

Hamlet by William Shakespeare

A gender twisted adaptation performed by the Wichita Shakespeare Company

Edited and Directed by Mark D Anderson

Casting notes

Actor 1 – Hamlet – female

Actor 2 – King Claudius – male (most lines originally written for Queen Gertrude)

Actor 3 – Queen Gertrude (most lines originally written for King Claudius) / Ghost – female

Actor 4 – Horatio – female

Actor 5 – Ophelia / Attendant – female

Actor 6 – Polonius / Priest – female

Actor 7 - Laertes / Guildenstern / Player 2 – male

Actor 8 – Bernardo / Rosencrantz / Player 1 / Messenger /Gravedigger / Osric – female
(adaptable to male)

ACT I SCENE I. Elsinore. A platform before the castle.

BERNARDO at his post.

Long live the king!

'Tis now struck twelve,

'tis bitter cold,

And I am sick at heart.

Not a mouse stirring.

Stand, ho! Who's there?

Enter HORATIO

HORATIO

Friend to this ground.

Holla! Bernardo!

BERNARDO

Say, What, is Horatio there?

HORATIO

A piece of her.

BERNARDO

Welcome, Horatio:

HORATIO

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

BERNARDO

You say 'tis but my fantasy,

And will not let belief take hold of you

Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of me:

Therefore I have entreated you

With me to watch the minutes of this night;

That if again this apparition come,

you may approve my eyes and speak to it.

HORATIO

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

BERNARDO

Sit down awhile;

And let me once again assail your ears,

That are so fortified against my story

What I have two nights seen.

HORATIO

Well, sit me down,

And let me hear Bernardo speak of this.

BERNARDO

Last night of all,

When yond same star that's westward from the pole

Had made his course to illume that part of heaven

Where now it burns, The bell then beating one,--

Enter Ghost

HORATIO

Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!

BERNARDO

In the same figure, like the queen that's dead.

Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

Looks it not like the queen? mark it, Horatio.

HORATIO

Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

BERNARDO

It would be spoke to.

Question it, Horatio.

HORATIO

What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,
by heaven I charge thee, speak!

BERNARDO

It is offended.

See, it stalks away!

HORATIO

Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

Exit Ghost

BERNARDO

'Tis gone, and will not answer.

How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:

Is not this something more than fantasy?

What think you on't?

HORATIO

Before my God, I might not this believe

Without the sensible and true avouch

Of mine own eyes.

BERNARDO

Is it not like the queen?

HORATIO

As thou art to thyself:

'Tis strange.

BERNARDO

Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,

With martial stalk hath she gone by my watch.

HORATIO

In what particular thought to work I know not;
But in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.
But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!

Re-enter Ghost

I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
Speak to me:
If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
Speak to me:
If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid, O, speak!
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
Speak of it: stay, and speak! Stop it, Bernardo.

BERNARDO

Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

HORATIO

Do, if it will not stand.

BERNARDO

'Tis here!

HORATIO

'Tis here!

BERNARDO

'Tis gone!

Exit Ghost

HORATIO

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill:
Break we our watch up; and by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to her.
Do you consent we shall acquaint her with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

BERNARDO

Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know
Where we shall find her most conveniently.

Exeunt

ACT I SCENE II. A room of state in the castle.

Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, (OPHELIA, ROSENGRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN)

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Though yet of Hamlet our dear sister's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on her,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.

KING CLAUDIUS

Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen.
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,--
Taken to wife.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And loose your voice.

KING CLAUDIUS

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

LAERTES

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

KING CLAUDIUS

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

POLONIUS

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

KING CLAUDIUS

Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my daughter,--

HAMLET

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET

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

KING CLAUDIUS

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

HAMLET

Ay, sir, it is common.

KING CLAUDIUS

If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
 To give these mourning duties to your mother:
 But, you must know, your mother lost a mother;
 That mother lost, lost hers, and the survivor bound
 In filial obligation for some term
 To do obsequious sorrow: but to persevere
 In obstinate condolment is a course
 Of impious stubbornness;
 It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
 A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
 An understanding simple and unschool'd:
 For what we know must be and is as common
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
 Why should we in our peevish opposition
 Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
 To reason most absurd.
 We pray you, throw to earth
 This unprevailing woe, and think of us
 As of a mother. For your intent
 In going back to school in Wittenberg,
 It is most retrograde to our desire:
 And we beseech you, bend you to remain
 Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our daughter.

KING CLAUDIUS

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

HAMLET

I shall in all my best obey you, sir.

KING CLAUDIUS

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

Exeunt all but HAMLET

HAMLET

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

Enter HORATIO and BERNARDO

HORATIO

Hail to your ladyship!

HAMLET

I am glad to see you well:

Horatio,--or I do forget myself.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

My good friend; Bernardo?

I am very glad to see you. Good even, sir.

But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

HORATIO

A truant disposition.

HAMLET

I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

HORATIO

I came to see your mother's funeral.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Indeed it follow'd hard upon.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Where, my lord?

HAMLET

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

HORATIO

She was a goodly queen.

HAMLET

She was a woman, take her for all in all,
I shall not look upon her like again.

HORATIO

My lady, I think I saw her yesternight.

HAMLET

Saw? who?

HORATIO

My lady, the queen your mother.

HAMLET

The queen my mother?

HORATIO

Season your admiration for awhile
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of this gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

HAMLET

For God's love, let me hear.

HORATIO

Two nights together had this gentlemen,
Bernardo, on his watch,
In the dead vast and middle of the night,
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your mother,
Appears before him. Thrice she walk'd
By his oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
whilst he stood dumb and did speak not to her. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart he did;
And I with him the third night kept the watch;
Where, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes: I knew your mother;
These hands are not more like.

HAMLET

But where was this?

BERNARDO

My lady, upon the platform where we watch'd.

HAMLET

Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO

I did;

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

HAMLET

'Tis very strange.

HORATIO

As I do live, my honour'd lady, 'tis true;

HAMLET

Indeed, indeed, friends, but this troubles me.

Hold you the watch to-night?

BERNARDO

I do, my lady.

HAMLET

Look'd She frowningly?

HORATIO

A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

HAMLET

I would I had been there.

HORATIO

It would have much amazed you.

HAMLET

I will watch to-night;

Perchance 'twill walk again.

HORATIO

I warrant it will.

HAMLET

If it assume my mother's person,

I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape

And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,

If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,

Let it be tenable in your silence still;

And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,

Give it an understanding, but no tongue:

I will requite your loves. So, fare you well:

Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,

I'll visit you.

BERNARDO

Our duty to your honour.

HAMLET

Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

Exeunt all but HAMLET

My mother's spirit! all is not well;

I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!

Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,

Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

Exit

ACT I SCENE III. A room in Polonius' house.

Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA

LAERTES

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

OPHELIA

Do you doubt that?

LAERTES

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

OPHELIA

No more but so?

LAERTES

Think it no more;
Perhaps she loves you now,
but you must fear,
Her greatness weigh'd, her will is not her own;
For she herself is subject to her birth:
for on her choice depends the safety and health of the whole state.
If she says she loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
As she in her particular act and place
May give her saying deed; which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list her songs,
Or lose your heart.
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
Be wary; best safety lies in fear:
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPHELIA

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

LAERTES

O, fear me not.

I stay too long: but here my mother comes.

Enter POLONIUS

A double blessing is a double grace,
 Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

POLONIUS

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

LAERTES

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lady.

POLONIUS

The time invites you; go; your servants tend.

LAERTES

Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well

What I have said to you.

OPHELIA

'Tis in my memory lock'd,

And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

LAERTES

Farewell.

Exit

POLONIUS

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

OPHELIA

So please you, something touching the lady Hamlet.

POLONIUS

Marry, well bethought:

'Tis told me, she hath very oft of late

Given private time to you; and you yourself

Have of your audience been most free and bounteous:

If it be so, as so 'tis put on me,

And that in way of caution, I must tell you,

You do not understand yourself so clearly

As it behoves my daughter and your honour.

What is between you? give me up the truth.

OPHELIA

She hath, my lady, of late made many tenders

Of her affection to me.

POLONIUS

Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,

Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe her tenders, as you call them?

OPHELIA

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

POLONIUS

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

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

Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;

Or--not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,

Running it thus--you'll tender me a fool.

OPHELIA

My lady she hath importuned me with love

In honourable fashion.

POLONIUS

Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

OPHELIA

And hath given countenance to her speech, my lady,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

POLONIUS

I do know,

When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows; Ophelia,

Do not believe her vows; for they are brokers,
Not of that dye which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,

Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,

The better to beguile. This is for all:

I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,

Have you so slander any moment leisure,

As to give words or talk with the Lady Hamlet.

Look to't, I charge you: come your ways.

OPHELIA

I shall obey, my lady

Exeunt

ACT I SCENE IV. The platform.

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and BERNARDO

HAMLET

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HORATIO

It is a nipping and an eager air.

HAMLET

What hour now?

HORATIO

I think it lacks of twelve.

HAMLET

No, it is struck.

HORATIO

Indeed? I heard it not: then it draws near the season

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

Look, my lady, it comes!

Enter Ghost

HAMLET

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,

Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,

Be thy intents wicked or charitable,

Thou comest in such a questionable shape

That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,

Queen, mother: O, answer me!

Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell

Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,

Have burst their cerements.

Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

Ghost beckons HAMLET

HORATIO

It beckons you to go away with it,

As if it some impartment did desire

To you alone.

BERNARDO

Look, with what courteous action

It waves you to a more removed ground:

But do not go with it.

HORATIO

No, by no means.

HAMLET

It will not speak; then I will follow it.

HORATIO

Do not, my lady.

HAMLET

Why, what should be the fear?

It waves me forth again: I'll follow it.

HORATIO

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lady,

Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff

That beetles o'er his base into the sea,

And there assume some other horrible form,

Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason

And draw you into madness? think of it:

HAMLET

It waves me still.

Go on; I'll follow thee.

BERNARDO

You shall not go, my lady.

HAMLET

Hold off your hands.

HORATIO

Be ruled; you shall not go.

HAMLET

My fate cries out, Unhand me

I say, away! Go on; I'll follow thee.

Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET

HORATIO

She waxes desperate with imagination.

BERNARDO

Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey her

HORATIO

Have after. To what issue will this come?

BERNARDO

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HORATIO

Heaven will direct it.

BERNARDO

Nay, let's follow her.

Exeunt

ACT I SCENE V. Another part of the platform.

Enter GHOST and HAMLET

HAMLET

Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.

GHOST

Mark me.

HAMLET

I will.

GHOST

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

HAMLET

Alas, poor ghost!

GHOST

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

HAMLET

Speak; I am bound to hear.

GHOST

So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAMLET

What?

GHOST

I am thy mother's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul:
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear mother love--

HAMLET

O God!

GHOST

Revenge her foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET

Murder!

GHOST

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

HAMLET

Haste me to know't, that I may sweep to my revenge.

GHOST

I find thee apt;

Now, Hamlet, hear:

'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy mother's life
Now wears her crown.

HAMLET

O my prophetic soul! My aunt!

GHOST

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of her wit, with traitorous gifts,--
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce!--won to her shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous king:
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!
From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to him in marriage, and to decline
Upon a wench whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine!
But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour my sister stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
Thus was I, sleeping, by a sister's hand
Of life, of king, at once dispatch'd:
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed,
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head:
O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be

A couch for luxury and damned incest.
 But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
 Against thy father aught: leave him to heaven
 And to those thorns that in him bosom lodge,
 To prick and sting him. Fare thee well at once!
 Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.

Exit

HAMLET

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

Writing

So, aunt, there you are. Now to my word;
 It is 'Adieu, adieu! remember me.'
 I have sworn 't.

BERNARDO HORATIO

[Within] My lady, my lady,--

HORATIO

[Within] Hamlet. Heaven secure her!

HAMLET

So be it! Come.

Enter HORATIO and BERNARDO

BERNARDO

How is't, my noble lady?

HORATIO

What news, my lady?

HAMLET

O, wonderful!

HORATIO

Tell it.

HAMLET

No; you'll reveal it.

HORATIO

Not I, my lady, by heaven.

BERNARDO

Nor I, my lady.

HAMLET

How say you, then; would heart of man once think it?

But you'll be secret?

HORATIO BERNARDO

Ay, by heaven, my lady.

HAMLET

Good friends,

As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,

Give me one poor request.

HORATIO

What is't, my lady? we will.

HAMLET

Never make known what you have seen to-night.

HORATIO

My lady, we will not.

HAMLET

Nay, but swear't.

HORATIO

In faith, My lady, not I.

BERNARDO

Nor I, my lady, in faith.

HAMLET

Upon my sword.

BERNARDO

We have sworn, my lady, already.

HAMLET

Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

GHOST

[Beneath] Swear.

HAMLET

Consent to swear.

HORATIO

Propose the oath, my lady.

HAMLET

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

GHOST

[Beneath] Swear.

HAMLET

Come hither,

And lay your hands again upon my sword:

Never to speak of this that you have heard,

Swear by my sword.

GHOST

[Beneath] Swear.

HORATIO

O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAMLET

And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,

Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come;

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,

How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,

As I perchance hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic disposition on,

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumber'd thus, or this headshake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

That you know aught of me: this not to do,

So grace and mercy at your most need help you, Swear.

GHOST

[Beneath] Swear.

HAMLET

Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!

They swear

So, friends,

With all my love I do commend me to you:

And what so poor a woman as Hamlet is

May do, to express her love and friending to you,

God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;

And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.

The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,

That ever I was born to set it right!

Nay, come, let's go together.

Exeunt

ACT II

SCENE I. A room in POLONIUS' house.

Enter POLONIUS and OPHELIA

POLONIUS

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

OPHELIA

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

POLONIUS

With what, i' the name of God?

OPHELIA

My lady, as I was sewing in my closet,
 Lady Hamlet, with her doublet all unbraced;
 her stockings foul'd, Ungarter'd;
 Pale as her shirt; her knees knocking each other;
 And with a look so piteous in purport
 As if she had been loosed out of hell
 To speak of horrors,--she comes before me.

POLONIUS

Mad for thy love?

OPHELIA

My lady, I do not know;

But truly, I do fear it.

POLONIUS

What said she?

OPHELIA

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

POLONIUS

Come, go with me: I will go seek the king.

This is the very ecstasy of love, I am sorry.

What, have you given her any hard words of late?

OPHELIA

No, my good lady, but, as you did command,
I did repel her fetters and denied
Her access to me.

POLONIUS

That hath made her mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted her.
By heaven, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king:
This must be known; which, being kept close, might
Move more grief to hide than hate to utter love.
Exeunt

ACT II SCENE II. A room in the castle.

Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!
 Moreover that we much did long to see you,
 The need we have to use you did provoke
 Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
 Of Hamlet's transformation; What it should be,
 More than her mother's death, that thus hath put her
 So much from the understanding of herself,
 I cannot dream of: I entreat you both,
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
 Some little time: so by your companies
 To draw her on to pleasures, and to gather,
 So much as from occasion you may glean,
 Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts her thus,
 That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

KING CLAUDIUS

She hath much talk'd of you;
 If it will please you
 To show us so much gentry and good will
 As to expend your time with us awhile,
 For the supply and profit of our hope,
 Your visitation shall receive such thanks
 As fits a king's remembrance.

ROSENCRANTZ

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

GUILDENSTERN

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

KING CLAUDIUS

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

GUILDENSTERN

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

KING CLAUDIUS

Ay, amen!

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN

Enter POLONIUS

POLONIUS

My good liege,

I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,

Both to my God and to my gracious king:

And I do think, or else this brain of mine

Hunts not the trail of policy so sure

As it hath used to do, that I have found

The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

KING CLAUDIUS

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

POLONIUS

My liege, and madam, to expostulate

What majesty should be, what duty is,

Why day is day, night night, and time is time,

Were nothing but to waste night, day and time.

Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,

And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,

I will be brief: your noble daughter is mad:

Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,

What is't but to be nothing else but mad?

But let that go.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

More matter, with less art.

POLONIUS

Madam, I swear I use no art at all.

That she is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true 'tis pity;

And pity 'tis 'tis true: a foolish figure;

But farewell it, for I will use no art.

Mad let us grant her, then: and now remains

That we find out the cause of this effect,

Or rather say, the cause of this defect,

For this effect defective comes by cause:

Thus it remains, and the remainder thus. Perpend.

I have a daughter--have while she is mine--

Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,

Hath given me this: now gather, and surmise.

Reads

'To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,'--

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is a vile phrase: but you shall hear. Thus:

Reads

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Came this from Hamlet to her?

POLONIUS

Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.

Reads

'Doubt thou the stars are fire;

Doubt that the sun doth move;

Doubt truth to be a liar;

But never doubt I love.

'O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers;

I have not art to reckon my groans: but that

I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

'Thine evermore most dear lady,

HAMLET.'

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me,

And more above, hath her solicitings,

As they fell out by time, by means and place,

All given to mine ear.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

But how hath she

Received her love?

POLONIUS

What do you think of me?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

As of a woman faithful and honourable.

POLONIUS

I would fain prove so. But what might you think,

When I had seen this hot love on the wing--

If I had given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,

Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;

What might you think? No, I went round to work,

And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:

'Lady Hamlet is a princess, This must not be:'

and then I precepts gave her,

That she should lock herself from her resort,

Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.

Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;

And Hamlet, repulsed,
 Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
 Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
 Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,
 Into the madness wherein now she raves,
 And all we mourn for.

KING CLAUDIUS

Do you think 'tis this?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

It may be, very likely.

POLONIUS

Hath there been such a time--I'd fain know that--

That I have positively said 'Tis so,'

When it proved otherwise?

KING CLAUDIUS

Not that I know.

POLONIUS

[Pointing to her head and shoulder]

Take this from this, if this be otherwise:

QUEEN GERTRUDE

How may we try it further?

POLONIUS

You know, sometimes she walks four hours together

Here in the lobby.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

So she does indeed.

POLONIUS

At such a time I'll loose my daughter to her:

Be you and I behind an arras then;

Mark the encounter: if she love her not

And be not from her reason fall'n thereon,

Let me be no assistant for a state,

But keep a farm and carters.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

We will try it.

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

POLONIUS

Away, I do beseech you, both away:

I'll board her presently.

Exeunt KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE

Enter HAMLET, reading

How does my good Lady Hamlet?

HAMLET

Well, God-a-mercy.

LORD POLONIUS

Do you know me, my lady?

HAMLET

Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

POLONIUS

Not I, my lady.

HAMLET

Then I would you were so honest a woman.

POLONIUS

Honest, my lady!

HAMLET

Ay, ma'am; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one picked out of ten thousand.

POLONIUS

That's very true, my lady.

HAMLET

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

POLONIUS

I have, my lady.

HAMLET

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

Friend, look to 't.

POLONIUS

[Aside] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter: yet she knew me not at first; she said I was a fishmonger: she is far gone, far gone.

I'll speak to her again.

What do you read, my lady?

HAMLET

Words, words, words.

POLONIUS

What is the matter, my lady?

HAMLET

Between who?

POLONIUS

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

HAMLET

Slanders, ma'am: for the satirical rogue says here that old women have grey hair, that their faces are wrinkled, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, ma'am, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet

I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for yourself, ma'am, should be old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

POLONIUS

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

HAMLET

Into my grave.

POLONIUS

Indeed, that is out o' the air.

[Aside]

How pregnant sometimes her replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, I will leave her, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between her and my daughter.--My honourable lady, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

HAMLET

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

POLONIUS

Fare you well, my lady

HAMLET

These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

POLONIUS

You go to seek the Lady Hamlet; there she is.

ROSENCRANTZ

[To POLONIUS] God save you, madam!

Exit POLONIUS

GUILDENSTERN

My honoured lady!

ROSENCRANTZ

My most dear lady!

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

As the indifferent children of the earth.

GUILDENSTERN

Happy, in that we are not over-happy;

HAMLET

What's the news?

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true.

Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN

Prison, my lady!

HAMLET

Denmark's a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ

Then is the world one.

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

We think not so, my lady.

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

ROSENCRANTZ GUILDENSTERN

We'll wait upon you.

HAMLET

No such matter.

What make you at Elsinore?

ROSENCRANTZ

To visit you, my lady; no other occasion.

HAMLET

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

GUILDENSTERN

What should we say, my lady?

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

To what end, my lady?

HAMLET

That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, and by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

ROSENCRANTZ

[Aside to GUILDENSTERN] What say you?

HAMLET

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

GUILDENSTERN

My lady, we were sent for.

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

What players are they?

ROSENCRANTZ

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

Flourish of trumpets within

GUILDENSTERN

There are the players.

HAMLET

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

GUILDENSTERN

In what, my dear lady?

HAMLET

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

My good friends, you are welcome to Elsinore.

ROSENCRANTZ

Good my lady!

HAMLET

Ay, so, God be wi' ye;

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

Enter POLONIUS

POLONIUS

Well be with you!

HAMLET

Hark you, at each ear a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of her swaddling-clouts.

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

POLONIUS

My lady, I have news to tell you.

HAMLET

My lady, I have news to tell you.

When Roscius was an actor in Rome,--

POLONIUS

The actors are come hither, my lady.

HAMLET

Buz, buz!

POLONIUS

Upon mine honour,--

HAMLET

Then came each actor on his ass,--

POLONIUS

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

HAMLET

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

LORD POLONIUS

What a treasure had he, my lady?

HAMLET

Why,

'One fair daughter and no more,

The which he loved passing well.'

POLONIUS

[Aside] Still on my daughter.

Enter two Players

HAMLET

You are welcome, masters. I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old friend! thy face is valenced since I saw thee last. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll have a speech straight: come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

PLAYER 1

What speech, my lord?

HAMLET

I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the

play, I remember, pleased not the million;
 an excellent play, well digested in the scenes,
 set down with as much modesty as cunning.

One speech in it I chiefly loved:

'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido; and
 thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of
 Priam's slaughter: if it live in your memory, begin
 at this line: let me see, let me see--

'The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,'--
 it is not so:--it begins with Pyrrhus:--

'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
 Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
 When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
 Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
 With heraldry more dismal; horridly trick'd
 With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
 Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
 That lend a damned light To their lord's murder:
 roasted in wrath and fire,
 And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
 With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
 Old grandsire Priam seeks.'

So, proceed you.

POLONIUS

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

PLAYER 1

'Anon he finds him
 Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
 Repugnant to command: unequal match'd,
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;
 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
 The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
 Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear

POLONIUS

This is too long.

HAMLET

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

PLAYER 1

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

HAMLET

'The mobled queen?'

POLONIUS

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

PLAYER 1

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

POLONIUS

Look, whether she has not turned her colour and has
tears in her eyes. Pray you, no more.

HAMLET

'Tis well: I'll have thee speak out the rest soon.
Good my lady, will you see the players well
Bestowed.

POLONIUS

My lady I will use them according to their desert.

HAMLET

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

POLONIUS

Come, sirs.

HAMLET

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

Exit POLONIUS with PLAYER 2

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

PLAYER 1

Ay, my lady.

HAMLET

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

PLAYER 1

Ay, my lady.

HAMLET

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

Exit Player 1

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!

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

What's Hecuba to her, or she to Hecuba,
That she should weep for her? What would she do,
Had she the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? She would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a queen,
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?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?
Bloody, bawdy villain! Remorseless, treacherous,
lecherous, kindless villain!
O, vengeance!

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the daughter of a dear mother murder'd,

Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion!
Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain! I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my mother
Before mine aunt: I'll observe her looks;
if she but blench, I know my course.
The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds
More relative than this: the play 's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the queen.
Exit

ACT III SCENE I. A room in the castle.*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, OPHELIA*

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Sweet King, leave us;
 For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
 That she, as 'twere by accident, may here
 Affront Ophelia:
 Her mother and myself, lawful espials,
 Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,
 We may of their encounter frankly judge,
 And gather by her, as she is behaved,
 If 't be the affliction of her love or no
 That thus she suffers for.

KING CLAUDIUS

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

OPHELIA

Sir, I wish it may.

Exit KING CLAUDIUS

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 colour
 Your loneliness.

Exit OPHELIA

I hear her coming: let's withdraw, my lady.

*Exeunt QUEEN GERTRUDE 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
 The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;

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

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

No, not I;
 I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA

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

There, my lady

HAMLET

Ha, ha! are you honest?

OPHELIA

My lady?

HAMLET

Are you fair?

OPHELIA

What means your ladyship?

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

Indeed, my lady, you made me believe so.

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

I was the more deceived.

HAMLET

Get thee to a nunnery: I am myself indifferent honest; I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should others such as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant wretches, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery.

Where's your mother?

OPHELIA

At home, my lady.

HAMLET

Let the doors be shut upon her, that she may play the fool no where but in her own house. Farewell.

OPHELIA

O, help her, you sweet heavens!

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

O heavenly powers, restore her!

HAMLET

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

Exit

OPHELIA

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Re-enter QUEEN GERTRUDE and POLONIUS

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

POLONIUS

It shall do well: but yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of her grief
Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia!
You need not tell us what Lady Hamlet said;
We heard it all. My lady, do as you please;
But, if you hold it fit, after the play
Let her father all alone entreat her
To show her grief: let him be round with her;
And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference. If he find her not,
To England send her, or confine her where
Your wisdom best shall think.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

Exeunt

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

Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.

Go, make you ready.

Exeunt Players

Enter POLONIUS

How now, my lady! I will the queen hear this piece of work?

POLONIUS

And the king too, and that presently.

HAMLET

Bid the players make haste.

Exit POLONIUS

HAMLET

What ho! Horatio!

Enter HORATIO

HORATIO

Here, sweet lady, at your service.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

O, my dear lady,--

HAMLET

Nay, do not think I flatter;

Something too much of this.--

There is a play to-night before the queen;

One scene of it comes near the circumstance

Which I have told thee of my mother's death:

I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,

Even with the very comment of thy soul

Observe mine aunt: if her occulted guilt

Do not itself unkennel in one speech,

It is a damned ghost that we have seen,

And my imaginations are foul.

Give her heedful note;

For I mine eyes will rivet to her face,

And after we will both our judgments join

In censure of his seeming.

HORATIO

Well, my lady:

If she 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:

Get you a place.

A flourish. Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, OPHELIA,

QUEEN GERTRUDE

How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAMLET

Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish: I eat

the air, promise-crammed: you cannot feed capons so.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words

are not mine.

HAMLET

No, nor mine now.

To POLONIUS

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

POLONIUS

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

HAMLET

What did you enact?

POLONIUS

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

HAMLET

It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf There.

KING CLAUDIUS

Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAMLET

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

POLONIUS

[To QUEEN GERTRUDE] O, ho! do you mark that?

HAMLET

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

Lying down at OPHELIA's feet

OPHELIA

No, my lady

HAMLET

I mean, my head upon your lap?

OPHELIA

Ay, my lady.

HAMLET

Do you think I meant country matters?

OPHELIA

I think nothing, my lady.

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

What is, my lady?

HAMLET

Nothing.

OPHELIA

You are merry, my lady.

HAMLET

Who, I?

OPHELIA

Ay, my lady.

HAMLET

O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my father looks, and my mother died within these two hours.

OPHELIA

Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lady.

HAMLET

So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great woman's memory may outlive her life half a year.

The dumb-show enters

Enter a King (who enlists Hamlets aid in playing the queen) 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 her down upon a bench: he, seeing her asleep, leaves her.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

What do you call the play?

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

You are as good as a chorus, my lady.

Enter LUCIANA(PLAYER 1)

HAMLET

This is one Luciana, neice to the queen
LUCIANA, takes off HAMLETS crown, kisses it.

LUCIANA

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

pours poison in the Queen's ears, and exit. The King returns; finds the Queen dead, and makes passionate action. LUCIANA, comes in again, seeming to lament with him. Hamlet sits up to watch the show.

The Poisoner woos the King: he seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts her love

HAMLET (over the dumb show)

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

OPHELIA

The queen rises.

HAMLET

What, frighted with false fire!

KING CLAUDIUS

How fares my lady?

POLONIUS

Give o'er the play.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Give me some light: away!

POLONIUS

Lights, lights, lights!

Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Very well, my lady.

HAMLET

Upon the talk of the poisoning?

HORATIO

I did very well note her.

HAMLET

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

For if the queen like not the comedy,

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

Come, some music!

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

GUILDENSTERN

Good my lady, vouchsafe me a word with you.

HAMLET

A whole history.

GUILDENSTERN

The queen--

HAMLET

Ay, what of her?

GUILDENSTERN

Is in her retirement marvellous distempered.

HAMLET

With drink?

GUILDENSTERN

No, my lady, rather with choler.

HAMLET

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

GUILDENSTERN

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

HAMLET

I am tame: pronounce.

GUILDENSTERN

The king, your father, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

HAMLET

You are welcome.

ROSENCRANTZ

Your behavior hath struck him into amazement and admiration.

HAMLET

O wonderful daughter, that can so astonish a father!

ROSENCRANTZ

He desires to speak with you in his closet, ere you go to bed.

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

My lady, you once did love me.

HAMLET

So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

ROSENCRANTZ

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

GUILDENSTERN

O, my lady, if our duty be too bold, our love is too unmannerly.

HAMLET

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

GUILDENSTERN

My lady I cannot.

HAMLET

I pray you.

GUILDENSTERN

Believe me, I cannot.

HAMLET

I do beseech you.

GUILDENSTERN

I know no touch of it, my lady.

HAMLET

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

Look you, these are the stops.

GUILDENSTERN

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

HAMLET

Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.

Enter POLONIUS

God bless you, ma'am!

POLONIUS

My lady, the king would speak with you, and presently.

HAMLET

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

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.

HAMLET

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

POLONIUS

I will say so.

HAMLET

By and by is easily said.

Exit POLONIUS

Leave me, friends.

Exeunt all but HAMLET

Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my father.
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom:
Let me be cruel, not unnatural:
I will speak daggers to him, but use none;
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites!
Exit

ACT III SCENE III. A room in the castle.

Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN

QUEEN GERTRUDE

I like her not, nor stands it safe with us
To let her madness range. Therefore prepare you;
I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
And she to England shall along with you:
The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so dangerous as doth hourly grow
Out of her lunacies.
Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

ROSENCRANTZ

We will haste us.

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

Enter POLONIUS

POLONIUS

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Thanks, dear my lord.

Exit POLONIUS

O, my offence is rank it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A sibling's murder. Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will:
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
Like a woman to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder'?
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition and my king.
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?
What then? what rests?

Try what repentance can: what can it not?
 Yet what can it when one can not repent?
 O bosom black as death!
 Help, angels! Make assay!
 Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart with strings of steel,
 Be soft as sinews of the newborn babe!
 All may be well.

Retires and kneels

Enter HAMLET

HAMLET

Now might I do it pat, now she is praying;
 And now I'll do't. And so she goes to heaven;
 And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd:
 A villain kills my mother; and for that,
 I, her sole child, do this same villain send
 To heaven. And am I then revenged,
 To take her in the purging of her soul,
 When she is fit and season'd for her passage?
 No!
 When she is drunk asleep, or in her rage,
 Or in the incestuous pleasure of her bed;
 or about some act that has no relish of salvation in't;
 Then trip her, that her heels may kick at heaven,
 And that her soul may be as damn'd and black
 As hell, whereto it goes. My father stays:
 This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

Exit

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

Exit

ACT III SCENE IV. The King's closet.

Enter KING CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS

POLONIUS

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

HAMLET

[Within] Father, father, father!

KING CLAUDIUS

Withdraw, I hear her coming.

POLONIUS hides behind the arras

Enter HAMLET

HAMLET

Now, father, what's the matter?

KING CLAUDIUS

Hamlet, thou hast thy mother much offended.

HAMLET

Father, you have my mother much offended.

KING CLAUDIUS

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

KING CLAUDIUS

Why, how now, Hamlet!

Have you forgot me?

HAMLET

No, by the rood, not so:

You are the king, your wife's sister's husband;
And--would it were not so!--you are my father.

KING CLAUDIUS

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

HAMLET

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

You go not till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

KING CLAUDIUS

What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?

Help, help, ho!

LORD POLONIUS

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

HAMLET

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

Makes a pass through the arras

POLONIUS

[Behind] O, I am slain!

Falls and dies

KING CLAUDIUS

O me, what hast thou done?

HAMLET

Nay, I know not:

Is it the queen?

KING CLAUDIUS

O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAMLET

A bloody deed! almost as bad, good father,

As kill a queen, and marry with her sister.

KING CLAUDIUS

As kill a queen!

HAMLET

Ay, lord, 'twas my word.

Lifts up the array and discovers POLONIUS

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;

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

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

If it be made of penetrable stuff,

KING CLAUDIUS

What have I done, that thou darest 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:

KING CLAUDIUS

Ay me, what act,

That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?

HAMLET

Look here, upon this picture, and on this,

The counterfeit presentment of two sisters.

See, what a grace was seated on this brow;

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

Here is your wife; like a mildew'd ear,
 Blasting her wholesome sister. Have you eyes?
 You cannot call it love; for at your age
 The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
 And waits upon the judgment: and what judgment
 Would step from this to this?
 O shame! where is thy blush?

KING CLAUDIUS

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

HAMLET

Nay, but to live
 In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed.
 A murderer and a villain;

KING CLAUDIUS

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

HAMLET

A king of shreds and patches,--

Enter Ghost

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

KING CLAUDIUS

Alas, she's mad!

HAMLET

Do you not come your tardy daughter 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 father sits:
 O, step between him and his fighting soul:
 Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works:
 Speak to him, Hamlet.

HAMLET

How is it with you, my lord?

KING CLAUDIUS

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

HAMLET

On her, on her! Look you, how pale she glares!
Her form and cause conjoin'd
Do not look upon me;
Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects: then what I have to do
Will want true colour; tears perchance for blood.

KING CLAUDIUS

To whom do you speak this?

HAMLET

Do you see nothing there?

KING CLAUDIUS

Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

HAMLET

Nor did you nothing hear?

KING CLAUDIUS

No, nothing but ourselves.

HAMLET

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

Exit Ghost

KING CLAUDIUS

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

HAMLET

Ecstasy!

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music: it is not madness
That I have utter'd: father, for love of grace,
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.

KING CLAUDIUS

O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

HAMLET

O, throw away the worser part of it,
 And live the purer with the other half.
 Good night: but go not to mine aunt's bed;
 Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
 Once more, good night:
 And when you are desirous to be bless'd,
 I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord, *Pointing to POLONIUS*
 I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,
 To punish me with this and this with me,
 That I must be their scourge and minister.
 I will bestow her, and will answer well
 The death I gave her. So, again, good night.
 I must be cruel, only to be kind:
 Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.
 One word more, good my lord.

KING CLAUDIUS

What shall I do?

HAMLET

Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
 Let the bloat queen tempt you again to bed;
 And let her, for a pair of reechy kisses,
 Or paddling in your neck with her damn'd fingers,
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,
 That I essentially am not in madness,
 But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let her know.

KING CLAUDIUS

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?

KING CLAUDIUS

'tis so concluded on.

HAMLET

There's letters seal'd: and my two schoolmates,
 Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
 They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
 And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;
 Father, good night. Indeed this counsellor
 Is now most still, most secret and most grave,
 Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
 Come, lady, to draw toward an end with you.
 Good night, father. *Exeunt severally; HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS*

ACT IV SCENE I. A room in the castle.

Enter HAMLET

HAMLET

Safely stowed.

ROSENCRANTZ: GUILDENSTERN:

[Within] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

HAMLET

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?

HAMLET

Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

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

GUILDENSTERN

A thing, my lord!

HAMLET

Of nothing: bring me to her.

Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAMLET

At supper.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

At supper! where?

HAMLET

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

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

What dost you mean by this?

HAMLET

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Where is Polonius?

HAMLET

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Go seek her there.

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ

HAMLET

She will stay till ye come.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,--
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done,--must send thee hence
With fiery quickness: therefore prepare thyself;
For England.

HAMLET

For England!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET

Good.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

Come; for England! Farewell, dear father.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Thy loving mother, Hamlet.

HAMLET

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

Exit

QUEEN GERTRUDE

To Guildenstern

Follow her at foot; tempt her with speed aboard;

Delay it not; I'll have her hence to-night:

Exit Guildenstern

Away! for every thing is seal'd and done
 That else leans on the affair: pray you, make haste.
 And, England, thou mayst not coldly set
 Our sovereign process; which imports at full,
 By letters congruing to that effect,
 The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
 For like the hectic in my blood she rages,
 And thou must cure me: till I know 'tis done,
 Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.
Exit

ACT IV SCENE II. *Elsinore. A room in the castle.*

Enter KING CLAUDIUS, HORATIO,

KING CLAUDIUS

I will not speak with her.
 She speaks much of her mother; says she hears
 There's tricks i' the world; and hems, and beats her heart;
 Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,
 That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,
 Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
 The hearers to collection.

HORATIO

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

KING CLAUDIUS

Let her come in.

Enter OPHELIA

OPHELIA

Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

KING CLAUDIUS

How now, Ophelia!

OPHELIA

[Sings]

How should I your true love know
 From another one?
 By her cockle hat and sandal shoon.

KING CLAUDIUS

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPHELIA

Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

[Sings]

She is dead and gone, my lord,

She is dead and gone;

At her head a grass-green turf,

At her heels a stone.

KING CLAUDIUS

Nay, but, Ophelia,--

OPHELIA

Pray you, mark.

[Sings]

White his shroud as the mountain snow,--

Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE

KING CLAUDIUS

Alas, look here, my lady.

OPHELIA

[Sings]

Larded with sweet flowers

Which bewept to the grave did go

With true-love showers.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

How do you, pretty lady?

OPHELIA

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Conceit upon her mother.

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.

KING CLAUDIUS

Pretty Ophelia!

OPHELIA

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

Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,

And dupp'd the chamber-door;

Let in the maid, that out a maid

Never departed more.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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 her i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it: and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night.

Exit

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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.

A noise within

Alack, what noise is this?

Enter LAERTES, armed;

LAERTES

Where is this king?

O thou vile king,

Give me my mother!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Calmly, good Laertes.

KING CLAUDIUS

What is the cause, Laertes,

That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?

Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person:

Tell me, Laertes, Why thou art thus incensed.

Let him go, Gertrude. Speak, man.

LAERTES

Where is my mother?

KING CLAUDIUS

Dead.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

But not by him.

LAERTES

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

To hell, allegiance! I dare damnation!

Let come what comes; only I'll be revenged

Most thoroughly for my mother.

KING CLAUDIUS

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 CLAUDIUS

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

Re-enter OPHELIA

OPHELIA

[Sings]

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

LAERTES

Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as moral as an old man's life?

OPHELIA

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray,
love, remember: and there is pansies. that's for thoughts.
There's fennel for you, and columbines: there's rue
for you; and here's some for me: we may call it
herb-grace o' Sundays: O you must wear your rue with
a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you
some violets, but they withered all when my mother
died: they say she made a good end,--

[Sings]

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

Exit

LAERTES

Do you see this, O God?

KING CLAUDIUS

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

LAERTES

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

LAERTES and KING CLAUDIUS start to exit

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

Exit KING CLAUDIUS

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Now must your conscience my acquaintance seal,
 And you must put me in your heart for friend,
 She which hath your noble mother slain
 Pursued my life.

LAERTES

Hamlet? but tell me
 Why you proceeded not against these feats,
 So crimeful and so capital in nature?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

The king her father
 Lives almost by her looks.

LAERTES

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Break not your sleeps for that:
 You shortly shall hear more:
 I loved your mother, and we love ourself;
 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine--

Enter a Messenger

How now! what news?

MESSENGER

Letters, my lady, from Hamlet:
 This to your lady; this to the king.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Laertes, you shall hear them. Leave us.

Exit Messenger

Reads

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

What should this mean?

And in a postscript here, she says 'alone.'

Can you advise me?

LAERTES

I'm lost in it, my lady. But let her come;
 It warms the very sickness in my heart,
 That I shall live and tell her to her teeth,
 'Thus didest thou.'

QUEEN GERTRUDE

If it be so, Laertes--

As how should it be so? how otherwise?--

Will you be ruled by me?

LAERTES

Ay, my lady;

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

To thine own peace. If she be now return'd,
 I will work her to an exploit, now ripe in my device,
 Under the which she shall not choose but fall:
 And for her death no wind of blame shall breathe,
 But even her father shall uncharge the practise
 And call it accident.

LAERTES

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

It falls right.
Laertes, was your mother dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

LAERTES

Why ask you this?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

LAERTES

To cut her throat i' the church.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home:
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence
And wager on your heads: she, being remiss,
Most generous and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practise
Requite her for your mother.

LAERTES

I will do't:

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Let's further think of this;
Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape: if this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance,
'Twere better not assay'd: Soft! let me see:
I ha't. When in your motion you are hot and dry--
And that she calls for drink, I'll have prepared her
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
If she by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there.

Enter KING CLAUDIUS

How now, sweet king!

KING CLAUDIUS

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

LAERTES

Drown'd!

KING CLAUDIUS

Drown'd, drown'd.

LAERTES

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Let's follow, my lord:

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 I. A churchyard.

Enter a Gravedigger with spade

He digs and sings

GRAVEDIGGER

In youth, when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet,
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,
Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance
O, methought, there was nothing meet.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

HAMLET

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

GRAVEDIGGER

[Sings]

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

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!

GRAVEDIGGER

[Sings]

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

Throws up another skull

HAMLET

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

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

GRAVEDIGGER

Mine, sir.

HAMLET

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

GRAVEDIGGER

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

HAMLET

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

What man dost thou dig it for?

GRAVEDIGGER

For no man, sir.

HAMLET

What woman, then?

GRAVEDIGGER

For none, neither.

HAMLET

Who is to be buried in't?

GRAVEDIGGER

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

HAMLET

How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the
card, or equivocation will undo us.

How long hast thou been a
grave-maker?

GRAVEDIGGER

Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that
very day that young Hamlet was born; she that
is mad, and sent into England.

HAMLET

Ay, marry, why was she sent into England?

GRAVEDIGGER

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

HAMLET

Why?

GRAVEDIGGER

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

HAMLET

How came she mad?

GRAVEDIGGER

Very strangely, they say.

HAMLET

How strangely?

GRAVEDIGGER

Faith, e'en with losing her wits.

HAMLET

Upon what ground?

GRAVEDIGGER

Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, woman
and girl, thirty years.

HAMLET

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

GRAVEDIGGER

I' faith, if he be not rotten before he die

he will last you some eight year

or nine year.

Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth
three and twenty years.

HAMLET

Whose was it?

GRAVEDIGGER

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

HAMLET

Nay, I know not.

GRAVEDIGGER

A pestilence on him for a mad rogue. This same skull,
sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

HAMLET

This?

GRAVEDIGGER

E'en that.

HAMLET

Let me see.

Takes the skull

Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow
of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath
borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how
abhorred in my imagination it is!

Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know
not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your
gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment,
that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one
now, to mock your own grinning?

Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HORATIO

What's that, my lady?

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 lady.

HAMLET

To what base uses we may return, Horatio!

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

Enter Priest in procession; the Corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES; KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken

The corse they follow did with desperate hand

For do its own life: 'twas of some estate.

Couch we awhile, and mark.

Retiring with HORATIO

LAERTES

What ceremony else?

PRIEST

Her obsequies have been as far enlarged

As we have warrantise: her death was doubtful;

And, but that great command o'ersways the order,

She should in ground unsanctified have lodged

Till the last trumpet

LAERTES

Must there no more be done?

PRIEST

No more be done:

LAERTES

Lay her i' the earth:

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh

May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,

A ministering angel shall my sister be,

When thou liest howling.

HAMLET

What, the fair Ophelia!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

Scattering flowers

LAERTES

Hold off the earth awhile,

Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

Leaps into the grave

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,

Till of this flat a mountain you have made.

HAMLET

[Advancing] What is he whose grief

Bears such an emphasis?

This is I,

Hamlet the Dane.

LAERTES

The devil take thy soul!

Grappling with her

HAMLET

Thou pray'st not well.

KING CLAUDIUS

Hamlet, Hamlet!

HORATIO

Good my lady, be quiet.

parts them

HAMLET

Why I will fight with him upon this theme

Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers

Could not, with all their quantity of love,

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

'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do:

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

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

To outface me with leaping in her grave?

Be buried quick with her, and so will I:

KING CLAUDIUS

O, she is mad, Laertes.

For love of God, forbear her

HAMLET

Hear you, sir;

What is the reason that you use me thus?

I loved you ever: but it is no matter;

Let Hercules himself do what he may,

The cat will mew and dog will have his day.

Exit

KING CLAUDIUS

I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon her.

Exit HORATIO

QUEEN GERTRUDE

To LAERTES

Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;

We'll put the matter to the present push.

Exeunt

ACT V SCENE II. *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, Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,

When our deep plots do pall: and that should teach us

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,

Rough-hew them how we will,--

But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed?

Here's the commission: --I sat me down,

Devised a new commission, wrote it fair:

wilt thou know

The effect of what I wrote?

HORATIO

Ay, good my lord.

HAMLET

An earnest conjuration from the king,

As England was his faithful tributary,

That, on the view and knowing of these contents,

Without debatement further, more or less,

He should the bearers put to sudden death,

Not shriving-time allow'd.

HORATIO

So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

HAMLET

They are not near my conscience;
 But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
 That to Laertes I forgot myself;
 For, by the image of my cause, I see
 The portraiture of his: I'll court his favours.
 But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
 Into a towering passion.

HORATIO

Peace! who comes here?

Enter OSRIC

OSRIC

Your ladyship is right welcome back to Denmark.

HAMLET

I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this water-fly?

HORATIO

No, my good lady.

OSRIC

Sweet lady, if your ladyship were at leisure, I
 should impart a thing to you from her 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 ladyship, it is very hot.

HAMLET

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

OSRIC

It is indifferent cold, my lady, indeed.

HAMLET

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

OSRIC

Exceedingly, my lady; it is very sultry,--as
 'twere,--I cannot tell how. But, my lady, her
 majesty bade me signify to you that she has laid a
 great wager on your head: this is the matter,--

HAMLET

I beseech you, remember--

HAMLET moves him to put on his hat

OSRIC

Nay, good my lady; for mine ease, in good faith.
Here is newly come to court Laertes; believe
me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent
differences, of very soft society and great showing:

HAMLET

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

OSRIC

My Lady?

HORATIO

Is't not possible to understand in another tongue?

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. 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.

OSRIC

I mean, sir, for his weapon.

HAMLET

What's his weapon?

OSRIC

Rapier and dagger.

HAMLET

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

OSRIC

The queen, hath wagered with him six Barbary
horses: against the which he has imponed, as I take
it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their
assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so: three of the
carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very

responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages,
and of very liberal conceit.

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

HAMLET

How if I answer 'no'?

OSRIC

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

HAMLET

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

OSRIC

Shall I re-deliver you e'en so?

HAMLET

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

OSRIC

I commend my duty to your ladyship.

HAMLET

Yours, yours.

Exit OSRIC

He does well to commend it himself; there are no
tongues else for's turn.

HORATIO

You will lose this wager, my lady.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Nay, good my lady--

HAMLET

It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of
gain-giving, as would perhaps trouble a woman.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

Not a whit, we defy augury: there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all:

Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, LAERTES, OSRIC, and Attendant with foils,
KING CLAUDIUS

Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.
KING CLAUDIUS puts LAERTES' hand into HAMLET's

HAMLET

Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong;
But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows,
And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd
With sore distraction. What I have done,
That might your nature, honour and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:
If Hamlet from herself be ta'en away,
And when she's not herself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then? Her madness: if't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
Her 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 till that time,
I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.

HAMLET

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

LAERTES

Come, one for me.

HAMLET

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

LAERTES

You mock me, lady.

HAMLET

No, by this hand.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

LAERTES

This is too heavy, let me see another.

HAMLET

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

They prepare to play

OSRIC

Ay, my good lady.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Set me the stoops of wine upon that table.
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
The queen shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;
And in the cup an union shall she throw,
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn.

Come, begin:

And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

HAMLET

Come on, sir.

LAERTES

Come, my lady.

They play

HAMLET

One.

LAERTES

No.

HAMLET

Judgment.

OSRIC

A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAERTES

Well; again.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;

Here's to thy health.

Give her the cup.

HAMLET

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

They play

Another hit; what say you?

LAERTES

A touch, a touch, I do confess.

KING CLAUDIUS

Our daughter shall win.

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows;

The king carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

HAMLET

Good sir!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

My leige, do not drink.

KING CLAUDIUS

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Come, let me wipe thy face.

LAERTES

My lady, I'll hit her now.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

I do not think't.

LAERTES

[Aside] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst 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 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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Part them; they are incensed.

HAMLET

Nay, come, again.

KING CLAUDIUS falls

OSRIC

Look to the king there, ho!

HORATIO

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

OSRIC

How is't, Laertes?

LAERTES

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

HAMLET

How does the king?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

He swounds to see them bleed.

KING CLAUDIUS

No, no, the drink, the drink,--O my dear Hamlet,--

The drink, the drink! I am poison'd.

Dies

HAMLET

O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd:

Treachery! Seek it out.

LAERTES

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

No medicine in the world can do thee good;

In thee there is not half an hour of life;

The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,

Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practise

Hath turn'd itself on me lo, here I lie,

Never to rise again: thy father's poison'd:

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

HAMLET

The point!--envenom'd too!

Then, venom, to thy work.

Stabs QUEEN GERTRUDE

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,

Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?

Follow my father.

QUEEN GERTRUDE dies

LAERTES

She is justly served;

It is a poison temper'd by herself.

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:

Mine and my mother'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:

Here's yet some liquor left.

HAMLET

As thou'rt a woman,

Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll have't.

O good Horatio, what a wounded name,

Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart

Absent thee from felicity awhile,

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,

To tell my story.

O, I die, Horatio;

The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:

The rest is silence.

Dies

HORATIO

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet princess:

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

Weep