

MAKE HAMLET

February 1, 2012  
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Dramatis Personae:

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, also Lucianous and Francisco  
Claudius, King of Denmark, also the Player King, Bernardo,  
and Ghost

Gertrude, Queen of Denmark, also the Player Queen and Ghost

Horatio, royal servant and gardener, also Prologue and Ghost

Ophelia, in love with Hamlet, associated with the court,  
also Ghost

Laertes, Ophelia's brother, also Marcellus and Ghost

Setting:

The present. A costume shop. Costume racks. Mannequins.  
Perhaps, on the upstage wall hangs a giant map of Denmark in  
the style of a 17<sup>th</sup> century map. Or perhaps it is a backdrop  
with the "O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I" soliloquy.  
A small garden. A microphone.

## Prologue.

*The play begins with all the actors on stage. In fact, the actors, though they may retire to the far sides of the stage when they "exit", never entirely leave the stage (this is subject to change depending on space). The actors prepare for the show - warming up and so on, perhaps wearing warm-up clothes or robes.*

HAMLET

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

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

HORATIO

I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us.

HAMLET

O, reform it altogether. Go, make you ready. We'll hear a play tonight.

ALL

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

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

ALL

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

Very well. My good friends, you are welcome to Elsinore.

*"I'm Waiting for My Man" plays. All the actors, standing onstage in a horizontal line, and put on their costumes.*

1.

*Darkness. A clock strikes twelve. Flashlights. A loud noise. Bernardo yells his line.*

BERNARDO

Who's there?

ALL

Shhhh!!!!

*Now everyone whispers until the ghost appears.*

FRANCISCO

Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

BERNARDO

Long live the king.

FRANCISCO

Bernardo?

BERNARDO

He.

FRANCISCO

You come most carefully upon your hour.

BERNARDO

'Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco.

FRANCISCO

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

BERNARDO

Have you had quiet guard?

FRANCISCO

Not a mouse stirring.

BERNARDO

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

FRANCISCO

I think I hear them. Stand ho, who is there?

*Enter Horatio and Marcellus.*

HORATIO

Friends to this ground.

MARCELLUS

And liegemen to the Dane.

FRANCISCO

Give you good night.

MARCELLUS

O farewell, honest soldiers; who hath relieved you?

FRANCISCO

Bernardo hath my place. Give you goodnight.

*Francisco exits.*

MARCELLUS

Holla, Bernardo!

BERNARDO

Say, what, is Horatio there?

HORATIO

A piece of him.

BERNARDO

Welcome Horatio, welcome good Marcellus.

MARCELLUS

What, has this thing appeared again tonight?

BERNARDO

I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS

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

HORATIO

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

BERNARDO

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

HORATIO

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

BERNARDO

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

*Lights up on a mannequin bust  
in an upstage corner. Its  
garments are blown by a fan.*

MARCELLUS

Peace, break thee off, look where it comes again.

BERNARDO

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

MARCELLUS

Thou art a scholar - speak to it, Horatio.

BERNARDO

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

HORATIO

Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder.

BERNARDO

It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS

Speak to it it, Horatio.

HORATIO

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

MARCELLUS

It is offended.

BERNARDO

See, it stalks away.

HORATIO

Stay, speak, speak, I charge thee speak.

*Lights down on mannequin bust.*

MARCELLUS

'Tis gone and will not answer.

BERNARDO

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

HORATIO

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

MARCELLUS

Is it not like the King?

HORATIO

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

MARCELLUS

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

HORATIO

In what particular thought to work, I know not,  
But in the gross and scope of mine opinion

This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

MARCELLUS

Good now, sit down, and tell me he that knows  
Why this same strict and most observant watch  
So nightly toils the subject of the land,  
And with such daily cost of brazen cannon  
And foreign mart for implements of war,  
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task  
Does not divide the Sunday from the week.  
What might be toward that this sweaty haste  
Doth make the night joint labourer with the day?  
Who is't that can inform me?

HORATIO

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

BERNARDO

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

HORATIO



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

*Again, lights up on mannequin  
bust in an upstage corner, its  
garments blown by a fan.*

HORATIO

But soft, behold, lo, where it comes again;  
I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion.  
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,  
Speak to me.  
If there be any good thing to be done  
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,  
Speak to me.

HORATIO

If thou art privy to thy country's fate  
Which happily foreknowing may avoid,  
O, speak.  
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life  
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth -  
For which they say your spirits oft walk in death -  
Speak of it, stay, and speak.

*Cock crows.*

Stop it, Marcellus!

MARCELLUS

Shall I strike it with my partisan?

HORATIO

Do if it will not stand.

BERNARDO

'Tis here!

HORATIO

'Tis here!

*Lights down on mannequin bust.*

MARCELLUS

'Tis gone.  
We do it wrong, being so majestic,  
To offer it the show of violence,  
For it is as the air, invulnerable,  
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

BERNARDO

It was about to speak when the cock crew.

HORATIO

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

MARCELLUS

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

HORATIO

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

MARCELLUS

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

*Exeunt.*

2.

*A room of state in the castle.*

*The King, Queen, Ophelia, and Laertes sit in chairs in a row. The Polonius costume hangs on an individual clothing rack at the table. Hamlet stands holding a gun to his head. The King is impatient, the Queen drinks, Ophelia cries, Laertes comforts his sister and vies for the attention Hamlet receives. Horatio stands off to the side. Finally, as we all knew he would, Hamlet puts the gun down. An embarrassing moment for the royal family.*

CLAUDIUS

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom  
To be contracted in one brow of woe,  
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature  
That we with wisest sorrow think on him  
Together with remembrance of ourselves.  
Therefore our sometime sister, now our Queen,  
Th'imperial jointress to this warlike state,  
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,  
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,  
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,  
Taken to wife. Nor have we herein barred  
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.  
Now follows, that you know: young Fortinbras,  
Holding a weak supposal of our worth  
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death  
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame -  
Co-leagued with this dream of his advantage -  
He hath not failed to pester us with message  
Importing the surrender of those lands  
Lost by his father, with all bands of law  
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.  
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting,  
Thus much the business is: we have here writ  
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras -  
Who impotent and bedrid scarcely hears  
Of this his nephew's purpose - to suppress  
His further gait herein, in that the levies,  
The lists and full proportions are all made  
Out of his subject; and we here dispatch  
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltemand,

For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,  
Giving to you no further personal power  
To business with the King more than the scope  
Of these delated articles allow.  
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?

LAERTES

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

CLAUDIUS

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

*Claudius looks toward the  
Polonius costume, which  
reminds him that Polonius is  
merely a costume. A small  
awkward pause.*

CLAUDIUS (cont'd)

Take thy fair hour, Laertes, time be thine  
And thy best graces spend it at thy will.  
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son -

HAMLET

A little more than kin, and less than kind.

CLAUDIUS

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET

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

GERTRUDE

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off  
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.  
Do not for ever with thy veiled lids  
Seek for thy noble father in the dust.  
Thou knowst '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, cold mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected havior of the visage,  
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,  
That can denote me truly. These indeed 'seem',  
For they are actions that a man might play,  
But I have that within which passes show,  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

CLAUDIUS

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,  
To give these mourning duties to your father,  
But you must know your father lost a father,  
That father lost lost his, and the survivor bound  
In filial obligation for some term  
To do obsequious sorrow; but to persevere  
In obstinate condolement is a course  
Of impious stubbornness, 'tis unmanly grief,  
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,  
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,  
An understanding simple and unschooled;  
For what we know must be, and is as common  
As any the most vulgar thing to sense -  
Why should we in our peevish opposition  
Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven,  
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,  
To reason most absurd, whose common theme  
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried  
From the first corpse till he that died today  
'This must be so.' We pray you throw to earth  
This unprevailing woe, and think of us  
As of a father, for let the world take note  
You are the most immediate to our throne,  
And with no less nobility of love  
Than that which dearest father bears his son  
Do I impart toward you. For your intent  
In going back to school in Wittenberg  
It is most retrograde to our desire,  
And we beseech you bend you to remain  
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,

Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

GERTRUDE

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 -  
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet  
Sits smiling to my heart, in grace whereof  
No jocund health that Denmark drinks today,  
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell  
And the King's rouse the heavens all bruit again,  
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

*Before they can exit, Hamlet  
explodes into the following  
monologue. Once each character  
has had enough, he exits,  
except Horatio.*

HAMLET

O that this too too sallied flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,  
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed  
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 thus:  
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 e're those shoes were old  
With which she followed my poor father's body,  
Like Niobe, all tears. Why she -  
O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason  
Would have mourned longer - married with my uncle,  
My father's brother (but no more like my father  
Than I to Hercules). Within a month,  
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,

She married. O most wicked speed! To post  
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets,  
It is not, nor it cannot come to good;  
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

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?

HORATIO

A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Where, my lord?

HAMLET

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

HORATIO

I saw him once - 'a was a goodly king.

HAMLET

'A was a man, take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again.

HORATIO

My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAMLET

Saw, who?

HORATIO

My lord, the King your father.

HAMLET

The king my father!

HORATIO

Season your admiration for a while  
With an attent ear till I may deliver  
This marvel to you.

HAMLET

For God's love let me hear!

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

But where was this?

HORATIO

My lord, upon the platform where we watched.



HAMLET

Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

'Tis very strange.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

Indeed, sir, but this troubles me.  
Hold you the watch tonight?

HORATIO

I do, my lord.

HAMLET

Armed, say you?

HORATIO

Armed, my lord.

HAMLET

From top to toe?

HORATIO

My lord, from head to foot.

HAMLET

Then saw you not his face?

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

What, looked he - frowningly?

HORATIO

A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

HAMLET

Pale, or red?

HORATIO

Nay, very pale.

HAMLET

And fixed his eyes upon you?

HORATIO

Most constantly.

HAMLET

I would I had been there.

HORATIO

It would have much amazed you.

HAMLET

Very like. Stay'd it long?

HORATIO

While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

HAMLET

His beard was grizzled, no?

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

I will watch tonight.  
Perchance 'twill walk again.

HORATIO

I warrant 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 friend,  
If you have hitherto concealed this sight  
Let it be tenable in your silence still  
And whatsoever else shall hap tonight  
Give it an understanding, but no tongue,  
I will requite your love. So, fare you well.  
Upon the platform 'twixt eleven and twelve  
I'll visit you.

HORATIO

My duty to your honour.

HAMLET

Your love, as mine to you, farewell.

*Exit Horatio.*

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 Hamlet.*

3.

*A room in Polonius' house. Enter Laertes and Ophelia.*

LAERTES

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

OPHELIA

Do you doubt that?

LAERTES

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

OPHELIA

No more but so?

LAERTES

Think it no more.  
For nature crescent does not grow alone  
In thews and bulks but, as this temple waxes  
The inward service of the mind and soul  
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,  
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch  
The virtue of his will; but you must fear,  
His greatness weighed, his will is not his own.  
He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends  
The safety and health of this whole state,  
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed  
Unto the voice and yielding of that body  
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you  
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it

As he in his particular act and place  
May give his saying deed, which is no further  
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.  
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain  
If with too credent ear you list his songs  
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open  
To his unmastered importunity.  
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,  
And keep you in the rear of your affection  
Out of the shot and danger of desire.  
The chariest maid is prodigal enough  
If she unmask her beauty to the moon.  
Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes.  
The canker galls the infants of the spring  
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,  
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth  
Contagious blastments are most imminent.  
Be wary then: best safety lies in fear,  
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPHELIA

I shall 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 puffed and reckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads  
And recks not his own rede.

LAERTES

O fear me not.

*A knock.*

LAERTES

I stay too long.

*Enter Hamlet wearing the  
Polonius costume. Temporary  
freeze. What will happen next?*

HAMLET

Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!  
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail  
And you are stayed for. There, my blessing with thee,  
And these few precepts in thy memory  
Look thou character: give thy thoughts no tongue  
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.  
Be thou familiar but by no means vulgar;  
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-hatched, unfledged courage. Beware

Of entrance to a quarrel but, being in,  
Bear't that th'opposed may beware of thee.  
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;  
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.  
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy  
But not expressed in fancy - rich, not gaudy;  
For the apparel oft proclaims the man  
And they in France of the best rank and station  
Are of all most select and generous chief in that.  
Neither a borrower nor a lender, boy;  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend  
And borrowing dulleth th'edge of husbandry.  
This above all, to thine own self be true  
And it must follow as the night the day  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
Farewell, my blessing season this in thee.

LAERTES

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

HAMLET

The time invites you. Go, your servants tend.

LAERTES

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

OPHELIA

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

LAERTES

Farewell.

*Exit Laertes.*

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

Affection? Pooh, you speak like a green girl  
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.  
Do you believe his 'tenders', as you call them?

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

Marry, I'll teach you; think yourself a baby  
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay  
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly  
Or – not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,  
Wrangling it thus – you'll tender me a fool.

OPHELIA

My lord, he hath importuned me with love  
In honourable fashion.

HAMLET

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.

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

I shall obey, my lord.

*Exeunt.*

4.

*The platform. Darkness. A clock strikes twelve. Enter Hamlet and Horatio.*

HAMLET

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HORATIO

It is a nipping, and an eager air.

HAMLET

*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off, within.*

What does this mean, my lord?

HAMLET

The king doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,  
Keeps wassail and the swaggering upspring 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 honoured in the breach than the observance.  
This heavy-headed revel east and west  
Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations:  
They clepe us drunkards and with swinish phrase  
Soil our addition, and indeed it takes  
From our achievements, though performed at height,  
The pith and marrow of our attribute.  
So oft it chances in particular men  
That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
As in their birth wherein they are not guilty  
(Since nature cannot choose his origin),  
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens  
The form of plausible manners - that these men,

Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect  
(Being nature's livery, or fortune's star),  
His virtues else, be they as pure as grace,  
As infinite as man may undergo,  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault: the dram of eale  
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt  
To his own scandal -

*Lights up on a mannequin  
bust. A fan blows its  
garments.*

HORATIO

Look, my lord, it comes!

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

It beckons you to go away with it,  
As if it some impartment did desire  
To you alone. But do not go with it.

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.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

It waves me still. Go on, I'll follow thee.

HORATIO

You shall not go, my lord.

HAMLET

Hold off your hands.

HORATIO

Be ruled, you shall not go.

HAMLET

My fate cries out  
And makes each petty artery in this body  
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.  
Still am I called - unhand me, gentleman -  
By heaven I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!  
I say, away! - Go on! I'll follow thee.

*Horatio backs away.*

HAMLET

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

GHOST

Mark me.

HAMLET

I will.

GHOST

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

HAMLET

Alas, poor ghost!

GHOST

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

HAMLET

Speak, I am bound to hear.

GHOST

So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAMLET

What?

GHOST

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

HAMLET

O God!

GHOST

- Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder!

HAMLET

Murder!

GHOST

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

HAMLET

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

GHOST

I find thee apt.  
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed  
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf  
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:

'Tis given out that, sleeping in 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.

HAMLET

O my prophetic soul!  
My uncle!

GHOST

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
With witchcraft of his wits, 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.  
But virtue, as it never will be moved  
Though Lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,  
So Lust, though to a radiant angel linked,  
Will sate itself in a celestial bed  
And prey on garbage.  
But soft, methinks I scent the morning air.  
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard -  
My custom always of the afternoon -  
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 whose effect  
Holds such an enmity with blood of man  
That swift as quicksilver it courses through  
The natural gates and alleys of the body  
And with a sudden vigour doth possess  
And curd like eager droppings into milk,  
The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine  
And a most instant tetter barked about  
Most lazarus-like with vile and loathsome crust,  
All my smooth body.  
Thus was I sleeping by a brother's hand  
Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched,  
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,  
Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled,  
No reckoning made but sent to my account  
With all my imperfections on my head.  
O horrible! O horrible, most horrible!  
If thou hast nature in thee bear it not,  
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
A couch for luxury and damned incest.  
But howsoever thou pursues this act  
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven  
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge

To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once:  
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near.  
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire.  
Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.

*Lights out on mannequin.  
Darkness again.*

HAMLET

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

*He writes.*

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

HORATIO

My lord, my lord!

HAMLET

So be it.

HORATIO

Illo, ho, ho, my lord!

HAMLET

Hillo, ho, ho, boy, come, bird, come.

*Enter Horatio.*

HORATIO

What news, my lord?

HAMLET

O, wonderful.

HORATIO

Good my lord, tell it.

HAMLET

No, you will reveal it.

HORATIO

Not I, my lord, by heaven.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Ay, by heaven.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

Why, right, you are in 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  
I will go pray.

HORATIO

These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

HAMLET

I am 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.  
And now, good friend,  
As you are friend, scholar and soldier,  
Give me one poor request.

HORATIO

What is't, my lord? I will.

HAMLET

Never make known what you have seen tonight.

HORATIO

My lord, I will not.

HAMLET

Nay, but swear't.

HORATIO

In faith, my lord, not I.

HAMLET

Upon my sword.

GHOST

Swear.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Propose the oath, my lord.

HAMLET

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

GHOST

Swear.

HAMLET

Well said, old mole, canst work i'th'earth so fast?

HORATIO

O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAMLET

And therefore as a stranger give it welcome:  
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come,  
Here as before: never - so help you mercy,  
How strange or odd some'er I bear myself  
(As I perchance hereafter shall think meet  
To put an antic disposition on) -  
That you, at such times seeing me never shall  
With arms encumbered thus, or this headshake,  
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase  
Or such ambiguous giving out to note

That you know aught of me. This do swear,  
So grace and mercy at your most need help you.

GHOST

Swear.

*Horatio swears.*

HAMLET

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

*Exeunt.*

5.

*Enter Ophelia. A phone rings,  
Ophelia answers. This scene  
is a phone conversation with  
her father but the audience  
only hears Ophelia's end.*

OPHELIA

Hello?

*Everyone else picks up a  
receiver on the same line.*

OPHELIA

O my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted.

LORD POLONIUS

With what, I' the name of God?

OPHELIA

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

LORD POLONIUS

Mad for thy love?

OPHELIA

My lord, I do not know,  
But truly I do fear it.

LORD POLONIUS

What said he?

OPHELIA

He took me by the wrist and held me hard;  
Then goes he to the length of all his arm  
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
He falls to such perusal of my face  
As 'a would draw it. Long stayed he so;  
At last, a little shaking of mine arm  
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound  
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
And end his being. That done, he lets me go  
And with his head over his shoulder turned  
He seemed to find his way without his eyes  
(For out o'doors he went without their helps)  
And to the last bended their light on me.

LORD POLONIUS

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

OPHELIA

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

LORD POLONIUS

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



*Everyone hangs up their receivers. Exit Ophelia.*

6.

*A room in the castle. Enter Claudius, Gertrude, and Horatio. Horatio picks up a letter from the ground.*

HORATIO

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

*Horatio reads the letter.*

HORATIO

Most fair return of greetings and desires.  
Upon our first he sent out to suppress  
His nephew's levies, which to him appeared  
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;  
But, better looked into, he truly found  
It was against your highness; whereat, grieved  
That so his sickness, age and impotence  
Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests  
On Fortinbras, which he in brief obeys,  
Receives rebuke from Norway and, in fine,  
Makes vow before his uncle never more  
To give th'assay of arms against your majesty.  
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,  
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee,  
And his commission to employ those soldiers  
So levied (as before) against the Polack,  
With an entreaty herein further shown

*He gives a paper.*

That it might please you to give quiet pass  
Through your dominions for this enterprise  
On such regards of safety and allowance  
As therein are set down.

CLAUDIUS

It likes us well,  
And at our more considered time we'll read,  
Answer and think upon this business.

*Exeunt.*

7.

*Enter Claudius and Gertrude.  
Claudius picks up a letter  
from the ground and reads it.*

CLAUDIUS

'To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most  
beautified Ophelia' - that's an ill phrase, a vile phrase,  
'beautified' is a vile phrase, but you shall hear - 'thus in  
her excellent white bosom, these,' etc.

GERTRUDE

Came this from Hamlet to her?

*Claudius continues to read.*

CLAUDIUS

'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.'

8.

*A room in the castle. Enter  
Claudius, Gertrude, and  
Ophelia.*

CLAUDIUS

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

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.*

CLAUDIUS

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

*Exit Claudius. Enter Hamlet  
carrying two extremely heavy  
suitcases.*

HAMLET

To be, or not to be - that is the question;  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles  
And by opposing end them; to die: to sleep -  
No more, and by a sleep to say we end  
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished - to die, to sleep -  
To sleep, perchance to dream - ay, there's the rub,  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil  
Must give us pause: there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life.  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office and the spurns  
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin. Who would fardels bear  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life  
But that the dread of something after death  
(The undiscovered country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns) puzzles the will  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of.  
Thus conscience does make cowards -  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry  
And lose the name of action. Soft you now,  
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons

Be all my sins remembered.

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

I humbly thank you, well.

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

No, not I.  
I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA

My 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

Ha, ha! Are you honest?

OPHELIA

My lord?

HAMLET

Are you fair?

OPHELIA

What means your lordship?

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

Could Beauty, my lord, have better commerce than  
with Honesty?

HAMLET

Ay, truly. For the power of Beauty will sooner transform  
honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of Honesty  
can translate Beauty into his likeness. This was sometime a  
paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you  
once.

OPHELIA

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

I was the more deceived.

HAMLET

Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all - believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

OPHELIA

At home, my lord.

HAMLET

Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool nowhere but in's own house. Farewell.

OPHELIA

O help him, you sweet heavens!

HAMLET

If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery. 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

Heavenly powers restore him.

HAMLET

I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.

OPHELIA

Why, how now, Hamlet - have you forgot me?

HAMLET

I have heard of your paintings well enough. God hath given you one face and you make yourselves another. You jig and amble you lisp, you nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't. It hath made me mad. I say we will have no more marriage. Those that are married already - all but one - shall live. The rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go!

OPHELIA

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!  
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword,  
Th'expectation and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,  
Th'observed of all observers, quite, quite down.  
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,  
That sucked the honey of his musicked vows,  
Now see what noble and most sovereign reason  
Like sweet bells jangled out of time and harsh -  
That unmatched form and stature of blown youth  
Blasted with ecstasy.

*Exit Hamlet.*

O, woe is me  
T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see.

*Re-enter Claudius.*

CLAUDIUS

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

*Exeunt.*

9.

*A hall in the castle. Enter Hamlet, carrying a mask.*

HAMLET

What ho, Horatio!

*Enter Horatio.*

HORATIO

Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

O, my dear lord -

HAMLET

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

And after we will both our judgments join  
In censure of his seeming.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

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

*Enter Ophelia.*

HAMLET

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

*He lies down at Ophelia's  
feet.*

OPHELIA

No, my lord.

HAMLET

Do you think I meant country matters?

OPHELIA

I think nothing, my lord.

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

What is, my lord?

HAMLET

Nothing.

OPHELIA

You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET

Who, I?

OPHELIA

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA



Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

HAMLET

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

*Danish march. A flourish.  
Enter Gertrude and Claudius,  
carrying masks. Gertrude,  
Claudius and Hamlet mimic the  
action spoken by Hamlet. With  
their masks on, they play the  
Queen, King, and fellow,  
respectively.*

HAMLET

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 exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The fellow comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The fellow wooes the Queen with gifts: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.

OPHELIA

What means this, my lord?

HAMLET

Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

OPHELIA

Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

HAMLET

We shall know by this fellow:

*Hamlet hands a script to  
Horatio.*

HAMLET

The players cannot keep council - they'll tell all.

OPHELIA

Will he tell us what this show meant?

HAMLET

Ay, or any show that you will show him: be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

OPHELIA

You are naught, you are naught. I'll mark the play.

PROLOGUE

For us, and for our tragedy,  
Here stooping to your clemency,  
We beg your hearing patiently.

*Hamlet looks at the paper he gave Horatio.*

HAMLET

Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

OPHELIA

'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET

As woman's love.

*Gertrude and Claudius prepare for the next scene, which they play as the Player Queen and King, respectively. Perhaps, ad lib directions from Hamlet, the theatre director.*

PLAYER KING

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

PLAYER QUEEN

So many journeys may the sun and moon  
Make us again count o'er ere love be done.  
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,  
So far from cheer and from your former state,  
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,  
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must.  
For women fear too much, even as they love,  
And women's fear and love holds quantity -  
Either none, 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.

PLAYER KING

'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too,  
My operant powers their functions leave to do,  
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind  
Honoured, beloved, and haply one as kind  
For husband shalt thou -

PLAYER QUEEN

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

HAMLET

That's wormwood!

PLAYER QUEEN

The instances that second marriage move  
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love.  
A second time I kill my husband dead  
When second husband kisses me in bed.

PLAYER KING

I do believe you think what now you speak.  
But what we do determine oft we break.  
Purpose is but the slave to memory,  
Of violent birth but poor validity.  
Which now like fruit unripe sticks on the tree  
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.  
Most necessary 'tis that we forget  
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:  
What to ourselves in passion we propose,  
The passion ending doth the purpose lose.  
The violence of either grief or joy  
Their own enactures with themselves destroy.  
Where joy most revels grief doth most lament,  
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.  
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange  
That even our loves should with our fortunes change,  
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove  
Whether Love lead Fortune or else Fortune Love.  
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies,  
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies,  
And hitherto doth Love on Fortune tend,  
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,  
And who in want a hollow friend doth try  
Directly seasons him his enemy.  
But orderly to end where I begun,  
Our wills and fates do so contrary run  
That our devices still are overthrown.  
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:

So think thou wilt no second husband wed  
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

PLAYER QUEEN

Nor earth to me give food nor heaven light,  
Sport and repose lock from me day and night.  
To desperation turn my trust and hope  
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope.  
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy  
Meet what I would have well and it destroy.  
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife  
If, once a widow ever I be wife.

HAMLET

If she should break it now!

PLAYER KING

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

*The Player King sleeps.*

PLAYER QUEEN

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

*Exit Player Queen.*

HAMLET

Madam, how like you this play?

GERTRUDE

The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

HAMLET

O, but she'll keep her word.

CLAUDIUS

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 Mousetrap.* Marry, how tropically! This play is the image  
of a murder done in Vienna. Gonzago is the duke's name, his  
wife Baptista. You shall see anon 'tis a knavish piece of

work, but what of that? Your majesty and we that have free souls - it touches us not. Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

*Hamlet puts on his Lucianus mask.*

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

OPHELIA

You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

HAMLET

I could interpret between you and your love if I could see the puppets dallying.

OPHELIA

You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

HAMLET

It would cost you a groaning to take off mine edge.

OPHELIA

Still better and worse.

HAMLET

So you mistake your husbands. Begin, murderer: leave thy damnable faces and begin. Come, 'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.'

LUCIANUS

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

*He pours the poison into the sleeping Player King's ears.  
Claudius reacts.*

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

The king rises.

HAMLET

What, frightened with false fire!

GERTRUDE

How fares my lord?

CLAUDIUS

Give o'er the play.  
Give me some light: away!

All

Lights, lights, lights!

*Exeunt all but Hamlet and  
Horatio.*

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Half a share.

HAMLET

A whole one, I.  
For thou dost know, O Damon dear,  
This realm dismantled was  
Of Jove himself, and now reigns here  
A very, very-pajock.

HORATIO

You might have rhymed.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Very well, my lord.

HAMLET

Upon the talk of the poisoning?

HORATIO

I did very well note him.  
My lord the Queen would speak with you,  
and presently.

HAMLET

'Tis now the very witching time of night  
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breaks out  
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood  
And do such business as the bitter day  
Would quake to look on. Soft, now to my mother.  
O heart, lose not thy nature. Let not ever  
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom -  
Let me be cruel, not unnatural:  
I will speak daggers to her but use none.  
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites.  
How in my words some ever she be shent  
To give them seals never my soul consent.

*Exeunt.*

10.

*A room in the castle. Enter  
Claudius and Hamlet.*

CLAUDIUS

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

O limed soul that struggling to be free  
Art more engaged. Help, angels! Make assay!  
Bow, stubborn knees, and, heart with strings of steel,  
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!  
All may be well.

*Retires and kneels.*

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 scanned:  
A villain kills my father, and for that  
I, his sole son, do this same villain send  
To heaven.

Why, 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 th'incestuous pleasure of his bed,  
At game a-swearing, or about some act  
That has no relish of salvation in't.  
Then trip him that his heels may kick at heaven  
And that his soul may be as damned and black  
As hell whereto it goes. My mother stays;  
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

*Claudius rises.*

CLAUDIUS

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

*Exeunt.*

11.

*The Queen's closet. Enter  
Gertrude. She lays the  
Polonius costume on the floor,  
downstage center.*

HAMLET

Mother, mother, mother!



*Enter Hamlet.*

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.

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, ho!

ALL

What ho! Help!

*Hamlet draws scissors.*

HAMLET

How now! A rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!

*He cuts the Polonius costume  
in half.*

GERTRUDE

O me, what hast thou done?

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.

GERTRUDE

As kill a king!

HAMLET

Ay, lady, 'twas my word.  
- Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell:  
I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune;  
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.  
- Leave wringing of your hands. Peace, sit you down  
And let me wring your heart. For so I shall  
If it be made of penetrable stuff,  
If damned custom have not brazed it so  
That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

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

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,  
A combination and a form indeed,  
Where every god did seem to set his seal  
To give the world assurance of a man;  
This was your husband. Look you now what follows:  
Here is your husband like a mildewed ear  
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?  
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? Sense, sure, you have -  
Else could you not have motion. But sure, that sense  
Is apoplexed, for madness would not err  
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd  
But it reserved some quantity of choice  
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't  
That thus hath cozened you at hoodman-blind?  
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,  
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,  
Or but a sickly part of one true sense  
Could not so mope.  
O shame, where is thy blush?  
Rebellious hell,  
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,  
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax  
And melt in her own fire; proclaim no shame  
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,  
Since frost itself as actively doth burn  
And reason panders will.

GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

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

GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

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

GERTRUDE

No more!

HAMLET

- a king of shreds and patches -

*Lights up on mannequin bust,  
its garments blown around by a  
fan.*

HAMLET

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

GERTRUDE

Alas, he's mad!

HAMLET

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

GHOST

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

HAMLET

How is it with you, lady?

GERTRUDE

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

Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

HAMLET

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

GERTRUDE

To whom do you speak this?

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

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!

*Lights fade out on mannequin.*

GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time  
And makes as healthful music. It is not madness  
That I have uttered. Bring me to the test  
And I the matter will reword, 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  
Whiles rank corruption mining all within  
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven,  
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,  
And do not spread the compost on the weeds  
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue,  
For in the fatness of these pury times  
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg.

Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

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.  
Goodnight, but go not to mine uncle's bed;  
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.  
That monster Custom, who all sense doth eat  
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,  
That to the use of actions fair and good  
He likewise gives a frock or livery  
That aptly is put on. Refrain tonight,  
And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
To the next abstinence, the next more easy.  
For use almost can change the stamp of nature  
And either shame the devil or throw him out  
With wondrous potency. Once more, goodnight,  
And when you are desirous to be blessed,  
I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord

*He points to the Polonius  
costume.*

I do repent, but heaven hath pleased it so  
To punish me with this, and this with me,  
That I must be their scourge and minister.  
I will bestow him and will answer well  
The death I gave him. So again good night.  
I must be cruel, only to be kind.  
Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.  
One word more, good lady.

GERTRUDE

What shall I do?

HAMLET

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

To try conclusions in the basket creep,  
And break your own neck down.

GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

I must to England - you know that?

GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

There's letters sealed.  
This man shall set me packing;  
I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.  
Mother, goodnight indeed. This councillor  
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.  
Goodnight, mother.

*Exeunt. Hamlet drags away the  
Polonius costume. He hangs  
the costume on the wall.*

12.

*A room in the castle. Enter  
Claudius and Gertrude.*

CLAUDIUS

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

GERTRUDE

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

CLAUDIUS

O heavy deed!  
It had been so with us, had we been there.  
His liberty is full of threats to all,  
To you yourself, to us, to everyone.  
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answered?

It will be laid to us whose providence  
Should have kept short, restrained and out of haunt  
This mad young man. But so much was our love,  
We would not understand what was most fit,  
But, like the owner of a foul disease,  
To keep it from divulging, let it feed  
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

GERTRUDE

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

CLAUDIUS

O Gertrude, come away.  
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch  
But we will ship him hence, and this vile deed  
We must, with all our majesty and skill,  
Both countenance and excuse.  
Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends  
And let them know both what we mean to do  
And what's untimely done. O, come away!  
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

*Exeunt.*

13.

*Another room in the  
castle. Enter Claudius  
and Hamlet.*

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 eat 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?

HAMLET

In heaven. Send thither to see. If your messenger find him not there, seek him i'th'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

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.  
Therefore prepare thyself:  
The bark is ready and the wind at help,  
The associates tend, and every thing is bent  
For England.

HAMLET

For England!

CLAUDIUS

Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET

Good.

CLAUDIUS

So is it if thou knewst our purposes.

HAMLET

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

CLAUDIUS

Thy loving father, Hamlet.

HAMLET

My mother. Father and mother is man and wife.  
Man and wife is one flesh. So - my mother.  
Come, for England!

*Exit Hamlet.*

CLAUDIUS

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

*Exit.*

14.

*Elsinore. A room in the  
castle. Enter Gertrude  
and Horatio.*

GERTRUDE

I will not speak with her.

HORATIO

She is importunate - indeed distract.  
Her mood will needs be pitied.

GERTRUDE

What would she have?

HORATIO

She speaks much of her father; says she hears  
There's tricks i' th' world, and hems, and beats her heart,  
Spurns enviously at straws, speaks things in doubt  
That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,  
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move  
The hearers to collection. They yawn at it  
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts  
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,  
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,  
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.  
'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may strew  
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.  
Let her come in.

*Exit Horatio.*

GERTRUDE

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,  
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss,

So full of artless jealousy is guilt  
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

*Re-enter Horatio, with  
Ophelia.*

OPHELIA  
Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN GERTRUDE  
How now, Ophelia!

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

GERTRUDE  
Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPHELIA  
Say you? Nay, pray you, mark.

*Sings. (?)*

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

*Shouts.*

Oh ho!

GERTRUDE  
Nay, but Ophelia -

OPHELIA  
Pray you mark.  
White his shroud as the mountain snow

*Claudius enters,  
Ophelia's text continues  
over his entrance and  
Gertrude's line.*

GERTRUDE  
Alas, look here, my lord.

OPHELIA  
Larded all with sweet flowers  
Which bewept to the ground did not go

With true-love showers.

CLAUDIUS

How do you, pretty lady?

OPHELIA

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

CLAUDIUS

Conceit upon her father -

OPHELIA

Pray, let's have no words of this, but when they ask you what it means, say you this:  
Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's Day  
All in the morning betime,  
And I a maid at your window  
To be your valentine.  
Then up her rose and donned his clothes  
And dupp'd the chamber door -  
Let in the maid that out a maid  
Never departed.

CLAUDIUS

Pretty Ophelia -

OPHELIA

By Gis and by Saint Charity,  
Alack, and fie for shame!  
Young men will do't, if they come to't;  
By cock, they are to blame.  
Quoth she, 'before you tumbled me,  
You promised me to wed.'  
He answers:  
'So would I ha' done by yonder sun  
If thou hadst not come to my bed.'

CLAUDIUS

How long hath she been thus?

OPHELIA

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

*Exit Ophelia.*

CLAUDIUS

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

*Exit Horatio.*

CLAUDIUS (cont'd)

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

*A noise within.*

GERTRUDE

Alack, what noise is this?

LAERTES

Where is this king?

*Enter Laertes, armed.*

LAERTES (cont'd)

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

Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person.  
There's such divinity doth hedge a king  
That treason can but peep to what it would,  
Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,  
Why thou art thus incensed. Let him go, Gertrude.  
Speak, man.

LAERTES

Where is my father?

KING 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,  
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit.  
I dare damnation. To this point I stand -  
That both the worlds I give to negligence.  
Let come what comes, only I'll be revenged  
Most thoroughly for my father.

CLAUDIUS

Who shall stay you?

LAERTES

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

CLAUDIUS

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

LAERTES

None but his enemies.

CLAUDIUS

Will you know them then?

LAERTES

To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms  
And like the kind life-rendering pelican

Repast them with my blood.

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 'pear  
As day does to your eye.

*Ophelia appears and  
screams.*

LAERTES

How now! what noise is that?

*Ophelia sings "My Heart  
Belongs to Daddy" - the  
Ella Fitzgerald version.  
The dialogue continues  
underneath her song.*

LAERTES (cont'd)

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,  
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!  
O heavens, is't possible a young maid's wits  
Should be as mortal as a poor man's life?  
Hadst thou thy wits and didst persuade revenge  
It could not move thus.

OPHELIA

I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth,  
forgone all custom of exercises and, indeed, it goes so  
heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame the earth  
seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy  
the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this  
majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why it appeareth  
nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of  
vapours.

LAERTES

There's nothing more than matter.

*Ophelia throws a spool of  
thread at the other  
characters as she  
mentions each flower.*

OPHELIA

There's rosemary: that's for remembrance. Pray you, love,  
remember. And there is pansies: that's for thoughts.

LAERTES

A document in madness - thoughts and remembrance fitted!

OPHELIA

There's fennel for you, and columbines. There's rue for you,  
and here's some for me. We may call it herb of grace  
o'Sundays. You may wear your rue with a difference.

*She picks up a skull.*

There's a daisy. I would give you some violets, but they  
withered all when my father died.

LAERTES

Thought and afflictions, passion, hell itself  
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

OPHELIA

God a'mercy on his soul. And of all Christians' souls.

*She kisses Horatio.*

OPHELIA (cont'd)

God buy you.

*She exits.*

LAERTES

Do you see this, O God?

CLAUDIUS

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

LAERTES

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



CLAUDIUS

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

15.

*Another room in the  
castle. Enter Horatio.  
He picks up a letter on  
the ground and reads it.*

HORATIO

'Horatio, ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded them. On the instant they got clear of our ship, so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy, but they knew what they did: I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent, and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldest fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb. Yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. Farewell. 'He that thou knowest thine. Hamlet.'

*Exit.*

16.

*Another room in the  
castle. Enter Claudius  
and Laertes.*

CLAUDIUS

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

LAERTES

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

CLAUDIUS

O, for two special reasons  
Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinewed  
But yet to me they're strong. The Queen his mother  
Lives almost by his looks and for myself,  
My virtue or my plague, be it either which,

She is so conjunct to my life and soul  
That as the star moves not but in his sphere  
I could not but by her. The other motive  
Why to a public count I might not go  
Is the great love the general gender bear him,  
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,  
Work like the spring that turneth wood to stone,  
Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,  
Too slightly timbered for so loud a wind,  
Would have reverted to my bow again  
But not where I had aimed them.

LAERTES

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

CLAUDIUS

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

*Horatio enters.*

HORATIO

These to your majesty, this to the Queen.

CLAUDIUS

From Hamlet! Who brought them?

HORATIO

Sailors, my lord, they say. I saw them not.

CLAUDIUS

Laertes, you shall hear them. Leave us.

*Exit Horatio. Claudius reads.*

CLAUDIUS

'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 return.'  
What should this mean? Are all the rest come back,  
Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

LAERTES

Know you the hand?

CLAUDIUS

'Tis Hamlets character. 'Naked',  
And in a postscript here, he says 'alone'.  
Can you devise me?

LAERTES

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

CLAUDIUS

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

LAERTES

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

CLAUDIUS

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

LAERTES

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

CLAUDIUS

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

LAERTES

What part is that, my lord?

CLAUDIUS

A very ribbon in the cap of youth.  
Yet needful too, for youth no less becomes  
The light and careless livery that it wears

Than settled age his sables and his weeds  
Importing health and graveness. Two months since  
Here was a gentleman of Normandy -  
He made confession of you  
And gave you such a masterly report  
For art and exercise in your defence,  
And for your rapier most especial,  
That he cried out 'twould be a sight indeed  
If one could match you. Th'escrimers of their nation  
He swore had neither motion, guard nor eye  
If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his  
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy  
That he could nothing do but wish and beg  
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with you.  
Now, out of this -

LAERTES

What out of this, my lord?

CLAUDIUS

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

LAERTES

Why ask you this?

CLAUDIUS

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

LAERTES

To cut his throat i'th'church.

CLAUDIUS

No place indeed should murder sanctuarize.  
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,  
Will you do this? Keep close within your chamber;

Hamlet returned shall know you are come home;  
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence  
And set a double varnish on the fame  
The Frenchman gave you, bring you in fine together  
And wager on your heads. He being remiss,  
Most generous and free from all contriving,  
Will not peruse the foils, so that with ease,  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
A sword unbated and in a pass of practice  
Requite him for your father.

LAERTES

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

CLAUDIUS

Let's further think of this,  
Weigh what convenience both of time and means  
May fit us to our shape. If this should fail  
And that our drift look through our bad performance  
'Twere better not essayed. Therefore this project  
Should have a back or second that might hold  
If this should blast in proof. Soft, let me see:  
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings -  
I ha't!  
When in your motion you are hot and dry -  
(As make your bouts more violent to that end)  
And that he calls for drink, I'll have preferred 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.*

CLAUDIUS (CONT'D)

How now, sweet queen!

*Ophelia sews loudly on  
the sewing machine.*

GERTRUDE

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

*Horatio plays "Spiegel im Spiegel" on the piano. Ophelia rises, changes into the wedding gown, and picks up a bolt of blue fabric. She unrolls the fabric down the center aisle and picks up to large rocks. She stands at the back of the audience. Speech continues over Ophelia's actions.*

Gertrude

There is a willow grows askant the brook  
That shows his hoary leaves in the glassy stream.  
Therewith fantastic garlands did she make  
Of crowflowers, 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 crownet weeds  
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke,  
When down her weedy trophies and herself  
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide  
And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up,  
Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds  
As one incapable of her own distress,  
Or like a creature native and endued  
Unto that element. But long it could not be  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
To muddy death.

*Freeze except Ophelia. Ophelia places the rocks into her pockets and descends into the water as she speaks the following monologue.*

OPHELIA

What a piece of work is a man - how noble in reason; how infinite in faculties, in form and moving; how express and admirable in action; how like an angel in apprehension; how like a god; the beauty of the world; the paragon of animals. And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?

*Ophelia drowns. The action of her death is her costume coming off. Horatio plays the last line of "Spiegel im*

*Spiegel." Laertes pulls  
Ophelia out of the water.  
Gertrude cleans up the  
water. Claudius gets  
dressed for the funeral.*

LAERTES

Alas, then she is drowned.

GERTRUDE

Drowned, drowned.

*Gertrude gets dressed for  
the funeral. Everyone  
lines up for the funeral  
procession during  
Laertes' next lines.*

LAERTES

Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,  
And therefore I forbid my tears. But yet  
It is our trick - nature her custom holds  
Let shame say what it will.

*Weeps.*

LAERTES (cont'd)

When these are gone  
The woman will be out.

*A funeral procession with  
the Ophelia costume.  
Everyone sings the  
Beatles' "A Day in a  
Life." They place Ophelia  
on the ground and gather  
around her. Black  
umbrellas. It rains.  
Horatio gives them weeds.*

17.

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

*They throw the weeds on  
the body.*

LAERTES (cont'd)

What ceremony else?  
What ceremony else?  
Must there no more be done?

Lay her i'th'earth:  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring!

GERTRUDE

Sweets to the sweet. Farewell!

*Adjusting her dress.*

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife:  
I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,  
And not have strewed thy grave.

LAERTES

O, treble woe  
Fall ten times double on that cursed 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.

*Clenches the Ophelia  
costume.*

LAERTES (CONT'D)

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made  
T'o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus.

*Hamlet advances.*

HAMLET

What is he whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis, whose phrase of sorrow  
Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand  
Like wonder-wounded hearers?

*Grabs hold of the Ophelia  
costume.*

ALL

This is I,  
Hamlet the Dane.

LAERTES

The devil take thy soul!

*He grapples with Hamlet.*

HAMLET

Thou pray'st not well.  
I prithee take thy fingers from my throat,  
For, though I am not splenative and rash,



Yet have I something in me dangerous  
Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand.

CLAUDIUS

Pluck them asunder.

GERTRUDE

Hamlet, Hamlet!

All

Gentlemen!

HORATIO

Good my lord, be quiet.

*They are parted.*

HAMLET

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

GERTRUDE

O my son, what theme?

HAMLET

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

CLAUDIUS

O, he is mad, Laertes.

GERTRUDE

For love of God, forbear him.

HAMLET

'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do.  
Woul't weep, woul't fight, woul't fast, woul't tear thyself,  
Woul't drink up easel, eat a crocodile?  
I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine,  
To outface me with leaping in her grave?  
Be buried quick with her, and so will I:  
And, if thou prate of mountains let them throw  
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,  
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,  
Make Ossa like a wart. Nay, an thou'lt mouth,  
I'll rant as well as thou.

GERTRUDE

This is mere madness,  
And thus awhile the fit will work on him.  
Anon, as patient as the female dove  
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,

His silence will sit drooping.

HAMLET

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

*Exit.*

CLAUDIUS

I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.

*Exit Horatio. Claudius  
speaks to Laertes.*

CLAUDIUS (cont'd)

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.*

18.

*A hall in the castle.  
Enter Hamlet, Horatio,  
Claudius, Gertrude, and  
Laertes.*

CLAUDIUS

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

*Claudius puts Laertes'  
hand into Hamlet's.*

HAMLET

Give me your pardon, sir. I've done you wrong,  
But pardon't as you are a gentleman.  
This presence knows, and you must needs have heard,  
How I am punished with sore distraction.  
What I have done  
That might your nature, honour and exception  
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.  
Was't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet.  
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away  
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,  
Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it.  
Who does it then? His madness. If't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged -  
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.  
Sir, in this audience,  
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil  
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts  
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house  
And hurt my brother.

LAERTES

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

HAMLET

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

LAERTES

Come, one for me.

HAMLET

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

LAERTES

You mock me, sir.

HAMLET

No, by this hand.

CLAUDIUS

Cousin Hamlet,  
You know the wager?

HAMLET

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

CLAUDIUS

I do not fear it. I have seen you both  
But since he is better we have therefore odds.

LAERTES

This is too heavy, let me see another.

HAMLET

This likes me well.

*They prepare to play.*

CLAUDIUS

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

*Trumpets sound, and  
cannon shot off within.*

Now the king drinks to Hamlet. Come, begin:

HAMLET

Come on, sir.

LAERTES

Come, my lord.

*They play.*

HAMLET

One.

LAERTES

No.

HAMLET

Judgment.

CLAUDIUS

A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAERTES

Well, again.

CLAUDIUS

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

HAMLET

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

*They play.*

HAMLET (cont'd)  
Another hit; what say you?

LAERTES  
A touch, a touch, I do confess.

CLAUDIUS  
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.

HAMLET  
Good madam.

CLAUDIUS  
Gertrude, do not drink.

GERTRUDE  
I will, my lord. I pray you pardon me.

HAMLET  
I dare not drink yet, madam. By and by.

GERTRUDE  
Come, let me wipe thy face.

LAERTES  
My lord, I'll hit him now.

CLAUDIUS  
I do not think't.

HAMLET  
Come, for the third, Laertes, you but dally.  
I pray you, pass with your best violence.  
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

LAERTES  
Say you so? Come on.

*They play.*

LAERTES (cont'd)  
Have at you now!

*Laertes wounds Hamlet;  
then in scuffling, they  
change rapiers, and*

*Hamlet wounds Laertes.*

CLAUDIUS

Part them - they are incensed.

HAMLET

Nay, come, again.

*Gertrude begins to remove  
her costume.*

HORATIO

Look to the queen there, ho!  
They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

CLAUDIUS

How is't, Laertes?

LAERTES

Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, King:  
I am justly killed with mine own treachery.

HAMLET

How does the Queen?

CLAUDIUS

She swounds to see them bleed.

GERTRUDE

No, no, the drink, the drink, O my dear Hamlet,  
The drink, the drink - I am poisoned.

*Retires and dies.*

HAMLET

O villainy, ho! Let the door be locked.  
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's of life;  
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand  
Unbated and envenomed. The foul practice  
Hath turned itself on me. Lo, here I lie,  
Never to rise again. Thy mother's poisoned -  
I can no more - the King, the King's to blame.

HAMLET

The point envenomed too? Then, venom, to thy work!

*Stabs Claudius.*

All

Treason! Treason!

CLAUDIUS

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 removes his  
costume and joins his  
wife.*

LAERTES

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

*Removes his costume and  
joins the other dead  
ones. Enter Ophelia,  
without costume; she  
joins her brother.*

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

As thou'rt a man  
Give me the cup. Let go! By heaven I'll ha't!  
O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,  
Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind me!

*Hamlet has been  
removing pieces of his  
costumes and Horatio has*

*been frantically  
collecting them.*

If thou didst ever hold me in the heart  
Absent thee from felicity awhile  
And in this harsh world draw they breath in pain.  
To tell my story.

*Horatio reads the  
backdrop with the third  
soliloquy and as he does  
he puts on Hamlet's  
clothes. A march afar off  
is heard [and a sound of  
shooting]. Note: a slash  
("/") indicates that the  
next character to speak  
starts talking at that  
point, over another  
character's dialogue.*

HORATIO

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!  
/Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
That from her working all the visage waned  
- Tears in his eyes, distraction in his 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 her,  
That he should weep for her? What would he do  
Had he the motive and that for passion  
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears  
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,  
Make mad the guilty and appal the free...

HAMLET

What warlike noise is this?

JEN

Young Fortinbras with conquest come from Poland.

HAMLET

O, I die, Horatio.  
The potent poison quite o'ercrows my spirit,  
I cannot live to hear the news from England,  
But I do prophesy th'election lights  
On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice.  
So tell him with th'occurrences more and less  
Which have solicited. - The rest is silence.



JULIA

Now cracks a noble heart. Goodnight, sweet Prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

ETHAN

Where is this sight?

WILL

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

NICK

This quarry cried on havoc. O proud Death,  
What feast is toward in this eternal cell that thou so many  
princes at a shot  
So bloodily hast struck?

HORATIO

Give order that these bodies  
High on a stage be placed to the view,  
And let me speak to th'yet unknowing world  
How these things came about. So shall you hear  
Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts,  
Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters,  
Of deaths put on by cunning, and for no cause,  
And in this upshot purposes mistook  
Fallen on th'inventors' heads. All this can I  
Truly deliver.

ALL

Let us haste to hear it  
And call the noblest to the audience.

HORATIO

But let this same be presently performed  
Even while men's minds are wild, lest more mischance  
On plots and errors happen. For I have heard  
That guilty creatures sitting at a play  
Have by the very cunning of the scene  
Been struck so to the soul that presently  
They have proclaimed their malefactions.  
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players  
Play something like the murder of my father  
Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks,  
I'll tent him to the quick. If 'a do blench  
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen  
May be a de'il, and the de'il hath power  
T'assume a pleasing shape. Yea, and perhaps  
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,  
As he is very potent with such spirits,  
Abuses me to damn me! I'll have grounds  
More relative than this.

ALL

The play's the thing  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.