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**THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET,  
PRINCE OF DENMARK  
December 8th, 2008**

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**Location:** Elsinore Castle and environs

**Date:** February 1-2 and 13-14, 1086 CE

**Playing Time:** 2 hours plus one 15-minute intermission

**Dramatis Personae**

**Ghost**, Past King of Denmark

**Hamlet**, Prince of Denmark

**Claudius**, King of Denmark

**Gertrude**, Queen of Denmark

**Polonius**, Counselor to the King,

**Ophelia**, Daughter to Polonius

**Laertes**, Son to Polonius

**Horatio**, Scholar and Friend to Hamlet

**Rosencrantz**, Student and Companion to Hamlet

**Guildenstern**, Student and Companion to Hamlet

**Marcellus**, A battlefield soldier

**Barnardo**, A Soldier

**Osric**, A Courtier

**Gravedigger**

**Gravedigger's Apprentice**

**Player King**

**Player Queen**

**Player Prince**

**Player Princess**

**Player Fool**

**Attendants**

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## ACT I

### SCENE I. Elsinore. A platform before the castle. (1, 1.1)

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*Enter GHOST*

1

ALL

[*within*] Who's there?

*Exeunt*

---

*Enter HORATIO*

2

HORATIO

Who's there?

### SCENE II. A room of state in the castle. (179, 1.2)

---

*Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, HAMLET, POLONIUS,  
LAERTES, and Attendants*

3

CLAUDIUS

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
The memory be green,  
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,  
The imperial jointress to this warlike state,  
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy --  
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd  
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.

---

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?  
You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?  
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,  
And loose 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?

4

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.

---

CLAUDIUS 5

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  
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

CLAUDIUS

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

---

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,-- 6

HAMLET

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

---

CLAUDIUS 7

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET

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

---

GERTRUDE 8

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,  
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.  
Do not for ever with thy vailèd 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.

GERTRUDE

If it be,  
Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET

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

---

CLAUDIUS 9  
'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,  
To give these mourning duties to your father:  
But, you must know, your father lost a father;  
That father lost, lost his. But to persevere  
In obstinate condolement is a course  
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief.

---

We pray you, throw to earth 10  
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.  
For your intent 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.

---

GERTRUDE 11  
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  
Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:  
Be as ourself in Denmark.

---

Madam, come; 12  
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet  
Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,  
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,  
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,  
And the king's rouse the heavens all bruit again,  
Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away.  
*Exeunt all but HAMLET*

---

HAMLET 13  
O, that this too too solid flesh would melt  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!  
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!  
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,  
Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature  
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!  
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:

So excellent a king; that was, to this,  
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother  
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!  
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,  
As if increase of appetite had grown  
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month--  
Let me not think on't--Frailty, thy name is woman!--  
A little month, or ere those shoes were old  
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,  
Like Niobe, all tears:--why she, even she--  
O, God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,  
Would have mourn'd longer--married with my uncle,  
My father's brother, but no more like my father  
Than I to Hercules. Within a month:  
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
Had left the flushing in her galléd 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 and MARCELLUS*

14

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?

15

MARCELLUS

My good lord--

HAMLET

I am very glad to see you.

---

But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

16

HORATIO

A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAMLET

I would not hear your enemy say so.  
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.

17

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

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

---

My father!--methinks I see my father.

18

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.

19

HAMLET

Saw? who?

HORATIO

My lord, the king your father.

HAMLET

The king my father!

---

HORATIO 20  
Season your admiration for awhile  
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,  
Upon the witness of this gentleman,  
This marvel to you.

HAMLET  
For God's love, let me hear.

---

HORATIO 21  
Two nights together has this gentleman,  
In the dead vast and middle of the night,  
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,  
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,  
Appears before him, and with solemn march  
Goes slow and stately by him: thrice he walk'd  
By his oppress'd and fear-surprisèd eyes,  
Within his truncheon's length; whilst he, distilled  
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,  
Stands dumb and speaks not to him. This to me  
In dreadful secrecy impart he did;  
And I with him the third night kept the watch;  
Where, as he had deliver'd, 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 22  
But where was this?

MARCELLUS  
My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

HAMLET  
Did you not speak to it?

---

HORATIO 23  
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 vanish'd from our sight.

HAMLET  
'Tis very strange.

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

And we did think it writ down in our duty  
To let you know of it.

HAMLET

Indeed, indeed, sir, but this troubles me.

---

Hold you the watch to-night?

24

MARCELLUS

I do, my lord.

---

HAMLET

Arm'd, say you?

25

MARCELLUS

Arm'd, my lord.

HAMLET

From top to toe?

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

I would I had been there.

HORATIO

It would have much amazed you.

HAMLET

Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?

HORATIO

While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

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 silver'd.

---

HAMLET

I will watch to-night;  
Perchance 'twill walk again.

26

HORATIO

I warrant 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 conceal'd this sight,  
Let it be tenable in your silence still;  
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,  
Give it an understanding but no tongue.  
I will requite your loves. So, fare you well.  
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,  
I'll visit you.

MARCELLUS

My duty to your honour.

HAMLET

Your love, 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*

27

**SCENE III. A room in Polonius' house. (460, 1.3)**

---

*Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA*

28

LAERTES

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

OPHELIA

Do you doubt that?

---

LAERTES

29

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 --

OPHELIA

No more but so?

LAERTES

Think it no more;  
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 honour may sustain,  
If with too credent ear you list his songs,  
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,  
And keep you in the rear of your affection,  
Out of the shot and danger of desire.  
Be wary then; best safety lies in fear:  
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPHELIA

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

LAERTES

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

---

*Enter POLONIUS*

30

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:  
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.  
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;  
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade.  
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
This above all: to thine ownself be true,

And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!

LAERTES

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POLONIUS

The time invites you; go; your servants tend.

---

LAERTES

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

31

OPHELIA

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

LAERTES

Farewell.

*Exit*

---

POLONIUS

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

32

OPHELIA

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

POLONIUS

Marry, well bethought.

---

What is between you? Give me up the truth.

33

OPHELIA

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

---

From this time

34

Be somewhat scantier of your maiden presence.  
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 IV. The platform. (603, 1.4)**

*Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS*

35

HAMLET

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HORATIO

It is a nipping and an eager air.

HAMLET

What hour now?

HORATIO

I think it lacks of twelve.

HAMLET

No, it is struck.

HORATIO

Indeed? I heard it not: then it draws near the season  
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

---

*A flourish of trumpets and canons within*

36

What does this mean, my lord?

HAMLET

The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,  
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;  
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,  
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 honour'd in the breach than the observance.

---

HORATIO 37  
Look, my lord, it comes!  
*Enter Ghost*

HAMLET  
Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

---

Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd, 38  
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
Thou comest in such a questionable shape  
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,  
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me!

---

What may this mean, 39  
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel  
Revisit'st 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 HAMLET* 40

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  
Why, what should be the fear?  
I do not set my life in a pin's fee;  
And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?  
It waves me forth again: I'll follow it.

---

*[they hold him back]* 41

HAMLET  
Hold off your hands.

HORATIO

Be ruled; you shall not go.

HAMLET

My fate cries out,  
Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.  
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!  
I say, away! Go on; I'll follow thee.

*Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET*

---

HORATIO

He waxes desperate with imagination.

42

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 V. Another part of the platform. (682, 1.5)**

*Enter GHOST and HAMLET*

43

HAMLET

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

GHOST

Mark me.

---

HAMLET

Speak; I am bound to hear.

44

GHOST

So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAMLET

What?

---

GHOST 45  
 I am thy father's spirit,  
 Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,  
 And for the day confined to fast in fires,  
 Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
 Are burnt and purged away. 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 46  
 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.

---

Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,  
 A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark  
 Is by a forged process of my death  
 Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,  
 The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
 Now wears his crown. 47

HAMLET  
 O my prophetic soul! My uncle!

---

GHOST 48  
 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!

---

But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;  
 Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,  
 My custom always of the afternoon, 49

Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,  
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,  
And in the porches of my ears did pour  
The leperous distilment.  
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand  
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd.

---

If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not; 50  
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
A couch for luxury and damnèd incest.  
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,  
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
Against thy mother aught: Fare thee well at once!  
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,  
Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.  
*Exit*

---

HAMLET 51  
O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?  
And shall I couple hell? Remember thee!  
Yea, from the table of my memory  
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain,  
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!

---

That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain; 52  
At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark:  
So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;  
It is 'Adieu, adieu! remember me.'  
I have sworn 't.

---

MARCELLUS & HORATIO 53  
[*Within*] My lord, my lord,--

MARCELLUS  
[*Within*] Lord Hamlet,--

HORATIO  
[*Within*] Heaven secure him!

---

*Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS* 54

MARCELLUS  
How is't, my noble lord?

HORATIO  
What news, my lord?



HAMLET

O, wonderful!

HORATIO

Good my lord, tell it.

HAMLET

No; you'll reveal it.

HORATIO

Not I, my lord, by heaven.

MARCELLUS

Nor I, my lord.

HAMLET

There's ne'er 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' the 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 has 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.

55

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,

56

As you are friends, scholar and soldier,  
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. Upon my sword.

---

GHOST

*[Beneath]* Swear.

57

HORATIO

O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAMLET

And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.

GHOST

*[Beneath]* Swear.

HAMLET

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

---

But come;

58

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

---

GHOST

*[Beneath]* Swear.

59

HAMLET

Rest, rest, perturbèd spirit!

---

So, gentlemen, 60  
With all my love I do commend me to you:  
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is  
May do, to 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.  
[*aside*] 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*

---

**SCENE VI. A room in POLONIUS' house. (970, 2.1)**

---

*Enter POLONIUS THEN OPHELIA* 61

POLONIUS  
How now, Ophelia, what's the matter?

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

POLONIUS  
With what, i' the name of God?

---

OPHELIA 62  
My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,  
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced;  
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,  
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;  
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;  
And with a look so piteous in purport  
As if he had been loosed out of hell  
To speak of horrors,--he comes before me.

---

POLONIUS 63  
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 raised a sigh so piteous and profound  
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
And end his being.

---

POLONIUS

64

I will go seek the king.  
This is the very ecstasy of love,  
Whose violent property fordoes itself  
Have you given him any hard words of late?

OPHELIA

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

POLONIUS

That hath made him mad.  
I am sorry. Come, go we to the king:  
This must be known.

*Exeunt*

---

**SCENE VII. A room in the castle. (1020, 2.2)**

*Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, ROSENCRANTZ,  
GUILDENSTERN, and Attendants*

65

CLAUDIUS

Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!

---

Something have you heard  
Of Hamlet's transformation; I entreat you both,  
That, being of so young days brought up with him,  
And sith so neighbour'd 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,  
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

66

---

GERTRUDE

67

Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you;  
And sure I am two men there are not living  
To whom he more adheres.

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.

CLAUDIUS

Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

GERTRUDE

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

GUILDENSTERN

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

GERTRUDE

Ay, amen!

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN*

---

*Enter POLONIUS*

68

POLONIUS

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

CLAUDIUS

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

---

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

69

GERTRUDE

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

CLAUDIUS

Well, we shall sift him.

---

POLONIUS

70

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.

GERTRUDE

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.

---

I have a daughter--have while she is mine--  
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,  
Hath given me this: now gather, and surmise.

71

[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, HAMLET.'*

CLAUDIUS

72

But how hath she received his love?

POLONIUS

What do you think of me?

CLAUDIUS

As of a man faithful and honourable.

POLONIUS

I would fain prove so.

---

I went round to work,  
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:  
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;

73

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

---

CLAUDIUS

74

Do you think 'tis this?

GERTRUDE

It may be, very likely.

POLONIUS

*[Pointing to his head and shoulder]*

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

---

CLAUDIUS

75

How may we try it further?

POLONIUS

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

GERTRUDE

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

We will try it.

GERTRUDE

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

POLONIUS

Away, I do beseech you, both away:

I'll board him presently.  
*Exeunt* CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE

---

*Enter* HAMLET, *reading*

76

O, give me leave:  
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  
Have you a daughter?

POLONIUS  
I have, my lord.

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

POLONIUS  
*[Aside]* How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter.

---

HAMLET  
Words, words, words.

77



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, should be old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

POLONIUS

[*Aside*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't.

---

My honorable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

78

HAMLET

You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will 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 ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

79

POLONIUS

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

ROSENCRANTZ

[*To POLONIUS*] God save you, sir!  
*Exit POLONIUS*

---

GUILDENSTERN

My honoured lord!

80

ROSENCRANTZ

My most dear lord!

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

As the indifferent children of the earth.

GUILDENSTERN

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

HAMLET

Nor the soles of her shoe?

ROSENCRANTZ

Neither, my lord.

HAMLET

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

GUILDENSTERN

'Faith, her privates we.

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

Then is doomsday near:

---

but your news is not true.

81

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

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

HAMLET

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

GUILDENSTERN

Which dreams indeed are ambition.

---

HAMLET

Now, in the beaten way of friendship,  
What make you at Elsinore?

82

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? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

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'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me:

---

83

no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

84

ROSENCRANTZ

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

---

HAMLET

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

85

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. What players are they?

ROSENCRANTZ

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

---

*Flourish of trumpets within*

86

GUILDENSTERN

There are the players.

HAMLET

Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore.

---

But my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

87

GUILDENSTERN

In what, my dear lord?

HAMLET

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

---

*Enter POLONIUS*

88

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.  
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...

---

*Enter Players*

89

HAMLET [*interrupting*]

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

PLAYER KING

What speech, my lord?

HAMLET

I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was  
never acted. One speech in it I  
chiefly loved: 'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido; and  
thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of  
Priam's slaughter: if it live in your memory, begin  
at this line: let me see, let me see--  
"The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,'--  
it is not so:--it begins with Pyrrhus:--  
"The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms..."  
So, proceed you.

---

PLAYER KING

90

"Anon he finds him  
Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,  
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,  
Repugnant to command: unequal match'd,  
Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;  
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword  
The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,  
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top  
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash  
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword,  
Which was declining on the milky head  
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:  
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,  
And like a neutral to his will and matter,  
Did nothing.

---

But, as we often see, against some storm,  
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,  
The bold winds speechless and the orb below

91

As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder  
Doth rend the region, so, after Pyrrhus' pause,  
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work;  
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall  
On Mars's armour forged for proof eterne  
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
Now falls on Priam.

---

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 93  
This is too long.

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

---

PLAYER KING 94  
'But who, O, who had seen the moblèd queen--'

HAMLET  
'The moblèd queen?'

POLONIUS  
That's good; 'moblèd queen' is good.

---

PLAYER KING 95  
'Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames  
With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head  
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,  
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,  
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up;  
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,  
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have  
pronounced.

---

But if the gods themselves did see her then 96  
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 97  
Look, whether he has not turned his colour and has  
tears in's eyes. Pray you, no more.

HAMLET  
'Tis well: I'll have thee speak out the rest soon.

---

Good my lord, will you see the players well 98  
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 bodkins, man, much better: use every man  
after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?  
Use them after your own honour and dignity.  
Take them in.

POLONIUS  
Come, sirs.

HAMLET  
Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow.  
*Exit POLONIUS with Players excluding PLAYER KING*

---

Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the 99  
Murder of Gonzago?

PLAYER KING  
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?

PLAYER KING  
Ay, my lord.

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

*Exit PLAYER KING*

---

My good friends, I'll leave you till night: you are 100  
welcome to Elsinore.

ROSENCRANTZ

Good my lord!

HAMLET

Ay, so, God be wi' ye;

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

---

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!  
Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
That from her working all his visage wann'd,  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!  
For Hecuba!  
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,  
That he should weep for her? What would he do,  
Had he the motive and the cue for passion  
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears  
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,  
Make mad the guilty and appall the free,  
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed  
The very faculties of eyes and ears.  
Yet I, the son of a dear father murder'd,  
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,  
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab.  
Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain! I have heard  
That guilty creatures sitting at a play  
Have by the very cunning of the scene  
Been struck so to the soul that presently  
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;  
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players  
Play something like the murder of my father  
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;  
I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,  
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen  
May be the devil: and the devil hath power  
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps  
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,  
As he is very potent with such spirits,  
Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds  
More relative than this: the play 's the thing  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

*Exit*

101



**SCENE VIII. A room in the castle. (1678, 3.1)**

*Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, OPHELIA*

102

CLAUDIUS

Sweet Gertrude, leave us now;  
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 the affliction of his love or no  
That thus he suffers for.

GERTRUDE

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

OPHELIA

Madam, I wish it may.  
*Exit GERTRUDE*

POLONIUS

Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,  
We will bestow ourselves.  
I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord.  
*Exeunt CLAUDIUS, POLONIUS & OPHELIA*

103

*Enter HAMLET*

104

HAMLET

To be, or not to be: that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause: there's the respect

That makes calamity of so long life;  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despisèd love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action.—

---

Soft you now!

105

The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remember'd.

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

No, not I;  
I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA

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

---

HAMLET 106  
 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. 107

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 108  
 Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a  
 breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest;  
 but yet I could accuse me of such things that it  
 were better my mother had not borne me: I am very  
 proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at  
 my beck than I have thoughts to put them in,  
 imagination to give them shape, or time to act them  
 in. What should such fellows as I do crawling  
 between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves,

all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery.

---

Where's your father?

109

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

110

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

111

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

*Exit*

---

OPHELIA

112

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

To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

---

*Re-enter CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS*

113

CLAUDIUS

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

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.

CLAUDIUS

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

---

**SCENE IX. A hall in the castle. (1848, 3.2)**

*Enter HAMLET and Players*

114

HAMLET [*distributing masks to the players*]

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to  
you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it,  
as many of your players do, I had as lief the  
town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air  
too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently;  
for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say,  
the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget  
a temperance that may give it smoothness.

PLAYER KING

I warrant your honour.

---

HAMLET 115  
Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion  
be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the  
word to the action; with this special o'erstep not  
the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is  
from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the  
first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the  
mirror up to nature. Now this overdone,  
or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful  
laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the  
censure of the which one must in your allowance  
o'erweigh a whole theatre of others.

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

HAMLET  
O, reform it altogether.

---

And let those that play 116  
your clowns speak no more than is set down for them;  
for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to  
set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh  
too; though, in the mean time, some necessary  
question of the play be then to be considered:  
that's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition  
in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.

*Exeunt Players*

---

*Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN* 117  
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? 118

ROSENCRANTZ GUILDENSTERN  
We will, my lord.  
*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

---

HAMLET 119  
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

120

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? For thou hast been  
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,  
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards  
Hast ta'en with equal thanks. Give me that man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
As I do thee.--Something too much of this.--  
There is a play to-night before the king;  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
Which I have told thee of my father's death:  
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,  
Even with the very comment of thy soul  
Observe mine uncle.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

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

---

*A flourish. Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, POLONIUS,  
OPHELLA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,  
ATTENDANTS*

121

CLAUDIUS

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.

CLAUDIUS

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

HAMLET

No, nor mine now.

---

[To POLONIUS]

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

122

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' the  
Capitol; Brutus killed me.

HAMLET

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

---

Be the players ready?

123

ROSENCRANTZ

Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

GERTRUDE

Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

124

HAMLET

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

POLONIUS

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

125

HAMLET

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?  
*Lying down at OPHELIA's feet*

126

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.

127

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 these two hours.

OPHELIA

Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

---

*Music. The dumb-show enters*

128

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

*Exeunt*

---

OPHELIA

What means this, my lord?

129

HAMLET

Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

OPHELIA  
Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

---

*Enter Prologue*

130

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?

131

OPHELIA  
'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET  
As woman's love.

---

*Enter two Players, King and Queen*

132

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

PLAYER QUEEN  
So many journeys may the sun and moon  
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!

---

But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,  
So far from cheer and from your former state,  
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,  
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:  
For women's fear and love holds quantity;  
In neither aught, or in extremity.  
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;  
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.

133

PLAYER KING  
'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;  
My operant powers their functions leave to do:  
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,

Honour'd, beloved; and haply one as kind  
For husband shalt thou--

PLAYER QUEEN

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

---

HAMLET

134

[*aside*] Wormwood, wormwood.

---

PLAYER QUEEN

135

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.  
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 wife!

---

HAMLET

136

If she should break it now!

---

PLAYER KING

137

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

*Sleeps*

---

PLAYER QUEEN

138

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

*Exit*

---

HAMLET

139

Madam, how like you this play?

GERTRUDE

The lady protests too much, methinks.

HAMLET

O, but she'll keep her word.

---

CLAUDIUS

140

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

HAMLET

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

CLAUDIUS

What do you call the play?

HAMLET

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

---

*Enter PLAYER FOOL*

141

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

---

OPHELIA

142

You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

---

PLAYER VILLAIN

143

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

*Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears*

---

HAMLET

144

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

GERTRUDE

How fares my lord?

POLONIUS

Give o'er the play.

CLAUDIUS

Give me some light: away!

ALL

Lights, lights, lights!

*Exeunt all but HAMLET*

---

HAMLET

145

Why, let the stricken deer go weep,  
The hart ungalled play;  
For some must watch, while some must sleep:  
So runs the world away.

*Exit*

---

**INTERMISSION**

## ACT II

### SCENE I. A hall in the castle as before. (2158, 3.2)

---

*Enter HORATIO then HAMLET*

146

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!

147

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

---

*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

148

GUILDENSTERN

Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

HAMLET

Sir, a whole history.

GUILDENSTERN

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

HAMLET

You are welcome.

---

GUILDENSTERN

149

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

HAMLET

Sir, I cannot.

GUILDENSTERN

What, my lord?

HAMLET

Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: but,  
sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command;  
or, rather, as you say, my mother.

---

ROSENCRANTZ

150

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?

151

ROSENCRANTZ

My lord, you once did love me.

HAMLET

So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

Sir, I lack advancement.

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

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

---

*Re-enter Players with recorders*

152

O, the recorders! let me see one. 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:  
Look you, these are the stops.

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

---

HAMLET 153  
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?

---

*Enter POLONIUS* 154

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

HAMLET  
Methinks it is like a weasel.

POLONIUS  
It is backed like a weasel.

HAMLET  
Or like a whale?



POLONIUS

Very like a whale.

HAMLET

Then I will come to my mother by and by.

POLONIUS

I will say so.

HAMLET

By and by is easily said.

*Exit POLONIUS*

---

Leave me, friends.

155

*Exeunt all but HAMLET*

---

Let me be cruel, not unnatural:

156

I will speak daggers to her, but use none!

*Exit*

---

**SCENE II. A room in the castle. (2302, 3.3)**

*Enter CLAUDIUS followed by Polonius*

157

POLONIUS

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

Behind the arras I'll convey myself,

To hear the process; and 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.

CLAUDIUS

Thanks, dear my lord.

*Exit POLONIUS*

---

O, my offence is rank it smells to heaven;

158

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 cursèd hand

Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,

Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens

To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy

But to confront the visage of offence?  
And what's in prayer but this two-fold force,  
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;  
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer  
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder?'  
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd  
Of those effects for which I did the murder,  
My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.  
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?  
In the corrupted currents of this world  
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself  
Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above;  
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!  
O limèd 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 newborn babe!  
All may be well.

*Retires and kneels*

---

*Enter HAMLET*

159

HAMLET

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

*Exit*

CLAUDIUS

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

*Exit*

---

**SCENE III. The Queen's closet. (2375, 3.4)**

*Enter GERTRUDE and POLONIUS*

161

POLONIUS

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

GERTRUDE

I'll warrant you,  
Fear me not: withdraw, I hear him coming.  
*POLONIUS hides behind the arras*

---

*Enter HAMLET*

162

HAMLET

Now, mother, what's the matter?

GERTRUDE

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET

Mother, you have my father much offended.

GERTRUDE

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

GERTRUDE

Why, how now, Hamlet!

HAMLET

What's the matter now?

GERTRUDE

Have you forgot me?

HAMLET

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

---

GERTRUDE

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

163

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.

GERTRUDE

What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?

---

Help, help, ho!

164

POLONIUS

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

HAMLET

[*Drawing*] How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!  
*Makes a pass through the arras*  
*POLONIUS Falls and dies*

---

GERTRUDE

O me, what hast thou done?

165

HAMLET

Nay, I know not:  
Is it the king?

GERTRUDE

O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAMLET

A bloody deed!

---

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

166

GERTRUDE

As kill a king!

HAMLET

Ay, lady, 'twas my word.

---

*Lifts up the arras and discovers POLONIUS*  
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

167

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,  
If damned custom have not brass'd it so  
That it is proof and bulwark against sense.

168

GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

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

GERTRUDE

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

---

HAMLET

Look here, upon this picture, and on this,  
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
See, what a grace was seated on this brow;  
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;  
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;  
A station like the herald Mercury  
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill.  
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:  
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,  
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?  
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,  
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?

169

---

You cannot call it love; for at your age  
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,  
And waits upon the judgment: and what judgment  
Would step from this to this?

170

---

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.

171

---

GERTRUDE 172

O Hamlet, speak no more:  
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;  
And there I see such black and grainèd spots  
As will 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,--

GERTRUDE

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

---

HAMLET 173

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!

GERTRUDE

No more!

HAMLET

A king of shreds and patches,--

---

*Enter Ghost*

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

GERTRUDE

Alas, he's mad!

---

HAMLET 175

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

GHOST

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

Speak to her, Hamlet.

---

HAMLET

176

How is it with you, lady?

GERTRUDE

Alas, how is't with you,  
To whom do you speak?

HAMLET

Do you see nothing there?

GERTRUDE

Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

HAMLET

Nor did you nothing hear?

GERTRUDE

No, nothing but ourselves.

---

HAMLET

177

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*

GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

Ecstasy!  
My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,  
And makes as healthful music: it is not madness  
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,  
And I the matter will re-word; which madness  
Would gambol from.

---

Mother, for love of grace,  
Lay not that mattering unction to your soul,  
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks:  
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,  
Whilst 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.

178

GERTRUDE

O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

HAMLET

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

---

Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed; 179  
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.  
Refrain to-night,  
And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
To the next abstinence. Once more, good night:  
And when you are desirous to be bless'd,  
I'll blessing beg of you.

---

For this same lord, 180  
*Pointing to POLONIUS*  
I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,  
To punish me with this and this with me,  
That I must be their scourge and minister.

---

So, again, good night. 181  
I must be cruel, only to be kind:  
Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.

---

One word more, good lady. 182

GERTRUDE

What shall I do?

HAMLET

I must to England; you know that?

GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

There's letters seal'd: and my two schoolfellows,  
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,  
They bear the mandate.  
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.  
*Exeunt severally; HAMLET dragging POLONIUS*



**SCENE IV. A room in the castle. (2662, 4.3)**

---

183

*Enter CLAUDIUS*

CLAUDIUS

I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.  
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!  
Yet must not we put the strong law on him:  
He's loved of the distracted multitude,  
Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;  
And where tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,  
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*

184

How now! what hath befall'n?

ROSENCRANTZ

Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,  
We cannot get from him.

CLAUDIUS

But where is he?

ROSENCRANTZ

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

CLAUDIUS

Bring him before us.

ROSENCRANTZ

Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

---

*Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN*

185

CLAUDIUS

Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAMLET

At supper.

CLAUDIUS

At supper! where?

HAMLET

Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain  
convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your

worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes, but to one table: that's the end.

CLAUDIUS

Alas, alas!

HAMLET

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

CLAUDIUS

What dost you mean by this?

HAMLET

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

---

CLAUDIUS

Where is Polonius?

186

HAMLET

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

CLAUDIUS

Go seek him there.

HAMLET

He will stay till ye come.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN*

---

CLAUDIUS

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

187

HAMLET

For England!

CLAUDIUS  
Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET  
Good.

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

HAMLET  
I see a cherub that sees them.  
[Looks at portrait and/ or Ghost and/ or Ophelia's silhouette]

---

But, come; for 188

England!  
*Enter ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN at door*  
Farewell, dear mother.

CLAUDIUS  
Thy loving father, Hamlet.

HAMLET  
My mother: father and mother is man and wife; man  
and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother. Come, for England!  
*Exit HAMLET*  
[Claudius hands letters to Rosencrantz]  
*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN*

---

CLAUDIUS 189  
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 V. Elsinore. A room in the castle. (2745, 4.5)**

*Enter GERTRUDE, and HORATIO* 190

GERTRUDE  
I will not speak with her.

HORATIO

She is importunate, indeed distract:  
Her mood will needs be pitied.  
'Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew  
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

GERTRUDE

Let her come in.  
*Exit HORATIO*

---

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is, 191  
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:  
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,  
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

---

*Re-enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA* 192

OPHELIA

Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

GERTRUDE

How now, Ophelia!

---

OPHELIA 193

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

---

GERTRUDE 194

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPHELIA

Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

---

[*Sings*] 195  
He is dead and gone, lady,  
He is dead and gone;  
At his head a grass-green turf,  
At his heels a stone.

---

GERTRUDE 196

Nay, but, Ophelia,--

OPHELIA

Pray you, mark.

---

[*Sings*] 197  
White his shroud as the mountain snow,--

*Enter CLAUDIUS*

---

GERTRUDE 198  
Alas, look here, my lord.

---

OPHELIA 199  
[Sings]  
Larded with sweet flowers  
Which bewept to the grave did go  
With true-love showers.

---

CLAUDIUS 200  
How do you, pretty lady?

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

CLAUDIUS  
Conceit upon her father.

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

---

[Sings] 201  
To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,  
All in the morning betime,  
And I a maid at your window,  
To be your Valentine.  
Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,  
And dupp'd the chamber-door;  
Let in the maid, that out a maid  
Never departed more.

---

CLAUDIUS 202  
Pretty Ophelia!

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

---

[Sings] 203  
By Gis and by Saint Charity,  
Alack, and fie for shame!  
Young men will do't, if they come to't;  
By cock, they are to blame.  
Quoth she, before you tumbled me,  
You promised me to wed.

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

---

CLAUDIUS 204  
How long hath she been thus?

---

OPHELIA 205  
I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I  
cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him  
i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it:  
and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my  
coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies;  
good night, good night.

*Exit*

---

CLAUDIUS 206  
Follow her close; give her good watch,  
I pray you.

*Exit HORATIO*

---

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs 207  
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,  
When sorrows come, they come not single spies  
But in battalions.

---

*A noise within* 208

GERTRUDE  
Alack, what noise is this?

CLAUDIUS  
Attend! Attend! Guard the door!

---

*Enter BARNARDO drawn* 209  
What is the matter?

BARNARDO  
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!'

---

GERTRUDE 210  
How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!  
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!  
*Noise within*

CLAUDIUS  
The doors are broke.

---

*Enter LAERTES armed* 211

LAERTES  
O thou vile king,  
Give me my father!

GERTRUDE  
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.

CLAUDIUS  
What is the cause, Laertes,  
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?

---

*[Gertrude steps between them]* 212

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.

LAERTES  
Where is my father?

CLAUDIUS  
Dead.

GERTRUDE  
But not by him.

CLAUDIUS  
Let him demand his fill.

LAERTES  
How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:  
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!

CLAUDIUS Good Laertes, If you desire to know the certainty Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge, That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe, Winner and loser?	
<hr/>	
LAERTES None but his enemies.	213
CLAUDIUS Why, now you speak Like a good child and a true gentleman. That I am guiltless of your father's death, And am most sensible in grief for it, It shall as level to your judgment pierce As day does to your eye.	
<hr/>	
[ <i>Noise within</i> ]	214
LAERTES How now! what noise is that?	
<hr/>	
[ <i>Re-enter OPHELIA</i> ]	215
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 by weight, Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!	
<hr/>	
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.	216
<hr/>	
OPHELIA [ <i>Sings</i> ] They bore him barefaced on the bier; Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny; And in his grave rain'd many a tear:-- Fare you well, my dove! O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.	217
<hr/>	
LAERTES This nothing's more than matter.	218
<hr/>	



OPHELIA	219
<p>There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray,  love, remember: and there is pansies. that's for thoughts.</p>	
LAERTES	
<p>A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.</p>	
<hr/>	
OPHELIA	220
<p>There's fennel for you, and columbines: there's rue  for you; and here's some for me: we may call it  herb-grace o' Sundays: O you must wear your rue with  a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you  some violets, but they withered all when my father  died: they say he made a good end,--</p>	
<hr/>	
[Sings]	221
<p>For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.</p>	
<hr/>	
LAERTES	222
<p>Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,  She turns to favour and to prettiness.</p>	
<hr/>	
OPHELIA	223
<p>[Sings]  And will he not come again?  And will he not come again?  No, no, he is dead:  Go to thy death-bed:  He never will come again.  His beard was as white as snow,  All flaxen was his poll:  He is gone, he is gone,  And we cast away moan:  God ha' mercy on his soul!  And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' ye.  <i>Exit</i></p>	
<hr/>	
LAERTES	224
<p>Do you see this, O God?</p>	
CLAUDIUS	
<p>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:</p>	
<p>I pray you, go with me.  <i>Exeunt</i></p>	
<hr/>	

**SCENE VI. Another room in the castle. (2986, 4.6)**

---

*Enter HORATIO*

225

HORATIO

[*reads*] 'Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give their deliverer 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. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.  
'He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.'

*Exit*

**SCENE VII. Another room in the castle.**

---

*Enter CLAUDIUS and LAERTES*

226

CLAUDIUS

I loved your father, and we love ourself;  
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine--

---

*Enter BARNARDO*

227

How now! what news?

BARNARDO

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

CLAUDIUS

From Hamlet! who brought them?

BARNARDO

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

CLAUDIUS

Laertes, you shall hear them. Leave us.

*Exit BARNARDO*

---

[*Reads*]

228

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

---

What should this mean?

229

LAERTES

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

CLAUDIUS

If it be so, Laertes--  
Will you be ruled by me?

LAERTES

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

---

CLAUDIUS

230

Two months since,  
Here was a gentleman of Normandy.

LAERTES

Upon my life, Lamond.

CLAUDIUS

The very same.

LAERTES

I know him well: he is the brooch indeed  
And gem of all the nation.

---

CLAUDIUS

231

He made confession of you,  
And gave you such a masterly report  
For art and exercise in your defence  
And for your rapier most especially,  
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,  
If one could match you.

LAERTES

What out of this, my lord?

CLAUDIUS

Hamlet is back: what would you undertake,  
To show yourself your father's son in deed  
More than in words?

LAERTES

To cut his throat i' the church.

---

CLAUDIUS 232  
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.  
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home:  
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence  
And 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 practise  
Requite him for your father.

---

LAERTES 233  
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 touch my point  
With this contagion, and gall him slightly,  
It may be death.

CLAUDIUS  
Let's further think of this--

---

I ha't. 234  
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.

---

*Enter GERTRUDE* 235  
How now, sweet queen!

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

LAERTES  
Drown'd! O, where?

---

GERTRUDE 236  
There is a willow grows aslant a brook,  
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;  
There with fantastic garlands did she come  
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples  
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,  
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:  
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds

Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;  
When down her weedy trophies and herself  
Fell in the weeping brook.

---

Her clothes spread wide; 237  
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up:  
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes;  
As one incapable of her own distress,  
Or like a creature native and indued  
Unto that element:

---

but long it could not be 238  
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?

GERTRUDE

Drown'd, drown'd.

---

LAERTES 239

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

*Exit*

---

CLAUDIUS 240

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*

---

**SCENE VIII. A churchyard. (3252, 5.1)**

*Enter GRAVEDIGGERS, with spades, &c* 241  
*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance*

GRAVEDIGGER

[*sings*] In youth, when I did love, did love,  
Methought it was very sweet,  
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behave,  
O, methought, there was nothing meet.  
[*sings*] But age, with his stealing steps,

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

*Throws up a skull*

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

*Throws up another skull*

---

HAMLET 242

I will speak to this fellow. 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 243

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

GRAVEDIGGER

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

HAMLET

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

GRAVEDIGGER

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

---

HAMLET 244

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 245  
How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

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

---

HAMLET 246  
How long is that since?

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

---

HAMLET 247  
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, it's no great matter there.

HAMLET  
Why?

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

---

Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years. 248

HAMLET  
Whose was it?

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

HAMLET  
Nay, I know not.

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

HAMLET

This?

GRAVEDIGGER

E'en that.

---

HAMLET

249

Let me see.

*Takes the skull*

Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rims at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft.

---

Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen? 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.

250

---

Prithee, Horatio, tell

251

me one thing.

HORATIO

What's that, my lord?

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

E'en so.

HAMLET

And smelt so? pah!

*Puts down the skull*

HORATIO

E'en so, my lord.

---

HAMLET

252

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



HORATIO

'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

HAMLET

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

---

But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the king. 253

---

*Enter masked procession; with Corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES;  
CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE* 254  
*Exeunt Gravediggers*

---

The queen -- who is this they follow? 255  
And with such maimed rites?  
*Retiring with HORATIO*

---

LAERTES 256

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

---

HAMLET 257

What, the fair Ophelia!

---

GERTRUDE 258

Sweets to the sweet: farewell!  
*Scattering flowers*  
I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;  
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,  
And not have strew'd thy grave.

---

LAERTES 259

O, treble woe  
Fall ten times treble on that cursèd head,  
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense  
Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth awhile,  
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:  
*Leaps into the grave*  
Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,

HAMLET	260
<p>[<i>Advancing</i>] What is he whose grief  Bears such an emphasis? This is I,  Hamlet the Dane.  <i>Leaps into the grave</i></p>	
LAERTES	261
<p>The devil take thy soul!  <i>Grappling with him</i></p>	
CLAUDIUS	262
<p>Pluck them asunder.</p>	
GERTRUDE	
<p>Hamlet, Hamlet!</p>	
HORATIO	
<p>Good my lord, be quiet.  <i>The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave</i></p>	
HAMLET	263
<p>Why I will fight with him upon this theme  Until my eyelids will no longer wag.</p>	
GERTRUDE	264
<p>O my son, what theme?</p>	
HAMLET	
<p>I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers  Could not, with all their quantity of love,  Make up my sum.</p>	
GERTRUDE	265
<p>This is mere madness:  And thus awhile the fit will work on him.</p>	
HAMLET	266
<p>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.  <i>Exit</i></p>	
CLAUDIUS	267
<p>I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.  <i>Exit HORATIO</i></p>	

[To LAERTES]

268

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 IX. A hall in the castle. (3512, 5.2)**

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO*

269

HAMLET

Up from my cabin,  
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark  
Groped I to find out them; had my desire.  
Finger'd their packet, where I found, Horatio,--  
O royal knavery!--an exact command,  
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,  
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,  
My head should be struck off.

HORATIO

Is't possible?

---

HAMLET

270

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

HORATIO

I beseech you.

---

HAMLET

271

Being thus be-netted round with villainies,--  
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,  
They had begun the play--I sat me down,  
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair:  
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,  
Without debatement further, more or less,  
He should the bearers put to sudden death,  
Not shriving-time allow'd.

---

HORATIO

272

So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't?

HAMLET

Why, man, they did make love to this employment;  
They are not near my conscience.  
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,

That to Laertes I forgot myself;  
For, by the image of my cause, I see  
The portraiture of his.

---

HORATIO 273

Peace! who comes here?  
*Enter OSRIC*

OSRIC  
Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

HAMLET  
I humbly thank you, sir.

---

Dost know this water-fly? 274

HORATIO  
No, my good lord.

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

---

OSRIC 275

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. 276

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.

277

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,--

278

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.

279

HAMLET

What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

OSRIC

Of Laertes?

---

HORATIO

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

---

280

HAMLET

Of him, sir.

281

OSRIC

I know you are not ignorant--

HAMLET

I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did,  
it would not much approve me. Well, sir?

---

OSRIC

You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is--  
I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation  
laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

282

HAMLET

What's his weapon?

OSRIC

Rapier and dagger.

HAMLET

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

---

OSRIC

283

The king, sir, hath waged with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so: three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

HAMLET

Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this 'imponed,' as you call it?

OSRIC

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

---

HAMLET

284

How if I answer 'no'?

OSRIC

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

---

HAMLET

285

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

OSRIC

Shall I re-deliver you e'en so?

HAMLET

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

OSRIC

I commend my duty to your lordship.

HAMLET

Yours, yours.

*Exit OSRIC*

---

HORATIO 286  
 You will lose this wager, my lord.

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

HORATIO  
 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 287  
 If your mind dislike any thing, obey it: I will  
 forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

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

---

*Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, LAERTES, OSRIC, and  
 Attendants with foils*

288

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

---

HAMLET 289  
 Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong;  
 But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.  
 This presence knows --  
 And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd  
 With sore distraction. What I have done,  
 That might your nature, honour and exception  
 Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

LAERTES  
 I am satisfied in nature,  
 Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most  
 To my revenge: but in my terms of honour  
 I stand aloof; and will no reconciliation,  
 Till by some elder masters, of known honour,

I have a voice and precedent of peace,  
To keep my name ungor'd.

HAMLET

I embrace it freely;  
And will this brother's wager frankly play.

---

Give us the foils. Come on.

290

LAERTES

Come, one for me.

---

291

HAMLET

Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

CLAUDIUS

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

---

LAERTES

This is too heavy, let me see another.

292

HAMLET

This likes me well. These foils have all a length?  
*They prepare to play*

OSRIC

Ay, my good lord.

---

CLAUDIUS

Set me the stoops of wine upon that table.  
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,  
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. Come, begin:  
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

293

---

HAMLET

Come on, sir.

294

LAERTES

Come, my lord.  
*They play*

HAMLET

One.



LAERTES

No.

HAMLET

Judgment.

OSRIC

A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAERTES

Well; again.

---

CLAUDIUS

295

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

HAMLET

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

---

Come.

296

*They play*

Another hit; what say you?

LAERTES

A touch, a touch, I do confess.

---

CLAUDIUS

297

Our son shall win.

GERTRUDE

He's fat, and scant of breath.

---

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows;  
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

298

HAMLET

Good madam!

---

CLAUDIUS

299

Gertrude, do not drink.

GERTRUDE

I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.  
*[she drinks, then offers it to Hamlet]*

---

HAMLET

300

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

GERTRUDE

Come, let me wipe thy face.

LAERTES	301
My lord, I'll hit him now.	
CLAUDIUS	
I do not think't.	
LAERTES	302
[ <i>Aside</i> ] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.	
HAMLET	303
Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally; I pray you, pass with your best violence; I am afeard you make a wanton of me.	
LAERTES	
Say you so?	
come on.	304
<i>They play</i>	
OSRIC	
Nothing, neither way.	
LAERTES	305
Have at you now! <i>LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then in scuffling, they change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES</i>	
CLAUDIUS	306
Part them; they are incensed.	
HAMLET	
Nay, come, again. <i>GERTRUDE falls</i>	
OSRIC	307
Look to the queen there, ho!	
HORATIO	308
They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?	
OSRIC	309
How is't, Laertes?	
LAERTES	
Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric; I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.	

HAMLET  
 How does the queen? 310

CLAUDIUS  
 She swoonds to see them bleed.

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

---

HAMLET 311  
 O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd:  
 Treachery! Seek it out.

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

---

HAMLET 312  
 The point!--envenom'd too!  
 Then, venom, to thy work.  
*Stabs CLAUDIUS*

---

CLAUDIUS 313  
 O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.

HAMLET  
 Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,  
 Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?  
 Follow my mother.  
*CLAUDIUS dies*

---

LAERTES 314  
 He is justly served;  
 It is a poison temper'd by himself.  
 Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:  
 Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,  
 Nor thine on me.  
*Dies*

---

HAMLET 315  
 Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.  
 I am dead, Horatio.

Thou livest; report me and my cause aright  
To the unsatisfied.

---

HORATIO 316  
Never believe it:  
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane:  
Here's yet some liquor left.

HAMLET  
As thou'rt a man,  
Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll have't.

---

O good Horatio, what a wounded name, 317  
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!  
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart  
Absent thee from felicity awhile,  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,  
To tell my story.

---

I die, Horatio; 318  
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:  
The rest is silence. [O,O,O,O.]  
*Dies*

---

HORATIO 319  
Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince:  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

---

Then let me speak to the yet unknowing world 320  
How these things came about: so shall you hear  
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,  
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,  
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,  
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook  
Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I  
Truly deliver.

*End*