUEEN: He's fat and scant of breath.

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin,<sup>5</sup> rub thy brows:  
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

9. Stand out brilliantly. 1. Cups. 2. Requite, or repay (by scoring a hit) on the third bout. 3. A large pearl. 4. Kettledrum. 5. Handkerchief. *Fat*: sweaty, or soft, because out of training.

HAMLET: Good madam!

KING: Gertrude, do not drink.

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

KING: [*Aside.*] It is the poisoned cup; it is too late.

QUEEN: Come, let me wipe thy face.

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

KING: I do not think't.

LAERTES: [*Aside.*] And yet it is almost against my conscience.

HAMLET: Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;

I pray you, pass with your best violence;

I am afeard you make a wanton<sup>6</sup> of me.

LAERTES: Say you so? come on.

[*They play.*]

OSRIC: Nothing, neither way.

LAERTES: Have at you now!

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

KING: Part them; they are incensed.

HAMLET: Nay, come, again.

[*The QUEEN falls.*]

OSRIC: Look to the queen there, ho!

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

OSRIC: How is't, Laertes?

LAERTES: Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe,<sup>7</sup> Osric;

I am justly killed with mine own treachery.

HAMLET: How does the queen?

KING: She swoonds to see them bleed.

QUEEN: No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Hamlet,—

The drink, the drink! I am poisoned.

[*Dies.*]

HAMLET: O villainy! Ho! let the door be locked:

Treachery! seek it out.

[*LAERTES falls.*]

LAERTES: It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;

No medicine in the world can do thee good,

In thee there is not half an hour of life;

The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,

Unbated and envenomed: the foul practice<sup>8</sup>

Hath turned itself on me; lo, here I lie,

Never to rise again: thy mother's poisoned:

I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.

HAMLET: The point envenomed too!

Then, venom, to thy work.

[*Stabs the KING.*]

ALL: Treason! treason!

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

HAMLET: Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damnèd Dane,

6. Weakling, spoiled child. 7. Snare. 8. Plot.



Drink off this potion: is thy union here?  
Follow my mother.

[KING *dies*.]

LAERTES: He is justly served;  
It is a poison tempered<sup>9</sup> by himself.  
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:  
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,  
Nor thine on me!  
[*Dies*.]

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

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

HAMLET: As thou'rt a man,  
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 a while,  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,  
To tell my story.  
[*March afar off, and shot within*.]

What warlike noise is this?

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

HAMLET: O, I die, Horatio;  
The potent poison quite o'er-crows<sup>1</sup> my spirit:  
I cannot live to hear the news from England;  
But I do prophesy the election lights<sup>2</sup>  
On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;  
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,  
Which have solicited.<sup>2</sup> The rest is silence.  
[*Dies*.]

HORATIO: Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest;  
[*March within*.]  
Why does the drum come hither?

[*Enter* FORTINBRAS, and the ENGLISH AMBASSADORS, with drum, colours, and ATTENDANTS.]

FORTINBRAS: Where is this sight?

HORATIO: What is it you would see?  
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

FORTINBRAS: This quarry cries on havoc.<sup>3</sup> O proud death,  
What feast is toward<sup>4</sup> in thine eternal cell,  
That thou so many princes at a shot  
So bloodily hast struck?

FIRST AMBASSADOR: The sight is dismal;  
And our affairs from England come too late:  
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,  
To tell him his commandment is fulfilled,  
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:  
Where should we have our thanks?

HORATIO: Not from his mouth  
Had it the ability of life to thank you:  
He never gave commandment for their death.  
But since, so jump upon<sup>5</sup> this bloody question,  
You from the Polack wars, and you from England  
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies  
High on a stage be plac'd to the view;  
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world  
How these things came about; so shall you hear  
Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts,  
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,  
Of deaths put on<sup>6</sup> by cunning and forced cause,  
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook  
Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I  
Truly deliver.

FORTINBRAS: Let us haste to hear it,  
And call the noblest to the audience.  
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune:  
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,  
Which now to claim my vantage<sup>7</sup> doth invite me.

HORATIO: Of that I shall have also cause to speak,  
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more:<sup>8</sup>  
But let this same be presently performed,  
Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mischance  
On<sup>9</sup> plots and errors happen.

FORTINBRAS: Let four captains  
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;  
For he was likely, had he been put on,<sup>1</sup>  
To have proved most royal: and, for his passage,<sup>2</sup>  
The soldiers' music and the rites of war

9. Compounded. 1. Overcomes. 2. Which have brought all this about. Occurrents: occurrences.

3. This heap of corpses proclaims a carnage. 4. Imminent. 5. So immediately on. 6. Prompted. Casual: chance. 7. Advantageous position, opportunity. Have some rights of memory: am still remembered. 8. More voices. 9. Following on. 1. Tried (as a king). 2. Death.



Speak loudly for him.

Take up the bodies: such a sight as this

Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the bodies: after which a peal of ordnance is shot off.*]