

# HAMLET

## PRINCE OF DENMARK

By William Shakespeare

### Dramatis Personae

	HAMLET, Prince of Denmark
	KING Claudius of Denmark, Hamlet's Uncle
	QUEEN Gertrude, of Denmark, and Mother to Hamlet
	HORATIO, Friend to Hamlet
	GHOST of Hamlet's Father, the former King of Denmark
	POLONIUS, Lord Chamberlain
	LAERTES, Son to Polonius
	OPHELIA, Daughter to Polonius
	REYNALDO, Servant to Polonius
	LUCIANUS Nephew to the King
Courtiers.	VOLTEMAND CORNELIUS ROSENCRANTZ GUILDENSTERN OSRIC GENTLEMAN
Officers	MARCELLUS BARNARDO
Soldier	FRANCISCO
	FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway CAPTAIN in army
	PRIEST SAILOR MESSENGER
Gravediggers	1st CLOWN 2nd CLOWN
Ambassadors	ENGLISH 1st and others DANISH Ambassadors to Norway
Players	PROLOGUE PLAYER KING PLAYER QUEEN
	Lords, Ladies, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers Attendants
Scene: Elsinore.	

# ACT 1.

## Scene 1. Elsinore. A Platform before the Castle.

FRANCISCO at his post. Enter BARNARDO.

Barnardo           Who's there?

Francisco           Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

Barnardo           Long live the king!

Francisco           Barnardo?

Barnardo           He.

Francisco           You come most carefully upon your hour.

Barnardo           'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

Francisco           For this relief much thanks; 'tis bitter cold,  
And I am sick at heart.

Barnardo           Have you had quiet guard?

Francisco           Not a mouse stirring.

Barnardo           Well, good night.  
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,  
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Francisco           I think I hear them. Stand ho! Who is there?

**Enter** HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Horatio            Friends to this ground.

Marcellus          And liegemen to the Dane.

Francisco          Give you good night.

Marcellus          O, farewell, honest soldier. Who hath relieved you?

Francisco          Barnardo hath my place. Give you good night.

**Exit**

Marcellus          Holla, Barnardo!

Barnardo          Say, what, is Horatio there?

Horatio            A piece of him.

Barnardo          Welcome Horatio. Welcome good Marcellus.

Horatio            What, has this thing appeared again tonight?

Barnardo          I have seen nothing.

Marcellus          Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,  
And will not let belief take hold of him,  
Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us.  
Therefore I have entreated him along  
With us to watch the minutes of this night,  
That if again this apparition come,  
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

Horatio            Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

Barnardo          Sit down a while,

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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

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

Barnardo Last night of all,  
When yond same star that's westward from the pole  
Had made his course t' illumine that part of heaven  
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,  
The bell then beating one -

**Enter GHOST.**

Marcellus Peace, break thee off. Look where it comes again!

Barnardo In the same figure like the king that's dead.

Marcellus Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.

Barnardo Looks a' not like the king? Mark it, Horatio.

Horatio Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder.

Barnardo It would be spoke to.

Marcellus Question it, Horatio.

Horatio What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,  
Together with that fair and warlike form  
In which the majesty of buried Denmark  
Did sometimes march? By heaven, I charge thee speak!

Marcellus It is offended.

Barnardo See, it stalks away.

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

**Exit GHOST.**

Marcellus 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Barnardo How now, Horatio? You tremble and look pale.  
Is not this something more than fantasy?  
What think you on't?

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

Marcellus Is it not like the king?

Horatio As thou art to thyself.  
Such was the very armour he had on  
When he the ambitious Norway combated;  
So frowned he once when in an angry parle  
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.  
'Tis strange.

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

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

Marcellus Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,  
Why this same strict and most observant watch  
So nightly toils the subject of the land,  
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,  
And foreign mart for implements of war,  
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task  
Does not divide the Sunday from the week;

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

What might be toward that this sweaty haste  
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:  
Who is't that can inform me?

Horatio                   That can I;  
At least, the whisper goes so: our last king,  
Whose image even but now appeared to us,  
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,  
Thereto pricked on by a most emulate pride,  
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet -  
For so this side of our known world esteemed him -  
Did slay this Fortinbras, who, by a sealed compact  
Well ratified by law and heraldry,  
Did forfeit with his life all those his lands  
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror;  
Against the which a moiety competent  
Was gaged by our king, which had returned  
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,  
Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same cov'nant  
And carriage of the article designed,  
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,  
Of unimproved metal hot and full,  
Hath, in the skirts of Norway here and there,  
Sharked up a list of lawless resolute,  
For food and diet, to some enterprise  
That hath a stomach in't, which is no other -  
As it doth well appear unto our state -  
But to recover of us, by strong hand  
And terms compulsory, those foresaid lands  
So by his father lost; and this, I take it,  
Is the main motive of our preparations,  
The source of this our watch, and the chief head  
Of this posthaste and rummage in the land.

Barnardo               I think it be no other but e'en so.  
Well may it sort that this portentous figure  
Comes armed through our watch, so like the king  
That was and is the question of these wars.

Horatio                A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.  
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,  
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead  
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;  
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,  
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star,  
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,  
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse;  
And even the like precurse of feared events,  
As harbingers preceding still the fates  
And prologue to the omen coming on,  
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
Unto our climatures and countrymen.

Re-enter GHOST.

But soft, behold! Lo where it comes again!  
I'll cross it though it blast me. Stay, illusion.  
[GHOST spreads its arms]

If thou hast any sound or use of voice,  
Speak to me.  
If there be any good thing to be done  
That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,  
Speak to me.  
If thou art privy to thy country's fate -  
Which happily foreknowing may avoid -  
O, speak.  
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life  
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

For which, they say, your spirits oft walk in death,  
Speak of it, stay and speak!  
[The cock crows]

Stop it, Marcellus.

Marcellus            Shall I strike it with my partisan?

Horatio             Do, if it will not stand.

Barnardo           'Tis here!

Horatio             'Tis here!

Marcellus          'Tis gone!

**Exit GHOST.**

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.

Barnardo           It was about to speak when the cock crew.

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

Marcellus          It faded on the crowing of the cock.  
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes  
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,  
The bird of dawning singeth all night long,  
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad,  
The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,  
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,  
So hallowed and so gracious is that time.

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

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

**Exeunt**

**Scene 2. A Room of State in the Castle.**

[Flourish]

Enter Claudius KING of Denmark, Gertrude the QUEEN, HAMLET dressed in black, POLONIUS, LAERTES, OPHELIA, VOLTEMAND, CORNELIUS, and LORDS attending.

King                Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
The memory be green, and that it us befitted

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom  
To be contracted in one brow of woe;  
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature  
That we with wisest sorrow think on him  
Together with remembrance of ourselves.  
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,  
Th' imperial jointress to this warlike state,  
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,  
With one auspicious and one dropping eye,  
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,  
Taken to wife; nor have we herein barred  
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.  
Now follows that you know young Fortinbras,  
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,  
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death  
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,  
Co-leagued with the dream of his advantage,  
He hath not failed to pester us with message  
Importing the surrender of those lands  
Lost by his father, with all bands of law,  
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.  
Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting,  
Thus much the business is: we have here writ  
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,  
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears  
Of this his nephew's purpose, to suppress  
His further gait herein, in that the levies,  
The lists, and full proportions, are all made  
Out of his subject; and we here dispatch  
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltemand,  
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,  
Giving to you no further personal power  
To business with the king more than the scope  
Of these dilated articles allow.  
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

Voltemand &

Cornelius      In that and all things will we show our duty.

King

We doubt it nothing; heartily farewell.

**Exeunt** VOLTEMAND and CORNELIUS.

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?  
You told us of some suit. What is't, Laertes?  
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane  
And lose your voice. What wouldst thou beg, Laertes,  
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?  
The head is not more native to the heart,  
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,  
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.  
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

Laertes

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

King

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

Polonius

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

King

Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

And thy best graces spend it at thy will!  
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son -

- Hamlet [Aside] A little more than kin, and less than kind.
- King How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
- Hamlet Not so, my lord. I am too much i'th' sun.
- Queen 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 father in the dust.  
Thou know'st 'tis common: all that lives must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity.
- Hamlet Ay, madam, it is common.
- Queen If it be,  
Why seems it so particular with thee?
- Hamlet Seems, madam? Nay, it is, I know not 'seems'.  
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,  
Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief,  
That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,  
For they are actions that a man might play;  
But I have that within which passeth show,  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.
- King 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,  
To give these mourning duties to your father;  
But you must know, your father lost a father,  
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound  
In filial obligation for some term  
To do obsequious sorrow. But to persevere  
In obstinate condolement is a course  
Of impious stubbornness, 'tis unmanly grief,  
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,  
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,  
An understanding simple and unschooled;  
For what we know must be and is as common  
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,  
Why should we in our peevish opposition  
Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven,  
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,  
To reason most absurd, whose common theme  
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried  
From the first corpse till he that died today,  
'This must be so.' We pray you, throw to earth  
This unprevailing woe, and think of us  
As of a father; for let the world take note  
You are the most immediate to our throne,  
And with no less nobility of love  
Than that which dearest father bears his son  
Do I impart toward you. For your intent  
In going back to school in Wittenberg,  
It is most retrograde to our desire,  
And we beseech you, bend you to remain  
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,  
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.
- Queen Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet.  
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.
- Hamlet I shall in all my best obey you, madam.
- King Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;  
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet  
Sits smiling to my heart, in grace whereof,  
No jocund health that Denmark drinks today  
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,  
And the king's rouse the heavens shall bruit again,  
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.  
[Flourish]

Exeunt all except HAMLET.

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

**Enter** HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BARNARDO.

Horatio            Hail to your lordship!

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

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

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

Marcellus        My good lord.

Hamlet            I am very glad to see you. [To BARNARDO] Good even, sir.  
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Horatio            A truant disposition, good my lord.

Hamlet            I would not hear your enemy say so,  
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence  
To make it truster of your own report  
Against yourself. I know you are no truant.  
But what is your affair in Elsinore?  
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

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

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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

Horatio Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.

Hamlet Thrift, thrift, Horatio. The funeral baked meats  
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.  
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven  
Ere I had seen that day, Horatio.  
My father, methinks I see my father.

Horatio Where, my lord?

Hamlet In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Horatio I saw him once. He was a goodly king.

Hamlet He was a man. Take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again.

Horatio My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Hamlet Saw? Who?

Horatio My lord, the king your father.

Hamlet The king my father!

Horatio Season your admiration for a while  
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,  
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,  
This marvel to you.

Hamlet For God's love, let me hear.

Horatio Two nights together had these gentlemen,  
Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch,  
In the dead waste and middle of the night  
Been thus encountered. A figure like your father,  
Armed at points exactly, cap-a-pe,  
Appears before them, and with solemn march  
Goes slow and stately by them. Thrice he walked  
By their oppressed and fear-surprised eyes,  
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distilled  
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,  
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me  
In dreadful secrecy impart they did,  
And I with them the third night kept the watch;  
Where, as they had delivered, both in time,  
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,  
The apparition comes. I knew your father;  
These hands are not more like.

Hamlet But where was this?

Marcellus My lord, upon the platform where we watched.

Hamlet Did you not speak to it?

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

Hamlet 'Tis very strange.

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

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Hamlet                   Indeed, indeed, sirs; but this troubles me.  
Hold you the watch tonight?

Barnardo &  
                                  Marcellus        We do, my lord.

Hamlet                   Armed, say you?

Barnardo &  
                                  Marcellus        Armed, my lord.

Hamlet                   From top to toe?

Barnardo &  
                                  Marcellus        My lord, from head to foot.

Hamlet                   Then saw you not his face.

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

Hamlet                   What looked he? Frowningly?

Horatio                  A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

Hamlet                   Pale or red?

Horatio                  Nay, very pale.

Hamlet                   And fixed his eyes upon you?

Horatio                  Most constantly.

Hamlet                   I would I had been there.

Horatio                  It would have much amazed you.

Hamlet                   Very like, very like. Stayed it long?

Horatio                  While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

Barnardo &  
                                  Marcellus        Longer, longer.

Horatio                  Not when I saw't.

Hamlet                   His beard was grizzled, no?

Horatio                  It was as I have seen it in his life,  
A sable silvered.

Hamlet                   I will watch tonight;  
Perchance 'twill walk again.

Horatio                  I warrant you it will.

Hamlet                   If it assume my noble father's person,  
I'll speak to it though hell itself should gape  
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,  
If you have hitherto concealed this sight,  
Let it be tenable in your silence still,  
And whatsoever else shall hap tonight,  
Give it an understanding but no tongue.  
I will requite your loves. So, fare you well.  
Upon the platform 'twixt eleven and twelve  
I'll visit you.

All                        Our duty to your honour.

Hamlet                   Your loves, as mine to you. Farewell.

**Exeunt** all but HAMLET.

My father's spirit in arms! All is not well.  
I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come.  
Till then sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will rise,

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

**Exit**

### Scene 3. A Room in Polonius' House.

**Enter** LAERTES and OPHELIA.

Laertes            My necessaries are embarked. 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 his 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.  
                          For nature crescent does not grow alone  
                          In thews and bulks, but as this temple waxes  
                          The inward service of the mind and soul  
                          Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,  
                          And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch  
                          The virtue of his will; but you must fear,  
                          His greatness weighed, his will is not his own,  
                          For he himself is subject to his birth;  
                          He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
                          Carve for himself, for on his choice depends  
                          The sanity and health of the whole state;  
                          And therefore must his choice be circumscribed  
                          Unto the voice and yielding of that body  
                          Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,  
                          It fits your wisdom so far to believe it  
                          As he in his particular act and place  
                          May give his saying deed; which is no further  
                          Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.  
                          Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,  
                          If with too credent ear you list his songs,  
                          Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open  
                          To his unmastered importunity.  
                          Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister;  
                          And keep you in the rear of your affection,  
                          Out of the shot and danger of desire.  
                          The chariest maid is prodigal enough  
                          If she unmask her beauty to the moon.  
                          Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes;  
                          The canker galls the infants of the spring  
                          Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,  
                          And in the morn and liquid dew of youth  
                          Contagious blastments are most imminent.  
                          Be wary then; best safety lies in fear;  
                          Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

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

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

And reck's not his own rede.

Laertes O, fear me not.  
I stay too long.

**Enter** POLONIUS.

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

Polonius Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!  
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,  
And you are stayed for. There, my blessing with thee,  
And these few precepts in thy memory

Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.  
Be thou familiar but by no means vulgar.  
The 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-hatched unfledged courage. Beware  
Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,  
Bear't that th' opposed may beware of thee.  
Give every man thine ear but few thy voice.  
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.  
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
But not expressed in fancy; rich, not gaudy,  
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,  
And they in France of the best rank and station  
Are of all most select and generous chief in that.  
Neither a borrower nor a lender be,  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
This above all - to thine own self be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!

Laertes Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Polonius The time invites you. Go, your servants tend.

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

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

Laertes Farewell.

**Exit**

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

Ophelia So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

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

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

Polonius Affection! Pooh! - you speak like a green girl

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.  
Do you believe his `tenders' as you call them?

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

Polonius Marry, I'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 lord, he 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 his speech, my lord,  
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Polonius Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,  
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul  
Lends the tongue vows. These blazes, daughter,  
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both  
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,  
You must not take for fire. From this time  
Be something scanter of your maiden presence,  
Set your entreatments at a higher rate  
Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,  
Believe so much in him, that he is young,  
And with a larger tether may he walk  
Than may be given you. In few, Ophelia,  
Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers,  
Not of that dye which their investments show,  
But mere implorators of unholy suits,  
Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds  
The better to beguile. This is for all:  
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth  
Have you so slander any moment leisure  
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.  
Look to't, I charge you. Come your ways.

Ophelia I shall obey, my lord.

**Exeunt**

### Scene 4. The Platform.

**Enter** HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.

Hamlet The air bites shrewdly, it is very cold.

Horatio It is a nipping and an eager air.

Hamlet What hour now?

Horatio I think it lacks of twelve.

Marcellus No, it is struck.

Horatio Indeed? I heard it not. It then draws near the season  
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.  
[A flourish of trumpets, and two pieces go off]

What does this mean, my lord?

Hamlet The king doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,  
Keeps wassail, and the swagg'ring up-spring reels,  
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out  
The triumph of his pledge.

Horatio Is it a custom?

Hamlet Ay, marry, is't,  
But to my mind, though I am native here  
And to the manner born, it is a custom  
More honoured in the breach than the observance.  
This heavy-headed revel east and west  
Makes us traduced, and taxed of other nations.  
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase  
Soil our addition; and indeed it takes  
From our achievements, though performed at height,  
The pith and marrow of our attribute.  
So, oft it chances in particular men  
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
As in their birth, wherein they are not guilty,  
Since nature cannot choose his origin, By their o'ergrowth of some complex-  
ion,  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens  
The form of plausible manners, that these men,  
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
Being nature's livery or fortune's star,  
His virtues else, be they as pure as grace,  
As infinite as man may undergo,  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault. The dram of evil  
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt  
To his own scandal.

**Enter GHOST.**

Horatio Look, my lord, it comes.

Hamlet Angels and ministers of grace defend us!  
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,  
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape  
That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,  
King, father, royal Dane. O, answer me!  
Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell  
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,  
Have burst their cerements? Why the sepulchre,  
Wherein we saw thee quietly enurned,  
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws  
To cast thee up again? What may this mean,  
That thou, dead corpse, again in complete steel,  
Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,  
Making night hideous, and we fools of nature  
So horridly to shake our disposition  
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?  
Say, why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?  
[GHOST beckons to HAMLET]

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

Marcellus Look with what courteous action  
It waves you to a more 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 lord.

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Hamlet                   Why, what should be the fear?  
I do not set my life at a pin's fee,  
And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?  
[GHOST beckons to HAMLET]  
It waves me forth again, I'll follow it.

Horatio                   What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,  
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff  
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,  
And there assume some other horrible form  
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,  
And draw you into madness? Think of it.  
The very place puts toys of desperation,  
Without more motive, into every brain  
That looks so many fathoms to the sea  
And hears it roar beneath.  
[GHOST beckons to HAMLET]

Hamlet                   It waves me still. [To the GHOST] Go on, I'll follow thee.

Marcellus               You shall not go, my lord.

Hamlet                   Hold off your hands!

Horatio                   Be ruled, you shall not go.

Hamlet                   My fate cries out,  
And makes each petty arture in this body  
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.  
[GHOST beckons to HAMLET]  
Still am I called. Unhand me, gentlemen.  
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!  
I say, away. [To GHOST] Go on, I'll follow thee.

**Exeunt** GHOST and HAMLET.

Horatio                   He waxes desperate with imagination.

Marcellus               Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

Horatio                   Have after. To what issue will this come?

Marcellus               Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Horatio                   Heaven will direct it.

Marcellus               Nay, let's follow him.

**Exeunt**

## Scene 5. Another Part of the Platform.

**Enter** GHOST and HAMLET.

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

Ghost                   Mark me.

Hamlet                   I will.

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

Hamlet                   Alas, poor ghost!

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

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Hamlet Speak, I am bound to hear.

Ghost So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

Hamlet What?

Ghost I am thy father's spirit,  
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,  
And for the day confined to fast in fires,  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison-house  
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word  
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres,  
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,  
And each particular hair to stand an end  
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.  
But this eternal blazon must not be  
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!  
If thou didst ever thy dear father love -

Hamlet O God!

Ghost Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

Hamlet Murder!

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

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

Ghost I find thee apt;  
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed  
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf  
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:  
'Tis given out that, sleeping in mine orchard  
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark  
Is by a forged process of my death  
Rankly abused. But know, thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown.

Hamlet O my prophetic soul!  
Mine uncle?

Ghost Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts -  
O wicked wit and gifts that have the power  
So to seduce! - won to his shameful lust  
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.  
O Hamlet, what a falling off was there  
From me, whose love was of that dignity  
That it went hand in hand even with the vow  
I made to her in marriage, and to decline  
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor  
To those of mine.  
But virtue, as it never will be moved,  
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,  
So lust, though to a radiant angel linked,  
Will sate itself in a celestial bed  
And prey on garbage.  
But soft! - methinks I scent the morning air.  
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,  
My custom always in the afternoon,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole  
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,  
And in the porches of mine 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,  
 And with a sudden vigour it doth posset  
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,  
 The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine,  
 And a most instant tetter barked about,  
 Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,  
 All my smooth body.  
 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand  
 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatched,  
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,  
 Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled,  
 No reck'ning made, but sent to my account  
 With all my imperfections on my head.  
 O, horrible! O, horrible! Most horrible!  
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.  
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
 A couch for luxury and damned incest.  
 But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,  
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
 Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven,  
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge  
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once.  
 The glowworm shows the matin to be near,  
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire.  
 Adieu, adieu, adieu! 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,  
 Unmixed with baser matter. Yes, by heaven!  
 O most pernicious woman!  
 O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!  
 My tables - meet it is I set it down  
 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain.  
 At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark.  
 [Writing]  
 So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;  
 It is `Adieu, adieu, remember me.'  
 I have sworn't.

Horatio                    [Calling within] My lord, my lord.

Marcellus                [Calling within] Lord Hamlet.

**Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.**

Horatio                    Heaven secure him.

Hamlet                    So be it!

Marcellus                [Calling] Illo, ho, ho, my lord.

Hamlet                    Hillo, ho, ho, boy. Come, bird, come.

Marcellus                How is't, my noble lord?

Horatio                    What news, my lord?

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Hamlet O, wonderful!

Horatio Good my lord, tell it.

Hamlet No, you will reveal it.

Horatio Not I, my lord, by heaven.

Marcellus Nor I, my lord.

Hamlet How say you, then; would heart of man once think it?  
But you'll be secret?

Horatio & Marcellus Ay, by heaven, my lord.

Hamlet There's never a villain dwelling in all Denmark  
But he's an arrant knave.

Horatio There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave  
To tell us this.

Hamlet Why, right, you are i'th' right;  
And so, without more circumstance at all,  
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part,  
You as your business and desire shall point you -  
For every man hath business and desire,  
Such as it is - and for mine own poor part,  
Look you, I'll go pray.

Horatio These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

Hamlet I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;  
Yes, faith, heartily.

Horatio There's no offence, my lord.

Hamlet Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,  
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,  
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you.  
For your desire to know what is between us,  
O'ermaster 't as you may. And now, good friends,  
As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,  
Give me one poor request.

Horatio What is't, my lord? We will.

Hamlet Never make known what you have seen tonight.

Horatio & Marcellus My lord, we will not.

Hamlet Nay, but swear't.

Horatio In faith, my lord, not I.

Marcellus Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Hamlet Upon my sword.

Marcellus We have sworn, my lord, already.

Hamlet Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost [Cries under the stage] Swear.

Hamlet Ah, ha, boy, sayst thou so? Art thou there, truepenny?  
Come on, you hear this fellow in the cellarage;  
Consent to swear.

Horatio Propose the oath, my lord.

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

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Ghost Swear.  
[They swear]

Hamlet Hic et ubique? Then we'll shift our ground.  
Come hither, gentlemen,  
And lay your hands again upon my sword.  
Swear by my sword,  
Never to speak of this that you have heard.

Ghost Swear by his sword.  
[They swear]

Hamlet Well said, old mole! Canst work i'th' earth so fast?  
A worthy pioneer! Once more remove, good friends.

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

Hamlet And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.  
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come,  
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,  
How strange or odd 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 encumbered thus, or this headshake,  
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase  
As 'Well, well, we know' or 'We could, an if we would',  
Or 'If we list to speak' or 'There be, an if they might',  
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note  
That you know aught of me. This not to do,  
So grace and mercy at your most need help you, swear.

Ghost Swear.  
[They swear]

Hamlet Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! So, gentlemen,  
With all my love I do commend me to you,  
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is  
May do t' express his love and friending to you,  
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together,  
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.  
The time is out of joint. O cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right!  
Nay, come, let's go together.

**Exeunt**

## ACT 2.

### Scene 1. A Room in Polonius' House.

**Enter** POLONIUS and REYNALDO.

Polonius            Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

Reynaldo            I will, my lord.

Polonius            You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,  
Before you visit him, to make inquire  
Of his behaviour.

Reynaldo            My lord, I did intend it.

Polonius            Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir,  
Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris,  
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,  
What company, at what expense; and finding  
By this encompassment and drift of question  
That they do know my son, come you more nearer  
Than your particular demands will touch it.  
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him,  
As thus: 'I know his father and his friends,  
And in part him'. Do you mark this, Reynaldo?

Reynaldo            Ay, very well, my lord.

Polonius            'And in part him, but', you may say, 'not well;  
But if't be he I mean, he's very wild,  
Addicted so and so'; and there put on him  
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank  
As may dishonour him, take heed of that;  
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips  
As are companions noted and most known  
To youth and liberty.

Reynaldo            As gaming, my lord.

Polonius            Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing,  
Quarrelling, drabbing - you may go so far.

Reynaldo            My lord, that would dishonour him.

Polonius            Faith, no, as you may season it in the charge.  
You must not put another scandal on him,  
That he is open to incontinency;  
That's not my meaning, but breathe his faults so quaintly  
That they may seem the taints of liberty,  
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,  
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,  
Of general assault.

Reynaldo            But, my good lord -

Polonius            Wherefore should you do this?

Reynaldo            Ay, my lord,  
I would know that.

Polonius            Marry, sir, here's my drift,  
And I believe it is a fetch of warrant:  
You laying these slight sullies on my son,  
As 'twere a thing a little soiled i'th' working,  
Mark you, your party in converse, him you would sound,  
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured  
He closes with you in this consequence:  
'Good sir', or so, or 'friend', or 'gentleman',  
According to the phrase or the addition  
Of man and country.

- Reynaldo Very good, my lord.
- Polonius And then, sir, does a' this - a' does - what was I about to say? By the mass, I was about to say something. Where did I leave?
- Reynaldo At 'closes in the consequence', at 'friend or so', and 'gentleman'.
- Polonius At 'closes in the consequence' - ay, marry;  
He closes with you thus: 'I know the gentleman,  
I saw him yesterday, or t'other day,  
Or then, or then, with such, or such; and, as you say,  
There was a' gaming, there o'ertook in's rouse,  
There falling out at tennis', or perchance  
'I saw him enter such a house of sale',  
Videlicet, a brothel, or so forth. See you now,  
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth;  
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,  
With windlasses and with assays of bias,  
By indirections find directions out.  
So, by my former lecture and advice,  
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?
- Reynaldo My lord, I have.
- Polonius God-buy-ye; fare ye well.
- Reynaldo Good my lord!
- Polonius Observe his inclination in yourself.
- Reynaldo I shall, my lord.
- Polonius And let him ply his music.
- Reynaldo Well, my lord.
- Polonius Farewell!

**Exit REYNALDO.**

**Enter OPHELIA.**

- How now, Ophelia! What's the matter?
- Ophelia Alas, my lord, I have been so affrighted.
- Polonius With what, i'th' name of God?
- Ophelia My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,  
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,  
No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,  
Ungartered and down-gyved to his ankle,  
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,  
And with a look so piteous in purport  
As if he had been loosed out of hell  
To speak of horrors, he comes before me.
- Polonius Mad for thy love?
- Ophelia My lord, I do not know,  
But truly I do fear it.
- Polonius What said he?
- Ophelia He took me by the wrist and held me hard;  
Then goes he to the length of all his arm,  
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow  
He falls to such perusal of my face

As a' would draw it. Long stayed he so.  
 At last, a little shaking of mine arm,  
 And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
 He raised a sigh so piteous and profound  
 As it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
 And end his being. That done, he lets me go,  
 And with his head over his shoulder turned,  
 He seemed to find his way without his eyes,  
 For out o' doors he went without their help,  
 And to the last bended their light on me.

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

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

Polonius            That hath made him mad.  
 I am sorry that with better heed and judgement  
 I had not quoted him. I feared he did but trifle  
 And meant to wreck thee; but beshrew my jealousy!  
 By heaven, it is as proper to our age  
 To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions  
 As it is common for the younger sort  
 To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king.  
 This must be known, which, being kept close, might move  
 More grief to hide than hate to utter love.  
 Come.

**Exeunt**

## Scene 2. A Room in the Castle.

[Flourish]

Enter KING and QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, with OTHERS.

King                Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.  
 Moreover that we much did long to see you,  
 The need we have to use you did provoke  
 Our hasty sending. Something have you heard  
 Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it,  
 Since nor th' exterior nor the inward man  
 Resembles that it was. What it should be,  
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him  
 So much from th' understanding of himself,  
 I cannot dream of. I entreat you both  
 That, being of so young days brought up with him  
 And since so neighboured to his youth and haviour,  
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court  
 Some little time, so by your companies  
 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,  
 So much as from occasion you may glean,  
 Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus  
 That, opened, lies within our remedy.

Queen              Good gentlemen, he hath much talked of you,  
 And sure I am two men there is not living  
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you  
 To show us so much gentry and good will

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

As to expend your time with us a while  
For the supply and profit of our hope,  
Your visitation shall receive such thanks  
As fits a king's remembrance.

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

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

King              Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

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

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

Queen            Ay, amen!

**Exeunt** ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and some OTHERS.

**Enter** POLONIUS.

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

King              Thou still hast been the father of good news.

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

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

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

King              Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

**Exit** POLONIUS.

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

Queen            I doubt it is no other but the main,  
His father's death and our o'erhasty marriage.

King              Well, we shall sift him.

Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTEMAND and CORNELIUS.

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

Voltemand       Most fair return of greetings and desires.  
Upon our first he sent out to suppress  
His nephew's levies, which to him appeared  
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;  
But better looked into, he truly found  
It was against your highness; whereat grieved  
That so his sickness, age, and impotence  
Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

On Fortinbras, which he, in brief, obeys,  
Receives rebuke from Norway, and, in fine,  
Makes vow before his uncle never more  
To give th' assay of arms against your majesty.  
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,  
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee  
And his commission to employ those soldiers  
So levied as before, against the Polack,  
With an entreaty, herein further shown,  
[Giving a paper]  
That it might please you to give quiet pass  
Through your dominions for this enterprise,  
On such regards of safety and allowance  
As therein are set down.

King                    It likes us well,  
And at our more considered time we'll read,  
Answer, and think upon this business.  
Meantime, we thank you for your well-took labour.  
Go to your rest, at night we'll feast together.  
Most welcome home.

**Exeunt** VOLTEMAND and CORNELIUS.

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

Queen                    More matter with less art.

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

[Reads] "To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia" -

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase, 'beautified' is a vile phrase. But you shall hear  
-

"These in her excellent white bosom, these".

Queen                    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, whilst this machine is to him,

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HAMLET.”

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

King But how hath she  
Received his love?

Polonius What do you think of me?

King As of a man faithful and honourable.

Polonius I would fain prove so; but what might you think,  
When I had seen this hot love on the wing,  
As I perceived it, I must tell you that,  
Before my daughter told me, what might you,  
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,  
If I had played the desk or table-book,  
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,  
Or looked upon this love with idle sight,  
What might you think? No, I went round to work,  
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:  
‘Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy star;  
This must not be’. And then I precepts gave her,  
That she should lock herself from his resort,  
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens;  
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice,  
And he, repelled - a short tale to make -  
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,  
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,  
Thence to a lightness; and by this declension  
Into the madness wherein now he raves,  
And all we mourn for.

King Do you think ‘tis this?

Queen It may be; very like.

Polonius Hath there been such a time - I’d fain know that -  
That I have positively said “‘Tis so”  
When it proved otherwise?

King Not that I know.

Polonius Take this from this [Indicating his head and shoulder]  
if this be otherwise.  
If circumstances lead me, I will find  
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed  
Within the centre.

King How may we try it further?

Polonius You know sometimes he walks for hours together  
Here in the lobby.

Queen So he does indeed.

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

King We will try it.

**Enter** HAMLET, reading a book.

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

Polonius Away, I do beseech you both, away.

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

**Exeunt** KING and QUEEN.

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

Hamlet Well, God-a-mercy.

Polonius Do you know me, my lord?

Hamlet Excellent well, you are a fishmonger.

Polonius Not I, my lord.

Hamlet Then I would you were so honest a man.

Polonius Honest, my lord?

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

Polonius That's very true, my lord.

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

Polonius I have, my lord.

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

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

Hamlet Words, words, words.

Polonius What is the matter, my lord?

Hamlet Between who?

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

Hamlet Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams. All which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir, shall 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.  
[To HAMLET] Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Hamlet Into my grave.

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

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

Polonius Fare you well, my lord.  
[Going]

Hamlet These tedious old fools!

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Polonius You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is.

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Rosencrantz [To POLONIUS] God save you, sir.

**Exit POLONIUS.**

Guildenstern Mine honoured lord!

Rosencrantz My most dear lord!

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

Rosencrantz As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guildenstern Happy, in that we are not overhappy;  
On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Hamlet Nor the soles of her shoe?

Rosencrantz Neither, my lord.

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

Guildenstern Faith, her privates we.

Hamlet In the secret parts of Fortune? O, most true, she is a strumpet. What news?

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

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

Guildenstern Prison, my lord?

Hamlet Denmark's a prison.

Rosencrantz Then is the world one.

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

Rosencrantz We think not so, my lord.

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

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

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

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

Hamlet A dream itself is but a shadow.

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

Hamlet Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to th' court? For, by my fay, I cannot reason.

Rosencrantz & Guildenstern We'll wait upon you.

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

Rosencrantz To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

Hamlet Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks, but I thank you; and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come, deal justly with me. Come, come. Nay, speak.

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Guildenstern      What should we say, my lord?  
 Hamlet              Why, anything - but to th' purpose. You were sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour. I know the good king and queen have sent for you.  
 Rosencrantz        To what end, my lord?  
 Hamlet              That you must teach me. But let me conjure you by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for or no.  
 Rosencrantz        [Aside to GUILDENSTERN] What say you?  
 Hamlet              [Aside] Nay then, I have an eye of you. If you love me, hold not off.  
 Guildenstern       My lord, we were sent for.  
 Hamlet              I will tell you why; 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'er-hanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god - the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me, no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.  
 Rosencrantz        My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.  
 Hamlet              Why did ye laugh then, when I said `man delights not me`?  
 Rosencrantz        To think, my lord, if you delight not in man what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you. We coted them on the way; and hither are they coming to offer you service.  
 Hamlet              He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle a'th' sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't. What players are they?  
 Rosencrantz        Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.  
 Hamlet              How chances it they travel? Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.  
 Rosencrantz        I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.  
 Hamlet              Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?  
 Rosencrantz        No, indeed, are they not.  
 Hamlet              How comes it? Do they grow rusty?  
 Rosencrantz        Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace; but there is, sir, an eyrie of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question and are most tyrannically clapped for't. These are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages - so they call them - that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and dare scarce come thither.  
 Hamlet              What, are they children? Who maintains 'em? How are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players - as it is most like, if their means are no better - their writers do them wrong to make them exclaim against their own succession?  
 Rosencrantz        Faith, there has been much to-do on both sides, and the nation holds it no sin to

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tarre them to controversy. There was for a while no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

- Hamlet Is't possible?
- Guildenstern O, there has been much throwing about of brains.
- Hamlet Do the boys carry it away?
- Rosencrantz Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.
- Hamlet It is not very strange; for my uncle is King of Denmark, and those that would make mouths at him while my father lived give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats apiece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.  
[Flourish of trumpets within]
- Guildenstern There are the players.
- Hamlet Gentlemen, 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 lord?
- Hamlet I am but mad north-north-west; when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.
- Re-enter POLONIUS.
- Polonius Well be with you, gentlemen.
- Hamlet Hark you, Guildenstern, and you too - at each ear a hearer - that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling clouts.
- Rosencrantz Haply he's the second time come to them, for they say an old man is twice a child.
- Hamlet I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. - You say right, sir, a' Monday morning; 'twas then indeed.
- Polonius My lord, I have news to tell you.
- Hamlet My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome -
- Polonius The actors are come hither, my lord.
- Hamlet Buzz, buzz.
- Polonius Upon my 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!
- Polonius What a treasure had he, my lord?
- Hamlet Why,  
'One fair daughter, and no more,  
The which he loved passing well'.
- Polonius [Aside] Still on my daughter.
- Hamlet Am I not i'th' right, old Jephthah?
- Polonius If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.
- Hamlet Nay, that follows not.

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Polonius           What follows then, my lord?

Hamlet            Why,  
                  `As by lot, God wot,'  
  
                  and then you know,  
  
                  `It came to pass as most like it was' -

The first row of the pious chanson will show you more, for look where my abridgement comes.

**Enter THE PLAYERS.**

You are welcome, masters, welcome all. I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old friend! Thy face is valanced since I saw thee last; com'st thou to beard me in Denmark? What, my young lady and mistress! By'r lady, your ladyship is nearer heaven than when I saw you last by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at anything we see. We'll have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your quality. Come, a passionate speech.

1st Player        What speech, my good lord?

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

"The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian beast" -

'tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus -

"The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,  
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble  
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,  
Hath now this dread and black complexion smeared  
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot  
Now is he total gules, horridly tricked  
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,  
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,  
That lend a tyrannous and a damned light  
To their lord's murder. Roasted in wrath and fire,  
And thus o'ersized with coagulate gore,  
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus  
Old grandsire Priam seeks."

So, proceed you.

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

1st Player        "Anon he finds him  
Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,  
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,  
Repugnant to command. Unequal matched,  
Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide;  
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword  
Th' unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,  
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top  
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash  
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear; for lo, his sword,  
Which was declining on the milky head  
Of reverend Priam, seemed i'th' air to stick;  
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,

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And, like a neutral to his will and matter,  
 Did nothing.  
 But as we often see against some storm  
 A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,  
 The bold winds speechless, and the orb below  
 As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder  
 Doth rend the region; so, after Pyrrhus' pause,  
 A roused vengeance sets him new a-work;  
 And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall  
 On Mars's armour, forged for proof eterne,  
 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
 Now falls on Priam.  
 Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods  
 In general synod take away her power,  
 Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,  
 And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven  
 As low as to the fiends!"

- Polonius This is too long.
- Hamlet It shall to th' barber's, with your beard. Prithee say on. He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps. Say on, come to Hecuba.
- 1st Player "But who, O who had seen the mobled queen - "
- Hamlet `The mobled queen?'
- Polonius That's good, `mobled queen' is good.
- 1st Player "Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames  
 With bisson rheum, a clout upon that head  
 Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,  
 About her lank and all o'erteemed loins,  
 A blanket, in th' alarm of fear caught up: -  
 Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steeped  
 Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced;  
 But if the gods themselves did see her then,  
 When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport  
 In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,  
 The instant burst of 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, whe'er he has not turned his colour, and has tears in's eyes. Prithee no more.
- Hamlet 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon. [To POLONIUS] Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear? - let them be well used, for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time. After your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.
- Polonius My lord, I will use them according to their desert.
- Hamlet God's bodykins, man, much better. Use every man after his desert, and who 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.
- Exit**
- Hamlet Follow him, friends. We'll hear a play tomorrow.  
 [To 1st PLAYER] Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the Murder of Gonzago?
- 1st Player Ay, my lord.
- Hamlet We'll ha't tomorrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?
- 1st Player Ay, my lord.

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

**Exeunt** PLAYERS.

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

Rosencrantz            Good my lord!

**Exeunt** ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Hamlet                    Ay, so, God-buy to you. Now I am alone.  
O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!  
Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
That from her working all this visage waned,  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!  
For Hecuba!  
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,  
That he should weep for her? What would he do  
Had he the motive and the cue for passion  
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears  
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,  
Make mad the guilty, and appal the free,  
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed  
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,  
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak  
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,  
And can say nothing - no, not for a king  
Upon whose property and most dear life  
A damned defeat was made. Am I a coward?  
Who calls me villain, breaks my pate across,  
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face,  
Tweaks me by th' nose, gives me the lie i'th' throat  
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?  
Ha! 'Swounds, I should take it; for it cannot be  
But I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall  
To make oppression bitter, or ere this  
I should-a fatted all the region kites  
With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!  
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!  
O, vengeance!  
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,  
That I, the son of a dear father murdered,  
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
Must like a whore unpack my heart with words,  
And fall a-cursing like a very drab,  
A scullion! Fie upon't! Foh!  
About, my brains. Hum, I have heard  
That guilty creatures sitting at a play  
Have, by the very cunning of the scene,  
Been struck so to the soul that presently  
They have proclaimed their malefactions;  
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players  
Play something like the murder of my father  
Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks,  
I'll tent him to the quick. If he do blench,  
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen  
May be a devil, and the devil hath power  
T' assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps  
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,  
As he is very potent with such spirits,  
Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds  
More relative than this. The play's the thing  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

**Exit**

## ACT 3.

### Scene 1. A Room in the Castle.

**Enter** KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

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

Rosencrantz           He does confess he feels himself distracted,  
But from what cause a' will by no means speak.

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

Queen                   Did he receive you well?

Rosencrantz           Most like a gentleman.

Guildenstern           But with much forcing of his disposition.

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

Queen                   Did you assay him  
To any pastime?

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

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

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

Rosencrantz           We shall, my lord.

**Exeunt** ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

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

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

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To both your honours.

Ophelia Madam, I wish it may.

**Exit** QUEEN.

Polonius Ophelia, walk you here. - Gracious, so please you,  
We will bestow ourselves. - Read on this book,  
That show of such an exercise may colour  
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this:  
'Tis too much proved that with devotion's visage  
And pious action we do sugar o'er  
The devil himself.

King [Aside] O, 'tis too true!  
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience.  
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,  
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it  
Than is my deed to my most painted word.  
O heavy burden!

Polonius I hear him coming. Let's withdraw, my lord.

**Exeunt** KING and POLONIUS.

**Enter** HAMLET.

Hamlet To be, or not to be, that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles  
And by opposing end them. To die - to sleep, No more; and by a sleep to  
say we end  
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil  
Must give us pause. There's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life,  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? Who would these fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscovered country from whose bourn  
No 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 remembered.

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

Hamlet I humbly thank you, well, well, well.

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

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- Hamlet No, not I;  
I never gave you aught.
- Ophelia My honoured lord, you know right well you did,  
And with them words of so sweet breath composed  
As made these things more rich. Their perfume lost,  
Take these again; for to the noble mind  
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.  
There, my lord.
- Hamlet Ha, ha! Are you honest?
- Ophelia My lord?
- Hamlet Are you fair?
- Ophelia What means your lordship?
- Hamlet That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.
- Ophelia Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?
- Hamlet Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness. This was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.
- Ophelia Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.
- Hamlet You should not have believed me, for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it. I loved you not.
- Ophelia I was the more deceived.
- Hamlet Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth? We are arrant knaves, all. Believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?
- Ophelia At home, my lord.
- Hamlet Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool nowhere but in's own house. Farewell.
- Ophelia O, help him, you sweet heavens!
- Hamlet If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go, farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell.
- Ophelia O heavenly powers, restore him!
- Hamlet I have heard of your paintings, too, well enough. God hath given you one face and you make yourselves another. You jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. I say we will have no more marriage. Those that are married already - all but one - shall live, the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.
- Exit**
- Ophelia O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!  
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,  
Th' expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,  
Th' observed of all observers, quite, quite down!  
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,  
That sucked the honey of his music vows,

Now see that noble and most sovereign reason  
 Like sweet bells jangled out of time, and harsh,  
 That unmatched form and feature of blown youth  
 Blasted with ecstasy. O, woe is me,  
 T' have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Re-enter KING and POLONIUS.

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

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

King It shall be so:  
 Madness in great ones must not unwatched go.

**Exeunt**

## Scene 2. A Hall in the Castle.

**Enter** HAMLET and THREE of the PLAYERS.

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

1st Player I warrant your honour.

Hamlet Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for anything so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now, this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole the-

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atre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither having th' accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bel-lowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

1st Player I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

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

**Exeunt** PLAYERS.

**Enter** POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

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

Polonius And the queen too, and that presently.

Hamlet Bid the players make haste.

**Exit** POLONIUS.

Will you two help to hasten them?

Rosencrantz Ay, my lord.

**Exeunt** ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Hamlet What ho, Horatio!

**Enter** HORATIO.

Horatio Here, sweet lord, at your service.

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

Horatio O, my dear lord.

Hamlet Nay, do not think I flatter,  
For what advancement may I hope from thee  
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits  
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flattered?  
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,  
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee  
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?  
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,  
And could of men distinguish her election,  
Sh'ath sealed thee for herself, for thou hast been  
As one, in suff'ring all, that suffers nothing,  
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards  
Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and blest are those  
Whose blood and judgement are so well commedled  
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger  
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
As I do thee. Something too much of this.  
There is a play tonight before the king;  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
Which I have told thee of my father's death.  
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,  
Even with the very comment of thy soul  
Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt  
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,  
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,  
And my imaginations are as foul

As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;

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For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,  
And after we will both our judgements join  
In censure of his seeming.

- Horatio Well, my lord.  
If a' steal aught the whilst this play is playing,  
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.  
[Sound a flourish]
- Hamlet They are coming to the play. I must be idle.  
Get you a place.
- Danish march.  
Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDEN-  
STERN, and other LORDS attending, with the GUARD carrying torches.
- King How fares our cousin Hamlet?
- Hamlet Excellent, i'faith, of the chameleon's dish. I eat the air, promise-crammed. You  
cannot feed capons so.
- King I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine.
- Hamlet No, nor mine now. [To POLONIUS] My lord, you played once i'th' university, you  
say?
- Polonius That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.
- Hamlet What did you enact?
- Polonius I did enact Julius Caesar. I was killed i'th' Capitol; Brutus killed me.
- Hamlet It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. Be the players ready?
- Rosencrantz Ay, my lord, they stay upon your patience.
- Queen Come hither, my good Hamlet, sit by me.
- Hamlet No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.  
[Indicating OPHELIA]
- Polonius [Aside to the KING] O ho, do you mark that?
- Hamlet Lady, shall I lie in your lap?  
[Sitting at OPHELIA's feet]
- Ophelia No, my lord.
- Hamlet I mean my head upon your lap?
- Ophelia Ay, my lord.
- Hamlet Do you think I meant country matters?
- Ophelia I think nothing, my lord.
- Hamlet That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.
- Ophelia What is, my lord?
- Hamlet Nothing.
- Ophelia You are merry, my lord.
- Hamlet Who, I?
- Ophelia Ay, my lord.
- Hamlet O God, your only jig-maker! What should a man do but be merry? For look you  
how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within's two hours.
- Ophelia Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.
- Hamlet So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heav-  
ens! - die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great

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man's memory may outlive his life half a year. But, by'r lady, a' must build churches then, or else shall a' suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is 'For O, for O, the hobby-horse is forgot.'

Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters.

**Enter** a KING and a QUEEN, very lovingly, the QUEEN embracing him.  
She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him.  
He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck.  
He lies him down upon a bank of flowers.  
She, seeing him asleep, leaves him.

Anon comes in another MAN, takes off his crown, kisses it, pours poison in the sleeper's ears, and leaves him.

The QUEEN returns, finds the KING dead, and makes passionate action.  
The POISONER, with some two or three MUTES, comes in again, seeming to condole with her.

The dead body is carried away.

The POISONER woos the QUEEN with gifts.  
She seems harsh awhile, but in the end accepts his love.

**Exeunt**

Ophelia                   What means this, my lord?  
Hamlet                   Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.  
Ophelia                   Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

**Enter** PROLOGUE.

Hamlet                   We shall know by this fellow. The players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.  
Ophelia                   Will a' tell us what this show meant?  
Hamlet                   Ay, or any show that you will show him. Be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.  
Ophelia                   You are naught, you are naught. I'll mark the play.  
Prologue                For us and for our tragedy,  
                              Here stooping to your clemency,  
                              We beg your hearing patiently.

**Exit**

Hamlet                   Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?  
Ophelia                   'Tis brief, my lord.  
Hamlet                   As woman's love.

**Enter** the PLAYER KING and QUEEN.

Player King            Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round  
                              Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground,  
                              And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen  
                              About the world have times twelve thirties been  
                              Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands  
                              Unite commutual in most sacred bands.  
  
Player Queen            So many journeys may the sun and moon  
                              Make us again count o'er ere love be done.  
                              But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,  
                              So far from cheer and from your former state,  
                              That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,  
                              Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must;  
                              For women fear too much, even as they love,  
                              And women's fear and love hold quantity,  
                              In neither aught, or in extremity.  
                              Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know,

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And as my love is sized, my fear is so.  
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;  
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

- Player King Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too.  
My operant powers their functions leave to do;  
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,  
Honoured, beloved; and haply one as kind  
For husband shalt thou -
- Player Queen O confound the rest!  
Such love must needs be treason in my breast.  
In second husband let me be accurst;  
None wed the second but who killed the first.
- Hamlet [Aside] Wormwood, wormwood.
- Player Queen The instances that second marriage move  
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love.  
A second time I kill my husband dead,  
When second husband kisses me in bed.
- Player King I do believe you think what now you speak,  
But what we do determine, oft we break.  
Purpose is but the slave to memory,  
Of violent birth, but poor validity;  
Which now, the fruit unripe, sticks on the tree,  
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.  
Most necessary 'tis that we forget  
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt.  
What to ourselves in passion we propose,  
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.  
The violence of either grief or joy  
Their own enactures with themselves destroy.  
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;  
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.  
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange  
That even our loves should with our fortunes change:  
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,  
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.  
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies;  
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies.  
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;  
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,  
And who in want a hollow friend doth try  
Directly seasons him his enemy.  
But, orderly to end where I begun,  
Our wills and fates do so contrary run  
That our devices still are overthrown;  
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own.  
So think thou wilt no second husband wed;  
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.
- Player Queen Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light,  
Sport and repose lock from me day and night,  
To desperation turn my trust and hope,  
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope,  
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy  
Meet what I would have well, and it destroy,  
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,  
If, once a widow, ever I be a wife!
- Hamlet If she should break it now!
- Player King 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here a while;  
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile  
The tedious day with sleep.  
[Sleeps]
- Player Queen Sleep rock thy brain,  
And never come mischance between us twain.

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**Exit**

Hamlet [To QUEEN] Madam, how like you this play?  
Queen The lady doth protest too much, methinks.  
Hamlet O, but she'll keep her word.  
King Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in't?  
Hamlet No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence i'th' world.  
King What do you call the play?  
Hamlet The Mousetrap. Marry, how tropically! This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna. Gonzago is the duke's name, his wife, Baptista. You shall see anon. 'Tis a knavish piece of work, but what o' that? Your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not. Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

**Enter LUCIANUS.**

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.  
Ophelia You are as good as a chorus, my lord.  
Hamlet I could interpret between you and your love if I could see the puppets dallying.  
Ophelia You are keen, my lord, you are keen.  
Hamlet It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.  
Ophelia Still better, and worse.  
Hamlet So you mistake your husbands. [To LUCIANUS] Begin, murderer. Pox, leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.  
Lucianus Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;  
Confederate season, else no creature seeing;  
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,  
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,  
Thy natural magic and dire property  
On wholesome life usurps immediately.  
[Pours the poison into the sleeper's ear.]  
Hamlet A' poisons him i'th' garden for's estate. His name's Gonzago. The story is extant, and written in very choice Italian. You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.  
Ophelia The king rises.  
Hamlet What, frightened with false fire?  
Queen How fares my lord?  
Polonius Give o'er the play.  
King Give me some light. Away!  
Polonius Lights, lights, lights!

**Exeunt** all but HAMLET and HORATIO.

Hamlet Why, let the stricken deer go weep,  
The hart ungalled play;  
For some must watch, while some must sleep;  
So runs the world away.  
Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers - if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me - with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players?  
Horatio Half a share.  
Hamlet A whole one, I.

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For thou dost know, O Damon dear,  
This realm dismantled was  
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here  
A very, very - pacock.

Horatio            You might have rhymed.

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

Horatio            Very well, my lord.

Hamlet            Upon the talk of the poisoning?

Horatio            I did very well note him.

Hamlet            Ah, ha! Come, some music! Come, the recorders!  
For if the king like not the comedy,  
Why then, belike he likes it not, perdy.  
Come, some music!

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Guildenstern      Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Hamlet            Sir, a whole history.

Guildenstern      The king, sir -

Hamlet            Ay, sir, what of him?

Guildenstern      Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

Hamlet            With drink, sir?

Guildenstern      No, my lord, rather with choler.

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

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

Hamlet            I am tame, sir. Pronounce.

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

Hamlet            You are welcome.

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

Hamlet            Sir, I cannot.

Guildenstern      What, my lord?

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

Rosencrantz      Then thus she says: your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

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

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

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

Rosencrantz      My lord, you once did love me.

Hamlet            So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

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- Rosencrantz      Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? You do surely bar the door upon your own liberty if you deny your griefs to your friend.
- Hamlet            Sir, I lack advancement.
- Rosencrantz      How can that be when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?
- Hamlet            Ay, sir, but 'While the grass grows' - the proverb is something musty.
- Re-enter PLAYERS, with recorders.
- O, the recorders! Let me see one.  
[Drawing ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN aside] To withdraw with you - why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?
- Guildenstern      O my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.
- Hamlet            I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?
- Guildenstern      My lord, I cannot.
- Hamlet            I pray you.
- Guildenstern      Believe me, I cannot.
- Hamlet            I do beseech you.
- Guildenstern      I know no touch of it, my lord.
- Hamlet            'Tis as easy as lying. Govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.
- Guildenstern      But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.
- Hamlet            Why, look you now how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me, you would seem to know my stops, you would pluck out the heart of my mystery, you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.
- Re-enter POLONIUS.
- God bless you, sir!
- Polonius           My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.
- Hamlet            Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?
- Polonius           By th' mass and 'tis, like a camel indeed.
- Hamlet            Methinks it is like a weasel.
- Polonius           It is backed like a weasel.
- Hamlet            Or like a whale.
- Polonius           Very like a whale.
- Hamlet            Then I will come to my mother by and by. [Aside] They fool me to the top of my bent. [To POLONIUS] I will come by and by.
- Polonius           I will say so.
- Exit**
- Hamlet            'By and by' is easily said. 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 mother.  
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever  
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom.  
Let me be cruel, not unnatural:  
I will speak daggers to her, but use none.  
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites:  
How in my words soever she be shent,  
To give them seals never my soul consent!

**Exit**

### **Scene 3. A Room in the Castle.**

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

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

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

Rosencrantz        The single and peculiar life is bound  
With all the strength and armour of the mind  
To keep itself from noyance; but much more  
That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests  
The lives of many. The cease of majesty  
Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw  
What's near it with it. Or it is a massy wheel  
Fixed on the summit of the highest mount,  
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things  
Are mortised and adjoined, which, when it falls,  
Each small annexment, petty consequence,  
Attends the boist'rous ruin. Never alone  
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

King                    Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage,  
For we will fetters put about this fear  
Which now goes too free-footed.

Rosencrantz        We will haste us.

**Exeunt** ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

**Enter** POLONIUS.

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

King                    Thanks, dear my lord.

**Exit** POLONIUS.

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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

**Enter** HAMLET, behind.

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

**Exit**

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

**Exit**

### Scene 4. The Queen's closet.

**Enter** QUEEN and POLONIUS.

Polonius A' will come straight. Look you lay home to him,  
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,  
And that your grace hath screened and stood between  
Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here.  
Pray you, be round with him.

Hamlet [Within] Mother, mother, mother!

Queen I'll warrant you; fear me not. Withdraw, I hear him coming.  
[POLONIUS hides behind the arras]

**Enter** HAMLET.

Hamlet Now, mother, what's the matter?

Queen Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Hamlet Mother, you have my father much offended.

Queen Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Hamlet Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

Queen Why, how now, Hamlet!

Hamlet What's the matter now?

Queen Have you forgot me?

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

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

Hamlet Come, come, and sit you down. You shall not budge;  
You go not till I set you up a glass  
Where you may see the inmost part of you.

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

Polonius [Behind the arras] What, ho! Help, help, help!

Hamlet [Drawing] How now, aA rat? Dead for a ducat, dead!  
[Thrusting his sword through the arras]

Polonius [Behind the arras]  
O, I am slain!  
[Dies]

Queen O me, what hast thou done?

Hamlet Nay, I know not. Is it the king?

Queen O what a rash and bloody deed is this!

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

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Queen As kill a king?

Hamlet Ay, lady, 'twas my word.  
 [Lifts up the arras and discovers POLONIUS]  
 Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell.  
 I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune;  
 Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.  
 [To QUEEN]  
 Leave wringing of your hands. Peace! Sit you down;  
 And let me wring your heart, for so I shall  
 If it be made of penetrable stuff;  
 If damned custom have not brazed it so  
 That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

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

Hamlet Such an act  
 That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,  
 Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose  
 From the fair forehead of an innocent love  
 And sets a blister there, makes marriage vows  
 As false as dicers' oaths. O, such a deed  
 As from the body of contraction plucks  
 The very soul, and sweet religion makes  
 A rhapsody of words. Heaven's face doth glow  
 O'er this solidity and compound mass  
 With tristful visage, as against the doom,  
 Is thought-sick at the act.

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

Hamlet Look here upon this picture, and on this,  
 The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
 See what a grace was seated on this brow -  
 Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,  
 An eye like Mars, to threaten and command,  
 A station like the herald Mercury  
 New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;  
 A combination and a form indeed  
 Where every god did seem to set his seal  
 To give the world assurance of a man.  
 This was your husband. Look you now what follows:  
 Here is your husband, like a mildewed ear  
 Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?  
 Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,  
 And batten on this moor? Ha, have you eyes?  
 You cannot call it love, for at your age  
 The heyday in the blood is tame, it's humble,  
 And waits upon the judgement; and what judgement  
 Would step from this to this? Sense sure you have,  
 Else could you not have motion; but sure that sense  
 Is apoplexed, for madness would not err,  
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd  
 But it reserved some quantity of choice  
 To serve in such a difference. What devil was't  
 That thus hath cozened you at hoodman-blind?  
 Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,  
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,  
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense  
 Could not so mope.  
 O shame, where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,  
 If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,  
 To flaming youth let virtue be as wax  
 And melt in her own fire; proclaim no shame  
 When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,  
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn,  
 And reason panders will.

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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

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

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

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

Queen No more!

Hamlet A king of shreds and patches -

**Enter GHOST.**

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

Queen Alas, he's mad!

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

Ghost Do not forget. This visitation  
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.  
But look, amazement on thy mother sits.  
O, step between her and her fighting soul.  
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.  
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Hamlet How is it with you, lady?

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

Hamlet On him, on him. Look you how pale he glares.  
His form and cause conjoined, preaching to stones,  
Would make them capable. [To GHOST] Do not look upon me,  
Lest with this piteous action you convert  
My stern effects; then what I have to do  
Will want true colour - tears perchance for blood.

Queen To whom do you speak this?

Hamlet Do you see nothing there?

Queen Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

Hamlet Nor did you nothing hear?

Queen No, nothing but ourselves.

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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

**Exit GHOST.**

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

Hamlet                   Ecstasy!  
My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time,  
And makes as healthful music. It is not madness  
That I have uttered. Bring me to the test,  
And I the matter will re-word, which madness  
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,  
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul  
That not your trespass but my madness speaks.  
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place  
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,  
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven,  
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,  
And do not spread the compost on the weeds  
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue,  
For in the fatness of these pursy times  
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,  
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

Queen                   O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

Hamlet                   O, throw away the worser part of it,  
And live the purer with the other half.  
Good night: but go not to my uncle's bed.  
Assume a virtue if you have it not.  
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,  
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,  
That to the use of actions fair and good  
He likewise gives a frock or livery  
That aptly is put on. Refrain tonight,  
And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
To the next abstinence, the next more easy;  
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,  
And either house the devil, or throw him out  
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night.  
And when you are desirous to be blest,  
I'll blessing beg of you.  
[Pointing to POLONIUS] For this same lord  
I do repent; but heaven hath pleased it so  
To punish me with this, and this with me,  
That I must be their scourge and minister.  
I will bestow him, and will answer well  
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.  
I must be cruel only to be kind.  
This bad begins, and worse remains behind.  
One word more, good lady.

Queen                   What shall I do?

Hamlet                   Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:  
Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed,  
Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse,  
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses  
Or paddling in your neck with his damned fingers,  
Make you to ravel all this matter out,  
That I essentially am not in madness,  
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know;  
For who that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,  
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,  
Such dear concernings hide? Who would do so?  
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,  
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,  
To try conclusions, in the basket creep  
And break your own neck down.

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

Hamlet          I must to England; you know that?

Queen            Alack,  
                  I had forgot. 'Tis so concluded on.

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

**Exit** HAMLET with the dead body. The QUEEN remains.

## ACT 4

### Scene 1. The Queen's Closet.

**Enter**, to the QUEEN, the KING, with ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

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

Queen                    Bestow this place on us a little while.

**Exeunt** ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

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

King                    What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

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

King                    O heavy deed!  
It had been so with us had we been there.  
His liberty is full of threats to all,  
To you yourself, to us, to every one.  
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answered?  
It will be laid to us, whose providence  
Should have kept short, restrained, and out of haunt,  
This mad young man. But so much was our love,  
We would not understand what was most fit,  
But, like the owner of a foul disease,  
To keep it from divulging, let it feed  
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

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

King                    O Gertrude, come away!  
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch  
But we will ship him hence; and this vile deed  
We must, with all our majesty and skill,  
Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

**Re-enter** ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

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

**Exeunt** ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends  
And let them know both what we mean to do  
And what's untimely done. So, haply, slander,  
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,  
As level as the cannon to his blank,  
Transports his poisoned shot, may miss our name  
And hit the woundless air. O, come away.  
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

**Exeunt**

## Scene 2. Another Room in the Castle.

**Enter** HAMLET.

Hamlet                    Safely stowed.

Rosencrantz & Guildenstern [Within]  
                                Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

Hamlet                    What noise? Who calls on Hamlet?

**Enter** ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

                                O, here they come.

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

Hamlet                    Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

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

Hamlet                    Do not believe it.

Rosencrantz            Believe what?

Hamlet                    That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a  
                                sponge - what replication should be made by the son of a king?

Rosencrantz            Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Hamlet                    Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But  
                                such officers do the king best service in the end. He keeps them, like an ape, in  
                                the corner of his jaw, first mouthed to be last swallowed. When he needs what  
                                you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

Rosencrantz            I understand you not, my lord.

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

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

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

Guildenstern            A thing, my lord?

Hamlet                    Of nothing. Bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.

**Exeunt**

## Scene 3. Another Room in the Castle.

**Enter** KING, with two or three LORDS.

King                      I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.  
                                How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!  
                                Yet must not we put the strong law on him:  
                                He's loved of the distracted multitude,  
                                Who like not in their judgement, but their eyes;  
                                And where 'tis so, th' offender's scourge is weighed,  
                                But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,  
                                This sudden sending him away must seem  
                                Deliberate pause. Diseases desperate grown  
                                By desperate appliance are relieved,  
                                Or not at all.

**Enter** ROSENCRANTZ.

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

How now! What hath befall'n?

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

King                But where is he?

Rosencrantz        Without, my lord, guarded to know your pleasure.

King                Bring him before us.

Rosencrantz        Ho, Guildenstern! Bring in the lord.

**Enter** GUILDENSTERN with HAMLET.

King                Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Hamlet              At supper.

King                At supper! Where?

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

King                Alas, alas!

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

King                What dost thou mean by this?

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

King                Where is Polonius?

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

King                [To some LORDS] Go seek him there.

Hamlet              A' will stay till you come.

**Exeunt** LORDS.

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

Hamlet              For England?

King                Ay, Hamlet.

Hamlet              Good.

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

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

King                Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Hamlet              My mother. Father and mother is man and wife, man and wife is one flesh, and so - my mother. Come, for England.

**Exit**

King                [To ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN]  
Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard.

Delay it not; I'll have him hence tonight.  
Away! - for everything is sealed and done  
That else leans on th' affair. Pray you, make haste.

**Exeunt** ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught -  
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,  
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red  
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe  
Pays homage to us - thou mayst not coldly set  
Our sovereign process, which imports at full,  
By letters congruing to that effect,  
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;  
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,  
And thou must cure me. Till I know 'tis done,  
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

**Exit**

## Scene 4. A Plain in Denmark.

**Enter** FORTINBRAS, A CAPTAIN, and SOLDIERS marching.

Fortinbras            Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king.  
Tell him that by his licence Fortinbras  
Craves the conveyance of a promised march  
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.  
If that his majesty would aught with us,  
We shall express our duty in his eye;  
And let him know so.

Captain                I will do't, my lord.

Fortinbras            Go softly on.

**Exeunt** FORTINBRAS and SOLDIERS.

**Enter** HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and OTHERS.

Hamlet                Good sir, whose powers are these?

Captain                They are of Norway, sir.

Hamlet                How purposed, sir, I pray you?

Captain                Against some part of Poland.

Hamlet                Who commands them, sir?

Captain                The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

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

Captain                Truly to speak, and with no addition,  
We go to gain a little patch of ground  
That hath in it no profit but the name.  
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;  
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole  
A ranker rate should it be sold in fee.

Hamlet                Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

Captain                Yes, it is already garrisoned.

Hamlet                Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats  
Will not debate the question of this straw.  
This is th' impostume of much wealth and peace,

That inward breaks, and shows no cause without  
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.

Captain God-buy-you, sir.

**Exit**

Rosencrantz Will't please you go, my lord?

Hamlet I'll be with you straight; go a little before.

**Exeunt** all but HAMLET.

How all occasions do inform against me,  
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.  
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,  
Looking before and after, gave us not  
That capability and godlike reason  
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be  
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple  
Of thinking too precisely on th' event -  
A thought which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom  
And ever three parts coward - I do not know  
Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do',  
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,  
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me;  
Witness this army of such mass and charge,  
Led by a delicate and tender prince,  
Whose spirit with divine ambition puffed  
Makes mouths at the invisible event,  
Exposing what is mortal and unsure  
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,  
Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great  
Is not to stir without great argument,  
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw  
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,  
That have a father killed, a mother stained,  
Excitements of my reason and my blood,  
And let all sleep, while, to my shame, I see  
The imminent death of twenty thousand men  
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,  
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,  
Which is not tomb enough and continent  
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,  
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

**Exit**

## Scene 5. Elsinore. A Room in the Castle.

**Enter** QUEEN, HORATIO, and A GENTLEMAN.

Queen I will not speak with her.

Gentleman She is importunate,  
Indeed distract. Her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen What would she have?

Gentleman She speaks much of her father, says she hears  
There's tricks i'th' world, and hems and beats her heart,  
Spurns enviously at straws, speaks things in doubt  
That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,  
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The hearers to collection; they aim at it,  
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts,  
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,  
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,  
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

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

Queen Let her come in.

**Exit GENTLEMAN.**

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

**Enter OPHELIA**, distracted, with a lute.

Ophelia Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

Queen How now, Ophelia?

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

Queen Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

Ophelia Say you? Nay, pray you, mark.

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

O ho!

Queen Nay, but Ophelia -

Ophelia Pray you, mark.

[Sings] White his shroud as the mountain snow -

**Enter KING.**

Queen Alas, look here, my lord.

Ophelia [Sings] Larded all with sweet flowers,  
Which bewept to the grave did not go  
With true-love showers.

King How do you, pretty lady?

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

King Conceit upon her father.

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

[Sings] Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day,  
All in the morning betime,  
And I a maid at your window,  
To be your Valentine.

Then up he rose, and donned his clothes,  
And duffed the chamber-door;  
Let in the maid, that out a maid  
Never departed more.

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

King Pretty Ophelia!

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

[Sings] By Gis and by Saint Charity,  
Alack, and fie for shame!  
Young men will do't, if they come to't,  
By Cock, they are to blame.

Quoth she 'Before you tumbled me,  
You promised me to wed.'  
He answers,  
'So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,  
An thou hadst not come to my bed.'

King How long hath she been thus?

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

**Exit**

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

**Exit HORATIO.**

O, this is the poison of deep grief. It springs  
All from her father's death, and now behold!  
O Gertrude, Gertrude,  
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,  
But in battalions. First, her father slain;  
Next, your son gone, and he most violent author  
Of his own just remove; the people muddied,

Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers  
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly  
In hugger-mugger to inter him; poor Ophelia  
Divided from herself and her fair judgement,  
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts;  
Last, and as much containing as all these,  
Her brother is in secret come from France,  
Feeds on this wonder, keeps himself in clouds,  
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear  
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;  
Wherein necessity, of matter beggared,  
Will nothing stick our person to arraign  
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,  
Like to a murd'ring-piece, in many places  
Gives me superfluous death.

[A noise within]

Queen Alack, what noise is this?

King Attend! Where is my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

**Enter A MESSENGER.**

What is the matter?

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

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Queen                   How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!  
[Noise within]  
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!

King                    The doors are broke.

**Enter** LAERTES, armed; DANES following.

Laertes                Where is the king? Sirs, stand you all without.

Danes                  No, let's come in.

Laertes                I pray you, give me leave.

Danes                  We will, we will.

Laertes                I thank you. Keep the door.

**Exeunt** DANES.

                          O thou vile king,  
Give me my father.

Queen                 [**Holding** LAERTES] Calmly, good Laertes.

Laertes                That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard,  
Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot  
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow  
Of my true mother.

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

Laertes                Where is my father?

King                    Dead.

Queen                  But not by him.

King                    Let him demand his fill.

Laertes                How came he dead? - I'll not be juggled with.  
To hell, allegiance! Vows, to the blackest devil!  
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!  
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,  
That both the worlds I give to negligence,  
Let come what comes; only I'll be revenged  
Most throughly for my father.

King                    Who shall stay you?

Laertes                My will, not all the world's.  
And for my means, I'll husband them so well  
They shall go far with little.

King                    Good Laertes,  
If you desire to know the certainty  
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge  
That, sweepstake, you will draw both friend and foe,  
Winner and loser?

Laertes                None but his enemies.

King                    Will you know them then?

Laertes                To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms,  
And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,  
Repast them with my blood.

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- King                    Why, now you speak  
Like a good child and a true gentleman.  
That I am guiltless of your father's death,  
And am most sensibly in grief for it,  
It shall as level to your judgement pierce  
As day does to your eye.
- Danes                    [Within] Let her come in.
- Laertes                How now! What noise is that?
- Re-enter OPHELIA.
- O, heat dry up my brains! Tears seven times salt  
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!  
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight  
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May,  
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!  
O heavens, is't possible a young maid's wits  
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?  
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine  
It sends some precious instance of itself  
After the thing it loves.
- Ophelia                [Sings] They bore him barefaced on the bier;  
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;  
And in his grave rained many a tear -  
  
Fare you well, my dove.
- Laertes                Hadst thou thy wits and didst persuade revenge,  
It could not move thus.
- Ophelia                You must sing 'A-down a-down', and you 'Call him a-down-a'. O how the wheel  
becomes it! It is the false steward that stole his master's daughter.
- Laertes                This nothing's more than matter.
- Ophelia                There's rosemary, that's for remembrance. Pray you, love, remember. And there  
is pansies, that's for thoughts.
- Laertes                A document in madness - thoughts and remembrance fitted.
- Ophelia                There's fennel for you, and columbines. There's rue for you; and here's some for  
me. We may call it herb of grace a Sundays. O, you must wear your rue with a  
difference. There's a daisy. I would give you some violets, but they withered all  
when my father died. They say a' made a good end.  
  
[Sings] For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.
- Laertes                Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,  
She turns to favour and to prettiness.
- Ophelia                [Sings] And will a' not come again?  
And will a' not come again?  
No, no, he is dead,  
Go to thy death-bed,  
He never will come again.  
  
His beard was as white as snow,  
All flaxen was his poll.  
He is gone, he is gone,  
And we cast away moan.  
God ha' mercy on his soul!  
  
And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God-buy-you.
- Exit**
- Laertes                Do you see this, O God?
- King                    Laertes, I must commune with your grief,  
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,

Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,  
 And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.  
 If by direct or by collateral hand  
 They find us touched, we will our kingdom give,  
 Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,  
 To you in satisfaction; but if not,  
 Be you content to lend your patience to us,  
 And we shall jointly labour with your soul  
 To give it due content.

Laertes                    Let this be so.  
 His means of death, his obscure funeral -  
 No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,  
 No noble rite, nor formal ostentation -  
 Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,  
 That I must call't in question.

King                        So you shall;  
 And where th' offence is, let the great axe fall.  
 I pray you go with me.

**Exeunt**

## Scene 6. Another Room in the Castle.

**Enter** HORATIO and a SERVANT.

Horatio                    What are they that would speak with me?

Servant                    Seafaring men, sir. They say they have letters for you.

Horatio                    Let them come in.

**Exit** SERVANT.

I do not know from what part of the world  
 I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

**Enter** SAILORS.

1st Sailor                God bless you, sir.

Horatio                    Let him bless thee too.

1st Sailor                A' shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir. It came from th' ambassador that was bound for England. If your name be Horatio, as I am I let to know it is.

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

Come, I will give you way for these your letters;  
 And do't the speedier that you may direct me  
 To him from whom you brought them.

**Exeunt**

**Scene 7. Another Room in the Castle.**

**Enter** KING and LAERTES.

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

Laertes                It well appears. But tell me  
Why you proceeded not against these feats,  
So criminal and so capital in nature,  
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,  
You mainly were stirred up.

King                    O, for two special reasons,  
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinewed,  
But yet to me they're strong. The queen his mother  
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself -  
My virtue or my plague, be it either which -  
She's so conjunctive to my life and soul  
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,  
I could not but by her. The other motive,  
Why to a public count I might not go,  
Is the great love the general gender bear him;  
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,  
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,  
Convert his gyves to graces, so that my arrows,  
Too slightly timbered for so loud a wind,  
Would have reverted to my bow again,  
But not where I have aimed them.

Laertes                And so have I a noble father lost;  
A sister driven into desp'rate terms,  
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,  
Stood challenger on mount of all the age  
For her perfections. But my revenge will come.

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

**Enter** a MESSENGER, with letters.

How now, what news?

Messenger            Letters, my lord, from Hamlet.  
These to your majesty; this to the queen.

King                    From Hamlet? Who brought them?

Messenger            Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not.  
They were given me by Claudio. He received them  
Of him that brought them.

King                    Laertes, you shall hear them.  
Leave us.

**Exit** MESSENGER.

[Reads] "High and mighty, you shall know I am set naked on your kingdom.  
Tomorrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes, when I shall, first asking you  
pardon, thereunto recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return.  
HAMLET."

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?

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Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

Laertes Know you the hand?

King 'Tis Hamlet's character. `Naked'!  
And in a postscript here he says `alone'.  
Can you devise me?

Laertes I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come;  
It warms the very sickness in my heart  
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,  
'Thus diest thou.'

King If it be so, Laertes -  
As how should it be so, how otherwise? -  
Will you be ruled by me?

Laertes Ay, my lord;  
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

King To thine own peace. If he be now returned,  
As checking at his voyage, and that he means  
No more to undertake it, I will work him  
To an exploit now ripe in my device,  
Under the which he shall not choose but fall;  
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,  
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice  
And call it accident.

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

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

Laertes What part is that, my lord?

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

Laertes A Norman was't?

King A Norman.

Laertes Upon my life, Lamord.

King The very same.

Laertes I know him well. He is the brooch indeed,  
And gem, of all the nation.

King He made confession of you,  
And gave you such a masterly report  
For art and exercise in your defence,

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And for your rapier most especial,  
That he cried out 'twould be a sight indeed  
If one could match you. The scrimers of their nation  
He swore had neither motion, guard, nor eye,  
If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his  
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy  
That he could nothing do but wish and beg  
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with you.  
Now, out of this -

Laertes                   What out of this, my lord?

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

Laertes                   Why ask you this?

King                       Not that I think you did not love your father,  
But that I know love is begun by time,  
And that I see, in passages of proof,  
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.  
There lives within the very flame of love  
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it;  
And nothing is at a like goodness still,  
For goodness, growing to a plurisie,  
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's sigh  
That hurts by easing. But, to the quick of th' ulcer:  
Hamlet comes back; what would you undertake  
To show yourself your father's son  
More than in words?

Laertes                   To cut his throat i'th' church.

King                       No place indeed should murder sanctuarize;  
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,  
Will you do this? - keep close within your chamber.  
Hamlet returned shall know you are come home.  
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,  
And set a double varnish on the fame  
The Frenchman gave you; bring you, in fine, together  
And wager on your heads. He, being remiss,  
Most generous and free from all contriving,  
Will not peruse the foils; so that with ease,  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
A sword unbated, and, in a pass of practice,  
Requite him for your father.

Laertes                   I will do't;  
And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.  
I bought an unction of a mountebank,  
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,  
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,  
Collected from all simples that have virtue  
Under the moon, can save the thing from death  
That is but scratched withal. I'll touch my point  
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,  
It may be death.

King                       Let's further think of this;  
Weigh what convenience both of time and means  
May fit us to our shape. If this should fail,  
And that our drift look through our bad performance,  
'Twere better not assayed; therefore this project  
Should have a back or second that might hold  
If this did blast in proof. Soft, let me see.  
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunning: -

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I ha't!  
When in your motion you are hot and dry -  
As make your bouts more violent to that end -  
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him  
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,  
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,  
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?

**Enter** QUEEN.

Queen                    One woe doth tread upon another's heel,  
                              So fast they follow. Your sister's drowned, Laertes

Laertes                 Drowned! O, where?

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

Laertes                 Alas, then she is drowned.

Queen                    Drowned, drowned.

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

**Exit**

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

**Exeunt**

## ACT 5.

### Scene 1. A Churchyard.

**Enter** TWO CLOWNS with spades and mattocks.

- 1st Clown                    Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?
- 2nd Clown                    I tell thee she is; therefore make her grave straight. The crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.
- 1st Clown                    How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?
- 2nd Clown                    Why, 'tis found so.
- 1st Clown                    It must be se offendendo, it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act hath three branches - it is to act, to do, and to perform. Argal, she drowned herself wittingly.
- 2nd Clown                    Nay, but hear you, Goodman Delver.
- 1st Clown                    Give me leave. Here lies the water; good. Here stands the man; good. If the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he nill he, he goes - mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself. Argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.
- 2nd Clown                    But is this law?
- 1st Clown                    Ay, marry, is't; crowner's quest law.
- 2nd Clown                    Will you ha' the truth an't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.
- 1st Clown                    Why, there thou sayst, and the more pity that great folk should have count'nance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession.
- 2nd Clown                    Was he a gentleman?
- 1st Clown                    A' was the first that ever bore arms.
- 2nd Clown                    Why, he had none.
- 1st Clown                    What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says Adam digged. Could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee. If thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself -
- 2nd Clown                    Go to.
- 1st Clown                    What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?
- 2nd Clown                    The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.
- 1st Clown                    I like thy wit well, in good faith; the gallows does well. But how does it well? It does well to those that do ill. Now, thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church; argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.
- 2nd Clown                    Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?
- 1st Clown                    Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.
- 2nd Clown                    Marry, now I can tell.
- 1st Clown                    To't.
- 2nd Clown                    Mass, I cannot tell.

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**Enter** HAMLET and HORATIO afar off.

1st Clown           Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating, and when you are asked this question next, say 'a gravemaker'. The houses that he makes lasts till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan; fetch me a stoup of liquor.

**Exit** 2nd CLOWN.

1st Clown           [Digging and singing]  
  
In youth, when I did love, did love,  
Methought it was very sweet  
To contract-O the time for-a my behove,  
O methought there-a was nothing-a meet.

Hamlet             Has this fellow no feeling of his business that a' 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.

1st Clown           [Sings] But age with his stealing steps  
Hath clawed 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 th' ground, as if it were Cain's jawbone, that did the first murder. This might be the pate of a politician which this ass now o'eroffices; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

Horatio            It might, my lord.

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

Horatio            Ay, my lord.

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

1st Clown           [Sings] A pickaxe and a spade, a spade,  
For and a shrouding-sheet,  
O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.  
[Throws up another skull]

Hamlet            There's another. Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quilllets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries. Is this the fine of his fines and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? Will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will scarcely lie in this box; and must th' inheritor himself have no more, ha?

Horatio            Not a jot more, my lord.

Hamlet            Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

Horatio            Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

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

1st Clown           Mine, sir.

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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

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

1st Clown You lie out on't, sir, and therefore 'tis not yours. For my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine.

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

1st Clown 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again from me to you.

Hamlet What man dost thou dig it for?

1st Clown For no man, sir.

Hamlet What woman, then?

1st Clown For none neither.

Hamlet Who is to be buried in't?

1st Clown One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Hamlet How absolute the knave is! We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it, the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier he galls his kibe. How long hast thou been a gravemaker?

1st Clown Of all the days i'th' year I came to't that day that our last King Hamlet o'ercame Fortinbras.

Hamlet How long is that since?

1st Clown Cannot you tell that? Every fool can tell that. It was that very day that young Hamlet was born - he that is mad and sent into England.

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

1st Clown Why, because he was mad. A' shall recover his wits there; or, if a' do not, 'tis no great matter there.

Hamlet Why?

1st Clown 'Twill not be seen in him there. There the men are as mad as he.

Hamlet How came he mad?

1st Clown Very strangely, they say.

Hamlet How `strangely'?

1st Clown Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Hamlet Upon what ground?

1st Clown Why, here in Denmark. I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

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

1st Clown Faith, if a' be not rotten before a' die - as we have many pocky corpses nowadays that will scarce hold the laying in - a' will last you some eight year or nine year. A tanner will last you nine year.

Hamlet Why he more than another?

1st Clown Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade that a' will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now hath lain you i'th' earth three-and-twenty years.

Hamlet Whose was it?

1st Clown A whoreson mad fellow's it was. Whose do you think it was?

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Hamlet Nay, I know not.

1st Clown A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! A' poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

Hamlet This?

1st Clown E'en that.

Hamlet Let me see. [Takes the skull] Alas, poor Yorick. I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath bore me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning? - quite chap-fallen. 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 lord?

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

Horatio E'en so.

Hamlet And smelt so? Pah!  
[Puts down the skull]

Horatio E'en so, my lord.

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

Horatio 'Twere to consider too curiously to consider so.

Hamlet No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it, as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust, the dust is earth, of earth we make loam, and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay,  
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.  
O, that that earth which kept the world in awe  
Should patch a wall t' expel the winter's flaw!

**Enter** a PRIEST, the KING, the QUEEN, LAERTES, and a coffin, with LORDS attending.

But soft, but soft awhile! Here comes the king,  
The queen, the courtiers. Who is that they follow?  
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken  
The corpse they follow did with desp'rate hand  
Fordo it own life. 'Twas of some estate.  
Couch we awhile, and mark.  
[HAMLET and HORATIO stand aside]

Laertes What ceremony else?

Hamlet That is Laertes, a very noble youth. Mark.

Laertes What ceremony else?

Priest Her obsequies have been as far enlarged  
As we have warranty. Her death was doubtful,  
And but that great command o'ersways the order  
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged  
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,  
Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her.  
Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants,  
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home  
Of bell and burial.

Laertes Must there no more be done?

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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

Laertes                 Lay her i'th' earth,  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring. I tell thee, churlish priest,  
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be  
When thou liest howling.

Hamlet                 [Aside] What, the fair Ophelia!

Queen                 [Scattering flowers] Sweets to the sweet; farewell.  
I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife.  
I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,  
And not have strewed thy grave.

Laertes                 O, treble woe  
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head  
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense  
Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth a while,  
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.  
[Leaps into the grave]  
Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made  
T' o'er top old Pelion, or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus.

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

Laertes                 The devil take thy soul!  
[Grappling with HAMLET]

Hamlet                 Thou pray'st not well.  
I prithee take thy fingers from my throat,  
For though I am not splenative and rash,  
Yet have I in me something dangerous,  
Which let thy wiseness fear. Hold off thy hand.

King                   Pluck them asunder.

Queen                 Hamlet, Hamlet!

Lords                   Gentlemen!

Horatio                Good my lord, be quiet.  
[The LORDS part them, and they come out of the grave]

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

Queen                 O my son, what theme?

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

King                   O, he is mad, Laertes

Queen                 For love of God, forbear him.

Hamlet                 'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do.  
Woo't weep, woo't fight, woo't fast, woo't tear thyself,  
Woo't drink up eisel, eat a crocodile?  
I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?  
To outface me with leaping in her grave?

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Be buried quick with her, and so will I.  
And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw  
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,  
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,  
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,  
I'll rant as well as thou.

Queen                    This is mere madness,  
And thus a while the fit will work on him;  
Anon, as patient as the female dove  
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,  
His silence will sit drooping.

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

**Exit**

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

**Exit** HORATIO.

[To LAERTES]  
Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech.  
We'll put the matter to the present push.  
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.  
This grave shall have a living monument.  
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;  
Till then, in patience our proceeding be.

**Exeunt**

**Scene 2. A Hall in the Castle.**

**Enter** HAMLET and HORATIO.

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

Horatio                Remember it, my lord!

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

Horatio                That is most certain.

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

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

My head should be struck off.

Horatio

Is't possible?

Hamlet

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

Horatio

I beseech you.

Hamlet

Being thus benetted round with villainies -  
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,  
They had begun the play - I sat me down,  
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair.  
I once did hold it, as our statistes do,  
A baseness to write fair, and laboured much  
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now  
It did me yeoman's service. 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,  
As love between them like the palm should flourish,  
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear  
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,  
And many suchlike as'es of great charge,  
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,  
Without debatement further more or less,  
He should the bearers put to sudden death,  
Not shriving-time allowed.

Horatio

How was this sealed?

Hamlet

Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.  
I had my father's signet in my purse,  
Which was the model of that Danish seal;  
Folded the writ up in the form of th' other,  
Subscribed it, gave't th' impression, placed it safely,  
The changeling never known. Now, the next day  
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent  
Thou know'st already.

Horatio

So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Hamlet

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

Horatio

Why, what a king is this!

Hamlet

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

Horatio

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

Hamlet

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

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me  
Into a tow'ring passion.

Horatio Peace, who comes here?

**Enter OSRIC.**

Osric Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Hamlet I humbly thank you, sir.  
[Aside to HORATIO] Dost know this water-fly?

Horatio No, my good lord.

Hamlet [Aside to HORATIO] Thy state is the more gracious, for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile. Let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess. 'Tis a chough, but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

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

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

Osric I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

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

Osric It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

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

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

Hamlet I beseech you, remember.  
[HAMLET moves him to put on his hat]

Osric Nay, good my lord, for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society, and great showing. Indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

Hamlet Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you, though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dozy th' arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither in respect of his quick sail. But in the verity of extolment I take him to be a soul of great article, and his infusion of such dearth and rareness as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

Osric Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

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

Osric Sir?

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

Hamlet 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?



HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Lord                   The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

Hamlet                She well instructs me.

**Exit LORD.**

Horatio              You will lose this wager, my lord.

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

Horatio               Nay, good my lord -

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

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

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

**Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, LORDS, OSRIC, and ATTENDANTS with Trumpets, drums, and cushions; foils and gauntlets; a table, and flagons of wine on it.**

King                   Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.  
[Puts LAERTES's hand into HAMLET's]

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

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

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

Laertes                Come, one for me.

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

Laertes                You mock me, sir.

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Hamlet No, by this hand.

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

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

King I do not fear it; I have seen you both.  
But since he's bettered, we have therefore odds.

Laertes This is too heavy; let me see another.

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

Osric Ay, my good lord.  
[They prepare to play]

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

Hamlet Come on, sir.

Laertes Come, my lord.  
[They play]

Hamlet One.

Laertes No.

Hamlet Judgement.

Osric A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laertes Well, again.

King Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;  
Here's to thy health.  
[Drum and trumpets sound, and shot goes off.]  
  
Give him the cup.

Hamlet I'll play this bout first; set it by a while.  
Come.  
[They play]  
Another hit; what say you?

Laertes A touch, a touch, I do confess.

King Our son shall win.

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

Hamlet Good madam.

King Gertrude, do not drink.

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

King [Aside] It is the poisoned cup; it is too late.

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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

Queen Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laertes My lord, I'll hit him now.

King I do not think't.

Laertes [Aside] And yet it is almost against my conscience.

Hamlet Come for the third, Laertes; you do but dally.  
I pray you, pass with your best violence;  
I am sure 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 HAM-  
LET wounds LAERTES]

King Part them; they are incensed.

Hamlet Nay, come again.  
[The QUEEN falls]  
Osric Look to the queen there, ho!

Horatio They bleed on both sides. [To HAMLET] How is it, my lord?

Osric How is't, Laertes?

Laertes Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric;  
I am justly killed with mine own treachery.

Hamlet How does the queen?

King She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen No, no, the drink, the drink! O my dear Hamlet;  
The drink, the drink! I am poisoned.  
[Dies]

Hamlet O villainy! Ho! Let the door be locked.  
Treachery, seek it out!

**Exit OSRIC.**

[LAERTES falls]

Laertes It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain.  
No med'cine in the world can do thee good;  
In thee there is not half an hour of life.  
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,  
Unbated and envenomed. The foul practice  
Hath turned itself on me; lo, here I lie,  
Never to rise again. Thy mother's poisoned.  
I can no more. The king, the king's to blame.

Hamlet The point envenomed too! Then, venom, to thy work.  
[Stabs the KING]

All Treason! Treason!

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

Hamlet Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane,  
Drink off this potion. - Is thy union here?  
Follow my mother.  
[KING dies]

Laertes He is justly served;  
It is a poison tempered by himself.  
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.  
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

- Nor thine on me.  
[Dies]
- Hamlet Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.  
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!  
You that look pale, and tremble at this chance,  
That are but mutes or audience to this act,  
Had I but time - as this fell sergeant Death  
Is strict in his arrest - O, I could tell you -  
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;  
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright  
To the unsatisfied.
- Horatio Never believe it.  
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane.  
Here's yet some liquor left.
- Hamlet As thou'rt a man,  
Give me the cup. Let go; by heaven I'll ha't.  
O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,  
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!  
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,  
Absent thee from felicity a while,  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,  
To tell my story.  
[March afar off, and shot within]
- What warlike noise is this?
- Osric Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,  
T' the ambassadors of England gives  
This warlike volley.
- Hamlet O, I die, Horatio.  
The potent poison quite o'ercrows my spirit.  
I cannot live to hear the news from England,  
But I do prophesy th' election lights  
On Fortinbras. He has my dying voice;  
So tell him, with th' occurrents, more and less,  
Which have solicited. The rest is silence.  
[Dies]
- Horatio Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.  
[March within]  
Why does the drum come hither?
- Enter** FORTINBRAS, and the ENGLISH AMBASSADORS, with DRUM, COLOURS, and ATTENDANTS.
- Fortinbras Where is this sight?
- Horatio What is it you would see?  
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.
- Fortinbras This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,  
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell  
That thou so many princes at a shot  
So bloodily hast struck?
- 1st Ambassador The sight is dismal;  
And our affairs from England come too late.  
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing  
To tell him his commandment is fulfilled,  
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.  
Where should we have our thanks?
- Horatio Not from his mouth,  
Had it th' ability of life to thank you;  
He never gave commandment for their death.  
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,  
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,

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Are here arrived, give order that these bodies  
High on a stage be placed to the view;  
And let me speak to th' yet unknowing world  
How these things came about. So shall you hear  
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,  
Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters,  
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,  
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook  
Fall'n on th' inventors' heads. All this can I  
Truly deliver.

Fortinbras      Let us haste to hear it,  
And call the noblest to the audience.  
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune;  
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,  
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

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

Fortinbras      Let four captains  
Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,  
For he was likely, had he been put on,  
To have proved most royal; and for his passage,  
The soldiers' music and the rites of war  
Speak loudly for him.  
Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this  
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.  
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

**Exeunt**, marching, bearing off the dead bodies; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off.

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