

The Tragedy of HAMLET, Prince of Denmark

by William Shakespeare

adapted by Kelly Groves

CAST OF CHARACTERS

THE GHOST, *the late King of Denmark, Hamlet's father*

HAMLET, *Prince of Denmark, son of the late King Hamlet and Queen Gertrude*

QUEEN GERTRUDE, *widow of King Hamlet, now married to Claudius*

KING CLAUDIUS, *brother to the late King Hamlet*

OPHELIA, *a young gentlewoman*

LAERTES, *her brother*

POLONIUS, *father of Ophelia and Laertes, councillor to King Claudius*

HORATIO, *Hamlet's friend and confidant*

ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN, *Hamlet's friends and former schoolmates*

FRANCISCO

BARNARDO

MARCELLUS

THE PLAYERS:

Prologue, Player King, Player Queen, and Lucianus in "The Murder of Gonzago" (males and/or females)

GRAVEDIGGER

MESSENGER

OSRIC

ATTENDANTS, LORDS, GUARDS, MUSICIANS, SOLDIERS

PROLOGUE

A clock strikes midnight. Enter Hamlet, alone.

HAMLET

O that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God, God,
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't, ah fie! That it should come to this!
But two months dead, nay, not so much, not two.
So excellent a king, so loving to my mother-
Heaven and earth,
Must I remember? - Frailty, thy name is woman!—
O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules. Within a month
She married—O most wicked speed: to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets.
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.

ACT I, SCENE I

Elsinore. A platform before the castle.
(Barnardo; Francisco; Horatio; Marcellus; Ghost)

BARNARDO

Who's there?

FRANCISCO

Stand and unfold yourself.

BARNARDO

Long live the King!

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

FRANCISCO

Who is there?

BARNARDO

Welcome, Horatio, welcome, good Marcellus.

HORATIO

What, has this thing appear'd again tonight?

BARNARDO

I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS

Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy.

HORATIO

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

MARCELLUS

Peace, break thee off! Look where it comes!

BARNARDO

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

MARCELLUS

Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.

FRANCISCO

Looks he not like the King?

BARNARDO

It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS

Speak to it, Horatio.

HORATIO

[*to The Ghost*] What art thou? 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.

BARNARDO

How now, Horatio?

Is not this something more than fantasy?

MARCELLUS

Is it not like the King?

HORATIO

As thou art to thyself.

Enter Ghost.

But soft, behold! Lo where it comes again!

Stay, illusion!

If thou hast any sound or use of voice,

Speak to me.

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!

FRANCISCO

'Tis here!

MARCELLUS

'Tis gone!

Exit Ghost.

BARNARDO

It was about to speak.

HORATIO

Let us impart what we have seen tonight
Unto young Hamlet, for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

MARCELLUS

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

Exeunt.

ACT I, Scene ii

Elsinore. A room of state in the castle.
(*Claudius; Gertrude; Polonius; Laertes; Hamlet; Horatio; Marcellus; Barnardo*)

Flourish. Enter Claudius, King of Denmark, Gertrude the Queen; Council: as Polonius; and his son Laertes, Hamlet.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

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

Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
Have we, with mirth in funeral,
and with dirge in marriage,
Taken to wife; nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
You told us of some suit,
What wouldest thou have, Laertes?

LAERTES

My dread lord,
Your leave and favor 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.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

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

POLONIUS

H'ath, my lord.
I do beseech you give him leave to go.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Take thy fair hour, Laertes, time be thine,

And thy best graces spend it at thy will!

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son—

HAMLET

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

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET

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

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,

And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

Do not forever with thy vailèd lids

Seek for thy noble father in the dust.

Thou know' st 'tis common, all that lives must die.

HAMLET

Ay, madam, it is common.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET

Seems, madam? Nay, it is, I know not "seems."

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

'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 his - to persevere

In obstinate condolement is a course

Of impious stubbornness, 'tis unmanly grief,

It shows a will most incorrect to heaven.

A fault against the dead, a fault to nature.

We pray you think of us as of a father,

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, kinsman, and our son.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

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.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.

Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come.

This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet

Sits smiling to my heart. Come away.

Flourish. Exeunt all but Hamlet.

HAMLET

Break my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo.

HORATIO

Hail to your lordship!

HAMLET

Horatio! I am glad to see you well.

HORATIO

The same, my lord.

HAMLET

My good friend--

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?

Marcellus?

MARCELLUS

My good lord.

HAMLET

I am very glad to see you. [To Barnardo] Good even.

But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

We'll teach you to drink deep 'ere you depart.

HORATIO

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

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

HORATIO

Where, my lord?

HAMLET

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

HORATIO

I saw him once, he was a goodly king.

HAMLET

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,
This marvel to you.

HAMLET

For God's love let me hear!

HORATIO

Two nights together had Marcellus and Barnardo,
In the dead waste and middle of the night,
Been thus encount'red: a figure like your father,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them; thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surprisèd eyes
Whilst they, distill'd
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.
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 watch.

HAMLET

Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO

My lord, I did,

But answer made it none

And vanish'd from our sight.

HAMLET

'Tis very strange.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

Indeed, indeed. But this troubles me.

Hold you the watch tonight?

BOTH BARNARDO AND MARCELLUS

We do, my lord.

HAMLET

I will watch tonight, perchance 'twill walk again.

HORATIO

I warr'nt it will.

HAMLET

If it assume my noble father's person,

I'll speak to it. I pray you all-

Upon the platform 'twixt eleven and twelve

I'll visit you.

HORATIO, MARCELLUS, AND BARNARDO

Our duty to your honor.

HAMLET

Farewell.

Exeunt all but Hamlet.

My father's spirit! All is not well.

Exit.

ACT I, Scene iii

Elsinore. A room in Polonius' house.

(Laertes; Ophelia; Polonius)

Enter Laertes and Ophelia, his sister.

LAERTES

My necessaries are embark'd. Farewell.

Let me hear from you.

OPHELIA

Do you doubt that?

LAERTES

For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favor—

No more.

OPHELIA

No more but so?

LAERTES

Think it no more:

Perhaps he loves you now, but you must fear,

his will is not his own.

For he himself is subject to his birth:

He may not, as unvalued persons do,

Carve for himself, for on his choice depends

The safety and health of this whole state,

Then weigh what loss your honor may sustain

If with too credent ear you list his songs,

Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmast' red 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.

OPHELIA

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

LAERTES

O, fear me not.

Enter Polonius.

I stay too long—but here my father comes.

POLONIUS

Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!

The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,

And you are stay'd for. There—My blessing with thee!

And these few precepts in thy memory

Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,

Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar:

Those friends thou hast, and their allegiance tried,

Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel.

Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice,

Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,

But not express'd in fancy (rich, not gaudy),

For the apparel oft proclaims the man.

Neither a borrower nor a lender be,

For loan oft loses both itself and friend.

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 invests you, go, your servants tend.

LAERTES

Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well

What I have said to you.

OPHELIA

'Tis in my memory lock'd,

And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

LAERTES

Farewell.

Exit Laertes.

POLONIUS

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

OPHELIA

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

POLONIUS

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late

Given private time to you.

If it be so—I must tell you,

You do not understand yourself so clearly

As it behooves my daughter and your honor.

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, puh! You speak like a green girl.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

OPHELIA

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

POLONIUS

Marry, I will teach you: Tender yourself more dearly,

Or you'll tender me a fool.

OPHELIA

My lord, he hath importun'd me with love
In honorable 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

I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows. These blazes, daughter,
You must not take for fire.

Be something scanter of your maiden presence,
Set your entreatments at a higher rate.

In few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows. This is for all:
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth
Have you give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you. Come your ways.

OPHELIA

I shall obey, my lord.

Exeunt.

ACT I, SCENE IV

Elsinore. A platform before Elsinore castle.

(*Hamlet; Horatio; Marcellus; Ghost*)

Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus. The clock strikes twelve.

Enter Ghost.

HORATIO

Look, my lord, it comes!

HAMLET

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

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

Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell?

King! Father? O, answer me!

Say why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?

Ghost beckons Hamlet.

HORATIO

It beckons you to go away with it.

MARCELLUS

Do not go!

HORATIO

No, by no means.

HAMLET

It will not speak - I will follow it.

HORATIO

Do not, my lord.

HAMLET

Why, what should be the fear?

MARCELLUS

You shall not go, my lord.

HAMLET

Hold off your hands.

HORATIO

Be rul'd, you shall not go.

HAMLET

Unhand me, gentlemen.

I say away! [To Ghost]—Go on, I'll follow thee.

Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.

MARCELLUS

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HORATIO

Let's follow him.

Exeunt.

ACT I, scene v

Elsinore. Another part of the platform before Elsinore castle.

(*Ghost; Hamlet; Horatio; Marcellus*)

Enter Ghost and Hamlet.

HAMLET

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

GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER

Mark me.

HAMLET

I will.

GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER

I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purg'd away. List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

HAMLET

O God!

GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER

Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET

Murder?

GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER

Murder most foul, strange, and unnatural.

Now, Hamlet, hear:

'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me, but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life

Now wears his crown.

HAMLET

My uncle?

GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast!

Sleeping within my orchard,

Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,

With juice of cursed hebona in a vial,

And in the porches of my ears did pour

The leperous distillment.

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand

Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd.

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 damnèd incest.

Adieu, adieu, adieu! Remember me.

Exit.

HAMLET

O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?

O fie, hold, hold, my heart.

Remember thee?

Ay, thou poor ghost, remember thee!

O most pernicious woman!

O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!

So, uncle, there you are.

"Adieu, adieu! Remember me."

I have sworn't.

HORATIO

[Within] My lord, my lord!

MARCELLUS

How is't, my noble lord?

HORATIO

What news, my lord?

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

Good friends, Give me one poor request.

HORATIO

What is't, my lord, we will.

HAMLET

Never make known what you have seen tonight.

BOTH BARNARDO AND MARCELLUS

My lord, we will not.

HAMLET

Nay, but swear't.

HORATIO

In faith, my lord.

HAMLET

Upon my sword.

MARCELLUS

We have sworn, my lord, already.

HAMLET

Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER

[Ghost cries under the stage] Swear.

HAMLET

Ha, ha, boy, say'st thou so?

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.

GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER

[*Beneath*] Swear.

HAMLET

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 OF HAMLET'S FATHER

[*Beneath*] Swear by his sword.

HORATIO

O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAMLET

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 some'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 encumb'red thus, or this headshake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As "Well, well, we know," or "We could, and if we would,"
Or "If we list to speak,"
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
That you know aught of me— this do swear.

GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER

[*Beneath*] Swear.

They swear.

HAMLET

Rest, rest, perturbèd spirit! So, gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you.
Let us go in together,
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.

The time is out of joint— O cursèd spite,

That ever I was born to set it right!

Nay, come, let's go together.

Exeunt.

ACT II, SCENE i

Elsinore. A room in Polonius' house.

(*Polonius; Ophelia*) *Enter Ophelia.*

POLONIUS

How now, Ophelia, what's the matter?

OPHELIA

O my lord, 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 unbrac'd,

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 he would draw it. Long stay'd he so.

At last, a little shaking of mine arm,

And thrice his head thus waving up and down,

He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound

As it did seem to shatter all his bulk

And end his being. That done, he lets me go,
And with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes,
For out a' doors he went without their helps,
And to the last bended their light on me.

POLONIUS

Come, go with me. I will go seek the King.

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

What, have you given 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.

Come, go we to the King. This must be known.

Come.

Exeunt.

ACT 2, scene i

Elsinore. A room in Elsinore castle.

(*King; Queen; Hamlet; Rosencrantz; Guildenstern; Polonius; Attendants; First Player (Player King); Player Queen; Player Prologue; Player Lucianus*)

Flourish. Enter King and Queen, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

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 call it,

Sith 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 sith so neighbored to his youth and havior,
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, open'd, lies within our remedy.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you,
And sure I am two men there is not living
To whom he more adheres.
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king's remembrance.

GUILDENSTERN

We both obey.

ROSENCRANTZ

And here lay our service freely at your feet.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz.

And I beseech you instantly to visit

My too much changèd 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!

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Ay, amen!

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with some Attendants.

Enter Polonius.

POLONIUS

My lord?

I do think, or else this brain of mine

Hunts not the trail of policy so sure

As it hath us'd to do, that I have found

The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

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

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

GETRUDA, QUEEN OF DENMARK

I doubt it is no other but the main,

His father's death and our o'erhasty marriage.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Well, we shall sift him.

POLONIUS

My liege, and madam, to expostulate

What majesty should be, what duty is,

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

Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time;

Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,

And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,

I will be brief. Your noble son is mad:

Mad call I it, for to define true madness,

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

But let that go.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

More matter with less art.

POLONIUS

Madam, I swear I use no art at all.

That he's 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—

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.

He reads:

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

That's a vile phrase.

"In her excellent white bosom, these, etc."

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Came this from Hamlet to her?

POLONIUS

Good madam, stay awhile. I will be faithful.

[Reads the letter:]

"Doubt thou the stars are fire,

Doubt that the sun doth move,

Doubt truth to be a liar,

But never doubt I love.

Thine evermore, most dear lady, Hamlet."

This in obedience hath my daughter shown me.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

But how hath she receiv'd his love?

POLONIUS

What do you think of me?

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

As of a man faithful and honorable.

POLONIUS

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

When I had seen this hot love on the wing—

As I perceiv'd 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 look'd upon this love with idle sight?

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

And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:

"Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy star;

This must not be"; and then I prescripts 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;

He fell into a sadness, then into a fast,

Thence into a weakness, thence to a lightness,

And by this declension,

Into the madness wherein now he raves,

And all we mourn for.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Do you think 'tis this?

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

It may be, very like.

POLONIUS

Hath there been such a time—I would fain know that—

That I have positively said, "'Tis so,"

When it prov'd otherwise?

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Not that I know.

How may we try it further?

POLONIUS

You know sometimes he walks for hours together

Here in the lobby.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

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.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

We will try it.

Enter Hamlet reading a book.

GETRUDA, QUEEN OF DENMARK

But look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

POLONIUS

Away, I do beseech you, both away.

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

Exeunt King and Queen.

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

HAMLET

Well.

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 pick'd
out of ten thousand.

POLONIUS

That's very true, my lord.

HAMLET

For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog— 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, he said I was a fishmonger. He is far gone. And truly in my youth I suff'red 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, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit-

POLONIUS

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

HAMLET

Into my grave.

POLONIUS

Indeed that's out of the air. [Aside] How pregnant sometimes his replies are! I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter. —My lord, I will take my leave of you.

HAMLET

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

POLONIUS

Fare you well, my lord.

HAMLET

These tedious old fools!

Enter Guildenstern and Rosencrantz.

POLONIUS

You go to seek the Lord Hamlet, there he is.

ROSENCRANTZ

[To Polonius] God save you, sir!

Exit Polonius.

GUILDENSTERN

My honor'd 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.

HAMLET

What make you at Elsinore?

ROSENCRANTZ

To visit you, my lord, no other occasion.

HAMLET

Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free
visitation? Come, come, deal justly with me.

GUILDENSTERN

What should we say, my lord?

HAMLET

I know the good King and Queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ

To what end, my lord?

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

[Aside to Guildenstern] What say you?

HAMLET

If you love me, hold not off.

GUILDENSTERN

My lord, we were sent for.

HAMLET

I will tell you why. I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving, how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god! The beauty of the world; the paragon of animals; and yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me—nor women 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 passed them on the way, and hither are they coming to offer you service.

HAMLET

What players are they?

ROSENCRANTZ

The tragedians of the city.

HAMLET

Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. You are welcome; but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceiv'd.

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 hand-saw.

Enter Polonius.

POLONIUS

Well be with you, gentlemen!

HAMLET

[Aside to them] Hark you, Guildenstern, and you too—that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

ROSENCRANTZ

They say an old man is twice a child.

HAMLET

I will prophesy, he comes to tell me of the players, mark it.

POLONIUS

My lord, I have news to tell you.

HAMLET

My lord, I have news to tell you.

POLONIUS

The actors are come hither, my lord.

HAMLET

Buzz, buzz!

POLONIUS

Upon my honor— The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral-

Enter the Players

HAMLET

You are welcome, masters, welcome all. I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, old friend! Why, thy face is valanc'd since I saw thee last. What, my young lady and mistress! Your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last. Pray God your voice be not

crack'd. Masters, you are all welcome. Come give us a taste of your quality, come, a passionate speech.

FIRST PLAYER (PLAYER KING)

What speech, my good lord?

HAMLET

I heard thee speak me a speech once, I remember, it was in a most excellent play. If it live in your memory, begin at this line—let me see, let me see, ah Hecuba—

"But who, ah woe, had seen the moblèd queen"—

POLONIUS

"The moblèd queen" that's good.

FIRST PLAYER (PLAYER KING)

"But who, ah woe, had seen the moblèd queen

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'er-teemèd loins,

A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up—

Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,

'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd.

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 clamor 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 he has tears in 's eyes.

HAMLET

Prithee no more.

(*The action freezes. Lights change. Hamlet addresses the audience*)

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 the visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, an' 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!

Bloody, bawdy villain!

Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!

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

That I, the son of a dear father murdered,

Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,

Must like a whore unpack my heart with words-

Fie upon't, foh!

About, my brains! Hum—I have heard

That guilty creatures sitting at a play

Have by the very cunning of the scene

Been struck so to the soul, that presently

They have proclaim'd their malefactions:

For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak

With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks,
I'll tent him to the quick. If he do blench,
I know my course.

(*The action resumes. Hamlet speaks to the Player*)

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

POLONIUS

My lord, I will.

POLONIUS

Come, sirs.

HAMLET

Follow him, friends, we'll hear a play tomorrow.

Exeunt all the Players but the First and Second.

Dost thou hear me, old friends? Can you play "The Murder of Gonzago"?

FIRST PLAYER (PLAYER KING)

The Murder of Gonzago?

SECOND PLAYER (PLAYER QUEEN)

Aye, my lord.

HAMLET

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

FIRST PLAYER (PLAYER KING)

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

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

Exeunt First and Second Player.

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

ROSENCRANTZ

Good my lord.

HAMLET

Ay, so, Good-bye to you.

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

The play's the thing

Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

Exit.

ACT III, scene i

Elsinore. A room in Elsinore castle.

(King; Queen; Polonius; Ophelia; Rosencrantz; Guildenstern; Lords;
Hamlet)

*Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern,
Lords.*

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

And can you by no drift of conference

Get from him why he puts on this confusion,

Grating so harshly all his days of quiet

With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

ROSENCRANTZ

He does confess he feels himself distracted,

But from what cause he will by no means speak.

GETRUEDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Did he receive you well?

ROSENCRANTZ

Most like a gentleman.

GUILDENSTERN

But with much forcing of his disposition.

GETRUEDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

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 beseech'd me to entreat your Majesties

To hear and see the matter.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

With all my heart, and it doth much content me

To hear him so inclin'd.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,

And drive his purpose into these delights.

ROSENCRANTZ

We shall, my lord.

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Sweet Gertrude, leave us two,

For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,

That he, as 'twere by accident, may here

Affront Ophelia.

We may of their encounter frankly judge

If't be th' affliction of his love or no

That thus he suffers for.

GETRUDA, QUEEN OF DENMARK

I shall obey you.

And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish

That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness. So shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honors.

OPHELIA

Madam, I wish it may.

Exit Queen.

POLONIUS

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

[*To Ophelia*] Read on this book.

I hear him coming. 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 heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep—
To sleep, perchance to dream— ay, there's the rub.
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause; there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life:
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin; who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of?

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.—Soft you now,
The fair Ophelia.

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

I humbly thank you, well, well, well.

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

No, not I,

I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA

My honor'd lord, you know right well you did,

And with them words of so sweet breath compos'd

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

I did love you once.

OPHELIA

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAMLET

You should not have believ'd me. I lov'd you not.

OPHELIA

I was the more deceiv'd.

HAMLET

Get thee to a nunn'ry, 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 offenses at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunn'ry. Where's your father?

OPHELIA

At home, my lord.

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

O, help him, you sweet heavens!

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

Heavenly powers, restore him!

HAMLET

I have heard of your paintings, well enough. God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another. You jig and amble, and you lisp, you 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 nunn'ry, go.

Exit.

OPHELIA

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,
Th' expectation and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
Th' observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason
Like sweet bells jangled out of time, and harsh;
That unmatch'd form and stature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy. O, woe is me
T' have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Ophelia withdraws.

Enter King and Polonius.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

There's something in his soul
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger;
I have in quick determination

Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England.

Haply the seas, and countries different, shall expel

This something-settled matter in his heart,

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.

Ophelia comes forward.

How now, Ophelia?

You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said,

We heard it all. My lord, do as you please,

But if you hold it fit, after the play

Let his queen-mother all alone entreat him

To show his grief. Let her be round with him,

And I'll be plac'd (so please you) in the ear

Of all their conference. If she find him not,

To England send him, or confine him where

Your wisdom best shall think.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

It shall be so.

Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.

Exeunt.

ACT 3, scene iii

Elsinore. A hall in Elsinore castle.

(*Hamlet; Polonius; Guildenstern; Rosencrantz; Horatio; King; Queen; Polonius; Ophelia; Rosencrantz; Guildenstern; Lords; Guard; First Player (Player King); Player Queen; Prologue; Lucianus*)

Enter Hamlet and Players

HAMLET

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I have pronounced it to you trippingly on the tongue. 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 was and is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image. Go, make you ready.

What ho, Horatio!

Enter Horatio.

HORATIO

Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAMLET

There is a play tonight before the King,
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death.

I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damnèd ghost that we have seen.
Give him heedful note,
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face.

HORATIO

Well, my lord.

Sound a flourish. Danish march. Enter Trumpets and Kettle-drums, King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and other Lords attendant, with his Guard carrying torches.

HAMLET

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

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAMLET

Excellent, i' faith.

Be the players ready?

ROSENCRANTZ

Ay, my lord, they stay upon your patience.

GETRUDÉ, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAMLET

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

Lying down at Ophelia's feet.

POLONIUS

[To the King.] O ho, do you mark that?

HAMLET

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

OPHELIA

No, my lord.

HAMLET

I mean, my head upon your lap?

OPHELIA

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

Do you think I meant country matters?

OPHELIA

I think nothing, my lord.

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

What is, my lord?

HAMLET

Nothing.

OPHELIA

You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET

Who, I?

OPHELIA

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

Nay, 'tis two months, my lord.

HAMLET

O heavens, die two months ago, and not forgotten yet?

The trumpets sound.

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

HAMLET

Madam, how like you this play?

GERTRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Anon come in another man, takes off his crown, kisses it, pours poison in the sleeper's ears, and leaves him. The Queen returns, finds the King dead, makes passionate action. The poiser with some three or four mutes come in again, seem to condole with her. The dead body is carried away. The poiser woos the Queen with gifts; she seems harsh and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts love.

OPHELIA

What means this, my lord?

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

What do you call the play?

HAMLET

"The Mouse-trap."

Enter Player Lucianus.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

OPHELIA

You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

Anon come in another man, takes off his crown, kisses it, pours poison in the sleeper's ears, and leaves him. The Queen returns, finds the King dead, makes passionate action. The pois'ner come in again, seems to condole with her. The pois'ner woos the Queen with gifts; she seems harsh and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts love.

OPHELIA

The King rises.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

How fares my lord?

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Give me some light. Away!

POLONIUS

Give o'er the play.

HAMLET

What, frightened with false fire?

POLONIUS

Lights, lights, lights!

Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio.

HAMLET

O good Horatio, didst perceive?

HORATIO

Very well, my lord.

HAMLET

Upon the pois'ning?

HORATIO

I did very well note him.

HAMLET

Ah, ha! Come, some music! The King like not the comedy!

Come, some music!

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

GUILDENSTERN

Good my lord, The King, sir—

HAMLET

Ay, sir, what of him?

GUILDENSTERN

Is in his retirement marvelous distemp'red.

HAMLET

With drink, sir?

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

My mother, you say—

ROSENCRANTZ

She says: your behavior hath struck her into amazement.

HAMLET

O wonderful son, that can so 'stonish a mother!

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

We shall obey. Have you any further trade with us?

ROSENCRANTZ

My lord, you once did love me.

HAMLET

And do still.

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

[To the Players] O, the recorders! Let me see one.

GUILDENSTERN

O my lord, if my duty be too bold-

HAMLET

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

It is as easy as lying. Govern these ventages with your fingers and thumbs, 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 utt'rance 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 play'd on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.

Enter Polonius.

POLONIUS

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

HAMLET

I will come to my mother by and by.

POLONIUS

I will say so.

Exit.

HAMLET

"By and by" is easily said. Leave me, friends.

Exeunt all but Hamlet.

Now to my mother.

Exit.

ACT III, scene iii

Elsinore. A room in Elsinore castle.

(*King; Rosencrantz; Guildenstern; Polonius; Hamlet*)

Enter King, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

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 's as doth hourly grow

Out of his lunacy.

GUILDENSTERN

We will ourselves provide.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

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

ROSENCRANTZ

We will haste us.

Exeunt Gentlemen, 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 call upon you ere you go to bed,

And tell you what I know.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Thanks, dear my lord.

Exit Polonius.

O, my offense 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.

"Forgive me my foul murder"?

That cannot be, since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder:

My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.

May one be pardon'd and retain th' offense?

O wretched state! O bosom black as death!

O limèd soul, that struggling to be free

Art more engag'd! Help, angels!

He kneels. Enter Hamlet.

HAMLET

Now might I do it pat, now he is a-praying;

And now I'll do't-and so he goes to heaven,

And so am I reveng'd.

A villain kills my father, and for that

I, his sole son, do this same villain send

To heaven.

Why, this is not revenge. No!

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent:

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,

Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed,

or about some act

That has no relish of salvation in't-

Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,

And that his soul may be as damn'd and black

As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays.

Exit.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

[*Rising*] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:

Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

Exit.

ACT III, scene iv

Elsinore. The Queen's room in Elsinore castle.

(*Queen Gertrude; Polonius; Hamlet; Ghost*)

Enter Queen Gertrude and Polonius.

POLONIUS

He will come straight. Look you lay home to him.

Pray you be round with him.

GERTRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

I'll warr'nt you, fear me not. Withdraw,
I hear him coming.

Polonius hides behind the arras. Enter Hamlet.

HAMLET

Now, mother, what's the matter?

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET

Mother, you have my father much offended.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Why, how now, Hamlet?

HAMLET

What's the matter now?

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Have you forgot me?

HAMLET

No: You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife,

And would it were not so, you are my mother.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

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.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?

Help ho!

POLONIUS

[*Behind*] What ho, help!

HAMLET

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

Kills Polonius through the arras.

POLONIUS

[Behind] O, I am slain.

GETRUDA, QUEEN OF DENMARK

O me, what hast thou done?

HAMLET

Nay, I know not, is it the King?

GETRUDA, QUEEN OF DENMARK

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.

GETRUDA, QUEEN OF DENMARK

As kill a king!

HAMLET

Ay, lady, it was my word.

Parts the arras and discovers Polonius.

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

I took thee for thy better.

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.

GETRUDÉ, QUEEN OF DENMARK

What have I done?

HAMLET

Such an act

That blurs the grace and blush of modesty.

GETRUDÉ, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Ay me, what act?

HAMLET

Look here upon this picture, and on this.

This was your husband. Look you now what follows:

Here is your husband, like a mildewed ear,

Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?

You cannot call it love. What judgment

Would step from this to this?

O shame, where is thy blush?

Rebellious hell-

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

O Hamlet, speak no more!

Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul,

And there I see such black and grainèd spots

As will not leave their tinct.

HAMLET

Nay, but to live

In the rank sweat of an enseamèd bed,

Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love

Over the nasty sty!

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

O, speak to me no more!

These words like daggers enter in my ears.

No more, sweet Hamlet!

HAMLET

A murderer and a villain!

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

No more!

Enter Ghost in his night-gown.

HAMLET

A king of shreds and patches—

[To the Ghost] Save me! What would your gracious figure?

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Alas, he's mad!

HAMLET

Do you not come your tardy son to chide?

O, say!

GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER

Do not forget! This visitation

Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.

But look, amazement on thy mother sits.

Speak to her, Hamlet.

HAMLET

How is it with you, lady?

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Alas, how is't with you?

Whereon do you look?

HAMLET

On him, on him! [To Ghost] Do not look upon me!

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

To whom do you speak this?

HAMLET

Do you see nothing there?

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Nothing at all.

HAMLET

Nor did you nothing hear?

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

No, nothing but ourselves.

HAMLET

Why, look you there! My father as he lived!

Exit Ghost.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

This is the very coinage of your brain.

HAMLET

It is not madness that I have utt'red.

Mother, for love of grace, confess yourself to heaven,

Repent what's past, avoid what is to come-

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

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.

For this same lord, *[Pointing to Polonius]* I do repent;

Again good night.

I must be cruel only to be kind.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

What shall I do?

HAMLET

I must to England, you know that?

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Alack,

I had forgot. 'Tis so concluded on.

HAMLET

There's letters seal'd, and my two schoolfellows,

They bear the mandate, they must sweep my way

And marshal me to knavery. Let it work.

I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room.

Good night, mother.

Exeunt severally, Hamlet tugging in Polonius.

ACT IV, SCENE I

Elsinore. A room in Elsinore castle.

(King; Queen; Rosencrantz; Guildenstern)

Enter King.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves—

You must translate, 'tis fit we understand them.

Where is your son?

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

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

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Mad as the sea and wind. 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.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

O heavy deed!

His liberty is full of threats to all,

To you yourself, to us, to every one.

Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?

It will be laid to us. Where is he gone?

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

To draw apart the body he hath kill'd,

He weeps for what is done.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

O Gertrude, come away!

The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,

But we will ship him hence, and this vile deed

We must with all our majesty and skill

Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:

Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,

And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him.

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

Into the chapel. I pray you haste in this.

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

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

And let them know both what we mean to do

And what's untimely done. O, come away!

My soul is full of discord and dismay.

Exeunt.

ACT IV, scene ii

Elsinore. Another room in Elsinore castle.

(*Hamlet; Rosencrantz; Guildenstern*)

Enter Hamlet.

HAMLET

Safely stow'd.

GENTLEMAN

[*Within*] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

HAMLET

But soft, what noise? Who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

ROSENCRANTZ

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

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.

GUILDENSTERN

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.

Exeunt.

ACT IV, scene iii

Elsinore. Another room in Elsinore castle.

(*King; Attendants; Rosencrantz; Hamlet; Guildenstern*)

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAMLET

At supper.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

At supper? Where?

HAMLET

Not where he eats, but where he is eaten. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

What dost thou mean by this?

HAMLET

Nothing.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

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, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

[To Attendants] Go seek him there.

HAMLET

He will stay till you come.

Exeunt Attendants.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Hamlet, this deed,

For that which thou hast done—must send thee hence

With fiery quickness; therefore prepare thyself,

For England.

HAMLET

For England?

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET

Good.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

So is it.

HAMLET

Come, for England! Farewell, dear mother.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Thy loving father, Hamlet.

HAMLET

Come, for England!

Exit.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Follow him at foot. Pray you make haste.

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

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

Pay homage to us—

Our sovereign process, which imports at full,

By letters congruing to that effect,

The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England.

Exit.

ACT IV, SCENE iv

CUT

ACT IV, scene v

Elsinore. A room in Elsinore castle.

(*Horatio; Queen Gertrude; Gentlewoman; Ophelia; King; Messenger; Laertes; Laertes's Followers*)

Enter Horatio, Queen Gertrude, and a Gentlewoman (OSRIC).

GETRUDÉ, QUEEN OF DENMARK

I will not speak with her.

OSRIC

She is importunate, indeed distract.

Her mood will needs be pitied.

GETRUDÉ, QUEEN OF DENMARK

What would she have?

OSRIC

She speaks much of her father, says she hears

There's tricks i' th' world, and hems, and beats her heart,

speaks things in doubt that carry but half sense. Her speech is
nothing-

HORATIO

' Twere good she were spoken with.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Let her come in.

Exit Osric. Enter Ophelia distracted, with her hair down, playing on a lute.

OPHELIA

Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

How now, Ophelia?

OPHELIA

[She sings.]

"How should I your true-love know

From another one?

By his cockle hat and staff,

And his sandal shoon."

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPHELIA

Say you? Nay, pray you mark.

"He is dead and gone, lady,

He is dead and gone,

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone."

O ho!

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Nay, but, Ophelia—

OPHELIA

Pray you mark.

"White his shroud as the mountain snow"—

Enter King.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Alas, look here, my lord.

OPHELIA

"Larded all with sweet flowers,

Which bewept to the ground did not go

With true-love showers."

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

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!

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Conceit upon her father.

OPHELIA

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

"Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day,

All in the morning betime,

And I a maid at your window,

To be your Valentine."

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Pretty Ophelia!

OPHELIA

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

"By Gis, and by Saint Charity,

Alack, and fie for shame!

Young men will do't if they come to't,

By Cock, they are to blame.

Quoth she, "Before you tumbled me,

You promis'd me to wed.'

'So would I 'a' done, by yonder sun,

And thou hadst not come to my bed.'"

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

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.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

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

Exit Horatio.

O, this is the poison of deep grief, it springs

All from her father's death!

O Gertrude, Gertrude,

When sorrows come, they come not single spies,

But in battalions: first, her father slain;

Next, your son gone-

A noise within. Cries of "Laertes shall be king!"

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Alack, what noise is this?

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

[Enter a Messenger] What is the matter?

BARNARDO

Save yourself, my lord!

Enter Laertes with others.

LAERTES

Where is this king?

O thou vile king, give me my father!

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Calmly, good Laertes.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Let him go, Gertrude.

Tell me, Laertes, why thou art thus incens'd.

LAERTES

Where is my father?

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Dead.

GERTRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

But not by him.

LAERTES

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

To hell, allegiance! I'll be reveng'd

Most throughly for my father.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

I am guiltless of your father's death,

And am most sensibly in grief for it.

Good Laertes, he which hath your noble father slain

Pursued my life.

A noise within: ["Let her come in!"]

LAERTES

How now, what noise is that?

Enter Ophelia.

Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!

OPHELIA

"*They bore him barefac'd on the bier,*

Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny,

And in his grave rain'd many a tear"—

Fare you well, my dove!

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember.

And there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

LAERTES

A document in madness.

OPHELIA

[To Claudius] There's fennel for you, and columbines. [To Gertrude]

There's rue for you, and here's some for me; I would give you some

violets, but they wither'd all when my father died. They say he made
a good end-

"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 pole,

He is gone, he is gone,

And we cast away moan,

God 'a' mercy on his soul!"

God be wi' you.

Exit Ophelia with Gertrude following.

LAERTES

O heat, dry up my brains.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Laertes, I must commune with your grief,

And you must put me in your heart for friend.

LAERTES

My revenge will come.

Exit Laertes. Enter Horatio with letters.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

How now? What news?

HORATIO

Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

From Hamlet? Who brought them?

HORATIO

Sailors, my lord.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Leave us.

Exit Horatio.

[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 recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return. Hamlet."

And in a postscript here he says "alone."

[*The King tears up the letter. Exit.*]

ACT IV, SCENE VI

CUT

ACT IV, SCENE VII

Elsinore. A room in the castle. (Gertrude, Laertes, Claudius)

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

One woe doth tread upon another's heel,

So fast they follow. Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

LAERTES

Drown'd! O, where?

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

There is a willow grows askant the brook,

That shows his hoary leaves in the glassy stream,

Therewith fantastic garlands did she make

Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples.

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 awhile 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,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

LAERTES

Alas, then she is drown'd?

GETRUDA, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Drown'd.

LAERTES

Poor Ophelia. I forbid my tears.

Adieu, my lord,

I have a speech a' fire that fain would blaze,
But that this folly drowns it.

Exit.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Let's follow, Gertrude.

How much I had to do to calm his rage!

Now fear I this will give it start again,

Exeunt.

ACT V, scene i

Elsinore. A churchyard.

(*Gravedigger; Hamlet; Horatio; King; Queen; Laertes; Doctor of Divinity; Lords; Attendants*)

Hamlet and Horatio enter from afar.

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. Up from my cabin,
in the dark grop'd I to find out them,
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew
To mine own room again, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio—
Ah, royal knavery!—an exact command:
My head should be struck off.

HORATIO

Is't possible?

HAMLET

Here's the commission.

But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

HORATIO

I beseech you.

HAMLET

I sat me down,
Devis'd a new commission, wrote it fair.
An earnest conjuration from the King,

As England was his faithful tributary,
And many such-like as's of great charge,
That on the view and knowing of these contents,
He should those bearers put to sudden death.

HORATIO

How was this seal'd?

HAMLET

Why, even in that was heaven ordain't.
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,
Subscrib'd it, gave't th' impression, plac'd it safely,
The changeling never known.

HORATIO

So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

HAMLET

Why, man, they are not near my conscience.

HORATIO

Why, what a king is this!

HAMLET

He that hath kill'd my king and whor'd my mother-

Is't not perfect conscience

To quit him with this arm? And is't not to be damn'd,

To let this canker of our nature come

In further evil?

HORATIO

It must be shortly known to him from England

What is the issue of the business there.

HAMLET

It will be short; the interim's mine.

Enter Gravedigger with shovel.

GRAVEDIGGER

[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? He sings in grave-making.

FIRST CLOWN (GRAVEDIGGER)

Throws up a shovelful of earth with a skull in it.

[*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."

HAMLET

Whose grave's this, sirrah?

GRAVEDIGGER

Mine, sir.

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

For such a guest is meet."

HAMLET

What man dost thou dig it for?

GRAVEDIGGER

For no man, sir.

HAMLET

What woman then?

GRAVEDIGGER

For none neither.

HAMLET

Who is to be buried in't?

GRAVEDIGGER

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

HAMLET

How absolute the knave is! How long hast thou been grave-maker?

GRAVEDIGGER

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?

GRAVEDIGGER

Why, because he was mad. He shall recover his wits there, or if he do not, 'tis no great matter there.

HAMLET

Why?

GRAVEDIGGER

There the men are as mad as he.

HAMLET

How came he mad?

GRAVEDIGGER

Very strangely, they say.

HAMLET

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

GRAVEDIGGER

Here's a skull now hath lien you i' th' earth three and twenty years.

HAMLET

Whose was it?

GRAVEDIGGER

A mad fellow's it was. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the King's jester.

HAMLET

This?

Takes the skull.

GRAVEDIGGER

E'en that.

HAMLET

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 abhorr'd in my imagination it is! Here hung those lips that I have kiss'd I know not how oft.

Puts down the skull.

To what base uses we may return, Horatio! But soft, but soft awhile, here comes the king.

Enter King, Queen, Laertes, and a Doctor of Divinity, following the corpse, with Lords attendant.

The Queen, the courtiers. Who is this they follow?

Couch we a while and mark.

Retiring with Horatio.

LAERTES

Lay her i' th' earth,

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh

May violets spring!

HAMLET

What, the fair Ophelia!

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

[Scattering flowers.] Sweets to the sweet, farewell!

I hop'd thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife.

LAERTES

O, treble woe

Fall ten times treble on that cursèd head

Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense

Depriv'd thee of! Hold off the earth a while,

Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.

Leaps in the grave.

HAMLET

[Coming forward] What is he whose grief

Bears such an emphasis?

LAERTES

The devil take thy soul!

Grappling with him.

HAMLET

I prithee take thy fingers from my throat.

Hold off thy hand!

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Pluck them asunder.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

Hamlet, Hamlet!

OPHELIA'S PALLBEARERS

Gentlemen!

HORATIO

Good my lord, be quiet.

The Attendants part them.

HAMLET

I lov'd Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers

Could not with all their quantity of love

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

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

O, he is mad, Laertes.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

For love of God, forbear him.

HAMLET

Show me what thou'rt do.

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

Woo't eat a crocodile?

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

To outface me with leaping in her grave?

I'll rant as well as thou.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

This is mere madness.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.

HAMLET

It is no matter.

Let Hercules himself do what he may,

The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.

Exit Hamlet with Horatio. Exeunt Queen, Attendants. Remain Claudius, Laertes, and Osric.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

The sight is dismal.

And our affairs from England come too late. [*He produces a letter*]

Our commandment is fulfilled. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.

And now Hamlet comes back.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

[*To Laertes*] They have gave you such a masterly report

For art and exercise-

And for your rapier most especial.

'Twould be a sight indeed if one could match you.

LAERTES

Indeed, my lord.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

This report does Hamlet so envenom with his envy

That he could nothing do but wish and beg

To play with you.

LAERTES

What of this, my lord?

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

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?

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Not that I think you did not love your father,
But what would you undertake
To show yourself indeed your father's son
More than in words?

LAERTES

To cut Hamlet's throat i'th' church.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this?
Stay close within your chamber. Hamlet return'd,
Shall know you are come home.
We'll put on those shall praise your excellency,
And bring you for a duel,
a friendly exposition 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 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 if I but gall him slightly,
It may be death.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

If this should fail, Soft let me see.

I have it!

When in your motion you are hot and dry—

And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him
A chalice whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,

Our purpose may hold.

Exeunt.

ACT V, scene ii

Elsinore. A hall in Elsinore castle.

(*Hamlet; Horatio; King; Queen; Laertes; Attendants*)

Enter Osric.

OSRIC

Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

HAMLET

I humbly thank you.

OSRIC

My lord, his Majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes. I know you are not ignorant of what excellency Laertes is with his weapon.

HAMLET

What's his weapon?

OSRIC

Rapier. And the King, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and Laertes, he shall not exceed you three hits; and it

would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

HAMLET

If it please his Majesty, let the foils be brought, I will win for him.

ORSRIC

I commend my duty to your lordship.

[*Exit Osric*]

HORATIO

You will lose, my lord.

HAMLET

I do not think so; Since Laertes went to France I have been in continual practice. I shall win at the odds.

HORATIO

But my lord-

HAMLET

Thou wouldest 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. Such a kind of misgiving as would perhaps trouble a woman.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

If it be now, it will be now.

[Enter Osric and Attendants]

BARNARDO

The King and Queen are all coming down.

OSRIC

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

HAMLET

She well instructs me.

A table prepar'd, and flagons of wine on it.

Enter Trumpets, Drums, and Officers with cushions, foils, daggers; King, Queen, Laertes, and all the State.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

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

The King puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's.

HAMLET

Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong,

What I have done, I here proclaim was madness.

LAERTES

I am satisfied in nature.

I do receive your offer'd love like love,

And will not wrong it.

HAMLET

I embrace it freely.

And will this brothers' wager frankly play.

Give us the foils. Come on.

LAERTES

Come, one for me.

HAMLET

I'll be your foil, Laertes.

LAERTES

You mock me, sir.

HAMLET

No, by this hand.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Give them the foils, Osric. Cousin Hamlet,

You know the wager?

HAMLET

Very well, my lord.

Your Grace has laid the odds a' th' weaker side.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

I do not fear it, I have seen you both.

Hamlet and Laertes prepare to fight.

The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath. [he toasts him]

Come, begin. [Trumpets.]

And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

HAMLET

Come on, sir.

LAERTES

Come, my lord.

They play and Hamlet scores a hit.

HAMLET

One.

LAERTES

No.

HAMLET

Judgment.

OSRIC

A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAERTES

Well, again.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Stay, give me drink. *{He gestures for a cup}*

Hamlet, here's to thy health! Give him the cup.

HAMLET

I'll play this bout first, set it by a while.

Come.

They play again.

Another hit; what say you?

LAERTES

A touch, a touch, I do confess't.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Our son shall win.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet. [*She picks up the poisoned cup*]

HAMLET

Good madam!

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Gertrude, do not drink.

GETRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK

I will, my lord, I pray you pardon me. [*She drinks*]

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

[*Aside to Laertes*]

It is the poisoned cup! It is too late.

LAERTES

My lord, I'll hit him now.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

I do not think't.

HAMLET

Come, for the third, Laertes.

LAERTES

Say you so? Have at you now!

Laertes wounds Hamlet; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers.

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

Part them, they are incens'd.

HAMLET

Nay, come again.

Hamlet wounds Laertes. The Queen falls.

OSRIC

Look to the Queen there ho!

HORATIO

[to Hamlet] How is it, my lord?

OSRIC

How is't, Laertes?

LAERTES

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

HAMLET

How does the Queen?

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

She swoons to see them bleed.

GETRUDA, QUEEN OF DENMARK

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

The drink, the drink! I am pois'ned.

Dies.

HAMLET

O villainy! Ho, let the door be lock'd!

Treachery! Seek it out.

LAERTES

Hamlet, thou art slain.

No med'cine in the world can do thee good;

The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,

Unbated and envenom'd. The foul practice

Hath turn'd itself on me.

I can no more—the King, the King's to blame.

HAMLET

The point envenom'd too!

Then, venom, to thy work.

Hurts the King.

ALL

Treason! Treason!

CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK

O, yet defend me friends! I am but hurt!

HAMLET

Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damnèd Dane,

Drink off this potion! *[Forces him to drink the potion]* Follow my mother!

King dies.

LAERTES

He is justly served.

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.

Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,

Nor thine on me.

Dies.

HAMLET

Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.

I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!

[To the onlookers] You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

That are but mutes or audience to this act,

Had I but time- O I could tell you-

Horatio, I am dead-

Thou livest. Report me and my cause aright

To the unsatisfied.

HORATIO

Here's yet some liquor left.

HAMLET

Give me the cup. Let go! By heaven, I'll ha't!

O God, Horatio, if thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,

Tell my story.

O, O, O, O-

—The rest is silence. (*Dies.*)

HORATIO

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest! [End.]