

RSC ASSOCIATE SCHOOLS
PROGRAMME

PLAYMAKING
FESTIVAL

HAMLET
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

EDITED BY PAUL AINSWORTH

IN COLLABORATION WITH REGIONAL THEATRES

The Core
at Corby Cube

INTER+MISSION
YOUTH THEATRE

THE GRAND
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COVENTRY

EMBASSY
THEATRE
Skegness 

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NORTHERN
STAGE

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Newcastle upon Tyne

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Truck
THEATRE

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Theatre

THE
MARLOWE

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ROYAL
ROYAL
CONCERT
HALL

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YORK
THEATRE
ROYAL

The Associate Schools programme is our partnership programme with regional theatres and schools across England. It is built around the principle of schools working in local partnerships to develop communities of practice inspired by Shakespeare's work. Each local partnership consists of a theatre partner (either the RSC or the school's local theatre) and a Lead Associate School who in turn recruits a number of Associate Schools. The programme aims to enrich the teaching, learning and enjoyment of Shakespeare's work across the country.

The Associate Schools programme also supports young people to perform Shakespeare's plays, engaging with his work as actors and theatre makers; exploring character and staging, making interpretive choices and speaking the language with understanding and confidence.

This Playmaking pack - an abridged version of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* - has been created for young people and teachers. It is designed to support performances that will take place across the country through the Associate Schools programme and with our Stratford Schools partnership.

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This Playmaking Pack is an abridged version of *Hamlet*.

*Act 4 Scene 1 is a compacted version of Act 4 Scene 1, 2 and 3 from the original text.

As well as the usual scene divisions, this script has been broken down further into units of action for ease in rehearsals.

Dramatis Personae

HAMLET, Prince of Denmark

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark – Hamlet's uncle

GHOST, of old Hamlet, former King of Denmark, Hamlet's father

GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark, Hamlet's mother

POLONIUS, councillor to the state of Denmark

LAERTES, Polonius' son

OPHELIA, Polonius' daughter

REYNALDO, Polonius' servant

HORATIO, Hamlet's friend and fellow-student

ROSENCRANTZ, Hamlet's friend and fellow-student

GUILDENSTERN, Hamlet's friend and fellow-student

VOLTEMAND and **CORNELIUS**, ambassadors for Denmark

MARCELLUS, the watch at Elsinore

BARNARDO, the watch at Elsinore

FRANCISCO, the watch at Elsinore

OSRIC, a courtier

THE PLAYERS - KING, QUEEN, LUCIANUS and PROLOGUE,
Travelling actors who perform the play.

FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway

CAPTAIN, in Fortinbras' army

GRAVEDIGGERS

A PRIEST

AMBASSADOR from England

LORDS, SOLDIERS, ATTENDANTS, SERVANTS, CITIZENS

1

ACT 1 SCENE 1.

Elsinore. A platform before the castle.

BARNARDO

Who's there?

FRANCISCO

Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

BARNARDO

Long live the king!

FRANCISCO

Barnardo?

BARNARDO

He.

FRANCISCO

You come most carefully upon your hour.

BARNARDO

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

FRANCISCO

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

BARNARDO

Have you had quiet guard?

FRANCISCO

Not a mouse stirring.

BARNARDO

Well, goodnight.

FRANCISCO

Stand! Who's there?

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS

HORATIO

Friends to this ground.

MARCELLUS

And liegemen to the Dane.

FRANCISCO

Give you goodnight.

Exit.

MARCELLUS

Holla! Barnardo!

BARNARDO

Say, what, is Horatio there?

HORATIO

A piece of him.

MARCELLUS

What, has this thing appeared again tonight?

BARNARDO

I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS

Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him.

HORATIO

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

BARNARDO

Sit down awhile;
And let us once again assail your ears,
What we two nights have seen.
Last night of all, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one –

MARCELLUS

Peace, break thee off.

Enter GHOST.

Look, where it comes again!

BARNARDO

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

MARCELLUS

Speak to it, Horatio.

BARNARDO

Looks it not like the king?

HORATIO

Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

BARNARDO

It would be spoke to.

HORATIO

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

MARCELLUS

It is offended.

BARNARDO

See, it stalks away!

HORATIO

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

Exit GHOST.

BARNARDO

Is not this something more than fantasy?

MARCELLUS

Is it not like the king?

HORATIO

As thou art to thyself.

'Tis strange.

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?

HORATIO

That can I,
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet –
Did slay this Fortinbras; who by a sealed compact,
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror.
Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute,
For food and diet, to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in't; which is no other-
But to recover of us, by strong hand
And terms compulsative, those foresaid lands
So by his father lost: and this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations.
But soft, behold! Lo, where it comes again!

Re-enter GHOST.

Stay, illusion!

Speak to me.

Speak to me.

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,

O, speak!

Speak of it: stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.

The cockerel crows

MARCELLUS

Shall I strike at it?

HORATIO

Do, if it will not stand.

BARNARDO

'Tis here!

HORATIO

'Tis here!

MARCELLUS

'Tis gone!

Exit GHOST.

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable.

BARNARDO

It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

HORATIO

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

Exeunt.

2

ACT 1, SCENE 2.

A room of state in the castle.

*Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES,
OPHELIA, VOLTEMAND, CORNELIUS and OTHERS.*

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,
Have we, taken to wife: for all, our thanks.
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
He hath not failed to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender of those lands,
Lost by his father with all bonds of law.
Thus much the business is: we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,-

Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose, - to suppress
His further gait herein; and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltmand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway.

CORNELIUS and VOLTEMAND

In that and all things will we show our duty.

Exeunt VOLTEMAND and CORNELIUS

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.

POLONIUS

I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

CLAUDIUS

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

HAMLET

(Aside) A little more than kin, and less than kind.

CLAUDIUS

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET

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

GERTRUDE

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off.
Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

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;
'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.

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.

KING CLAUDIUS

Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.

Exeunt all but HAMLET.

3

HAMLET

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she followed my poor father's body,
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:
She married.
It is not nor it cannot come to good:
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BARNARDO

HORATIO

Hail to your lordship!

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

So sir, what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

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

My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAMLET

Saw, who?

HORATIO

My lord, the king your father.
Two nights together had these gentlemen,
In the dead vast and middle of the night,
Been thus encountered. A figure like your father
Armed at a point.

HAMLET

But where was this?

MARCELLUS

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

HAMLET

Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO

My lord, I did;
But answer made it none.

HAMLET

'Tis very strange.
Hold you the watch tonight?

BARNARDO

We do, my lord.

HAMLET

If you have hitherto concealed this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still.
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

ALL

Our duty to your honour.

Exeunt all but HAMLET.

HAMLET

My father's spirit in arms! All is not well.

Exit

4

ACT 1, SCENE 3.

*A room in Polonius' house.
Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.*

LAERTES

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

OPHELIA

Do you doubt that?

LAERTES

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

OPHELIA

No more but so?

LAERTES

Think it no more;
Perhaps he loves you now, but you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
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.

LAERTES

I stay too long: but here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS with REYNALDO.

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

Exit LAERTES.

POLONIUS

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

OPHELIA

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.
He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.

POLONIUS

Affection! Pooh! You speak like a green girl,
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

OPHELIA

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

POLONIUS

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

OPHELIA

I shall obey, my lord.

Exeunt.

5

ACT 1, SCENE 4.

*The platform.
Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, BARNARDO, MARCELLUS.*

HAMLET

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HORATIO

It is a nipping and an eager air.

BARNARDO

What hour now?

MARCELLUS

I think it lacks of twelve.

HAMLET

No, it is struck. *A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off, within*
The king doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,
The triumph of his pledge.

BARNARDO

Look, my lord, it comes!

Enter the GHOST.

HAMLET

Thou comest in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me!
Say, why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?

The GHOST beckons HAMLET [to follow him].

BARNARDO

It beckons you to go away with it.

MARCELLUS

But do not go with it.

BARNARDO

No, by no means.

HAMLET

It will not speak; then I will follow it.

HORATIO

Do not, my lord.

HAMLET

Why, what should be the fear?

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

HORATIO

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
And there assume some other horrible form,
And draw you into madness? Think of it!

HAMLET

Go on; I'll follow thee.

MARCELLUS

You shall not go, my lord.

HORATIO

Be ruled; you shall not go.

HAMLET

My fate cries out.

Exit GHOST and HAMLET.

BARNARDO

Let's follow.

HORATIO

Have after. To what issue will this come?

MARCELLUS

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Exeunt.

6

ACT 1, SCENE 5.

*Another part of the platform.
Enter the GHOST and HAMLET.*

HAMLET

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

GHOST

Mark me.

My hour is almost come.

HAMLET

Speak; I am bound to hear.

GHOST

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

Now, Hamlet, hear:
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me; but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

HAMLET

O my prophetic soul! My uncle!

GHOST

Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd:
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother. Fare thee well at once!
Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.

Exit.

HAMLET

O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Remember thee!
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain.
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark:

HAMLET writes his oath.

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

BARNARDO

(Within) My lord, my lord, –

MARCELLUS

(Within) Lord Hamlet, –

HORATIO

(Within) Heaven secure him!

HAMLET

So be it!

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS and BARNARDO.

HORATIO

What news?

HAMLET

O, wonderful!

HORATIO

Good my lord, tell it.

HAMLET

There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark
But he's an arrant knave.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

Never make known what you have seen tonight.

MARCELLUS

My lord, we will not.

HAMLET

Nay, but swear it.

HORATIO

In faith,
My lord, not I.

BARNARDO

Nor I, my lord, in faith.

MARCELLUS

We have sworn, my lord, already.

GHOST

(Beneath) Swear.

HAMLET

Consent to swear.
Never to speak of this that you have seen.

GHOST

(Beneath) Swear.

HAMLET

Never to speak of this that you have heard.

GHOST

(Beneath) Swear.

HORATIO

O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAMLET

Swear.

GHOST

(Beneath) Swear.

HAMLET

Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!

HORATIO, MARCELLUS and BARNARDO swear.

The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!

Exeunt.

ACT 2, SCENE 1.

A room in Polonius' house.

Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO then enter OPHELIA.

POLONIUS

How now, Ophelia! What's the matter?

OPHELIA

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

POLONIUS

With what, i' the name of God?

OPHELIA

My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced;
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors, – he comes before me.

POLONIUS

Mad for thy love?

OPHELIA

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

POLONIUS

What said he?

OPHELIA

He took me by the wrist and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
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 shoulders turned,
He seem'd 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.

POLONIUS

Come, go with me: I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love,
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

OPHELIA

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

POLONIUS

That hath made him mad.

Exeunt.

9

ACT 2, SCENE 2.

A room in the castle

*Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, ROSENCRANTZ and
GUILDENSTERN [who are welcomed to Elsinore] and ATTENDANTS*

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and some ATTENDANTS

Enter POLONIUS with letters [taken from OPHELIA, which she received from HAMLET]

POLONIUS gives CLAUDIUS letters.

CLAUDIUS reads

GERTRUDE reads

Enter HAMLET

Exeunt CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, and ATTENDANTS

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

Exit POLONIUS.

GUILDENSTERN

My honoured lord!

ROSENCRANTZ

My most dear lord!

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

As the indifferent children of the earth.

GUILDENSTERN

Happy, in that we are not over-happy.

HAMLET

What's the news?

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true. What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN

Prison, my lord!

HAMLET

Denmark's a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ

We think not so, my lord.

HAMLET

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

GUILDENSTERN

Which dreams indeed are ambition.

HAMLET

A dream itself is but a shadow. Shall we to the court?

ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

We'll wait upon you.

HAMLET

What make you at Elsinore?

ROSENCRANTZ

To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

HAMLET

Were you not sent for? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

GUILDENSTERN

What should we say, my lord?

HAMLET

You were sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks: I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ

To what end, my lord?

HAMLET

That you must teach me. Were you sent for, or no?

GUILDENSTERN

My lord, we were sent for.

HAMLET

I will tell you why; I have of late – but wherefore I know not – lost all my mirth; the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave overhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

ROSENCRANTZ

To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you: hither are they coming, to offer you service.

HAMLET

What players are they?

ROSENCRANTZ

The tragedians of the city.

Flourish of trumpets within. Enter THE PLAYERS.

GUILDENSTERN

These are the players.

HAMLET

You are welcome, masters; welcome all. I am glad
To see thee well.

Enter POLONIUS.

POLONIUS

Come.

HAMLET

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

Exit POLONIUS with all the PLAYERS but PLAYER – LUCIANUS.

(to PLAYER LUCIANUS) Old friend; can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

PLAYER – LUCIANUS

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

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

PLAYER – LUCIANUS

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

Very well.

Exit PLAYER – LUCIANUS.

HAMLET

Ay, so, God be wi' ye;

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

10

HAMLET

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have. He would drown the stage with tears.
Ha!

Fie upon't! Foh! About, my brain! I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions.
I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;
I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,
I know my course. the play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

Exit.

11

ACT 3, SCENE 1.

A room in the castle.

Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, POLONIUS and OPHELIA.

GERTRUDE

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.

OPHELIA

Madam, I wish it may.

Exit GERTRUDE.

POLONIUS

Ophelia, walk you here. - Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves. - Read on this book.
I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord.

Exeunt CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS

[to a place where they eavesdrop, while OPHELIA pretends to read].

Enter HAMLET.

HAMLET

To be, or not to be, that is the question,
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
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. Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action. – Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia!

OPHELIA

How does your honour for this many a day?

HAMLET

I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

No, not I;
I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA

My honour'd lord, you know right well you did;
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. I did love you once.

OPHELIA

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAMLET

You should not have believed me; 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. 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. Farewell.

OPHELIA

O, help him, you sweet heavens!

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

O heavenly powers, restore him!

HAMLET

I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. To a nunnery, go.

Exit HAMLET.

12

OPHELIA

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

Re-enter CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS.

CLAUDIUS

Love! His affections do not that way tend;
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul,
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,
I have in quick determination
Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England.

POLONIUS

(To OPHELIA) You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;
We heard it all.

Exeunt.

13

ACT 3, SCENE 2.

*A hall in the castle.
Enter HAMLET and THE PLAYERS.*

HAMLET

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines.

PLAYER

I warrant your honour.

HAMLET

Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, was and is, to hold the mirror up to nature. Go, make you ready.

Exeunt PLAYERS.

Enter HORATIO.

HAMLET

What ho! Horatio!

HORATIO

Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAMLET

There is a play tonight before the king;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death.
Observe mine uncle: if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

Get you a place.

*Danish march. A flourish. Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE,
POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and OTHERS.*

Be the players ready?

ROSENCRANTZ

Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

GERTRUDE

Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET

Who, I?

OPHELIA

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

What should a man do but be merry? For, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

OPHELIA

Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

HAMLET

So long? O heavens! Die two months ago, and not forgotten yet?

[The play begins] Enter PLAYER [PROLOGUE].

PLAYER – PROLOGUE

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

Exit PLAYER.

OPHELIA

'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET

As woman's love.

Enter two PLAYERS, [KING and QUEEN].

PLAYER – KING

Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground,
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,

PLAYER – KING

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

PLAYER – QUEEN

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

HAMLET

(Aside) Wormwood, wormwood.

PLAYER – KING

I do believe you think what now you speak;
But what we do determine oft we break.

PLAYER – QUEEN

Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

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 the PLAYER QUEEN.

CLAUDIUS

What do you call the play?

HAMLET

The Mousetrap.

Enter PLAYER LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

OPHELIA

You are as good as a chorus.

PLAYER – LUCIANUS

Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;
Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
Thy natural magic and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

PLAYER LUCIANUS pours poison into the sleeper's ear, CLAUDIUS rises.

OPHELIA

The king rises.

HAMLET

What, frightened with false fire!

GERTRUDE

How fares my lord?

POLONIUS

Give o'er the play.

CLAUDIUS

Give me some light: away!

ALL

Lights, lights, lights!

Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.

HAMLET

O good Horatio, didst perceive?

HORATIO

Very well, my lord.

HAMLET

Upon the talk of the poisoning?

HORATIO

I did very well note him.

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

GUILDENSTERN

The king, sir, –

HAMLET

Ay, sir, what of him?

GUILDENSTERN

Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

HAMLET

Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor.

GUILDENSTERN

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

HAMLET

I am tame, sir: pronounce.

GUILDENSTERN

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

ROSENCRANTZ

Your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

HAMLET

O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother!

ROSENCRANTZ

She desires to speak with you.

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

Why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

GUILDENSTERN

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

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

Then I will come to my mother by and by. I will come by and by. Leave me, friends.

Exeunt all but HAMLET.

HAMLET

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft! Now to my mother.
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 somever she be shent,
To give them seals never, my soul, consent!

Exit.

16

ACT 3, SCENE 3.

*A room in the castle.
Enter CLAUDIUS.*

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:
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!

*Kneeling to pray.
Enter HAMLET (drawing a dagger).*

HAMLET

Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
And now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven;
And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd:
A villain kills my father; and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.
O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
No!
Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,

And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell, whereto it goes.

Exit HAMLET.

CLAUDIUS

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

Exit CLAUDIUS.

17

ACT 3, SCENE 4.

*The Queen's closet.
Enter GERTRUDE and POLONIUS.*

POLONIUS

He will come straight. Look you lay home to him:
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with
Pray you, be round with him.

*POLONIUS hides behind the arras.
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, help, ho!

POLONIUS

(Hidden) What, ho! Help, help, help!

HAMLET

(Drawing a dagger) How now! A rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!

*HAMLET stabs through the arras.
POLONIUS falls and dies.*

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.
(Lifts up the arras and discovers POLONIUS).
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.
(To GERTRUDE) Leave wringing of your hands: peace! Sit you down,
And let me wring your heart; for so I shall.

GERTRUDE

What have I done?

HAMLET

Such an act.

GERTRUDE

Ay me, what act!

Enter GHOST.

HAMLET

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

GERTRUDE

Alas, he's mad!

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:
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 the incorporal air do hold discourse?
Whereon do you look?

HAMLET

On him, on him! Look you, how pale he glares!
Do not look upon me;
Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects.

GERTRUDE

To whom do you speak this?

HAMLET

Do you see nothing there?

GERTRUDE

No, nothing but ourselves.

HAMLET

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

Exit GHOST.

GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

Ecstasy!

GERTRUDE

O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

HAMLET

O, throw away the worser part of it,
 And live the purer with the other half.
 Good night: For this same lord,

Pointing to POLONIUS.

I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,
 To punish me with this and this with me.
 I must be cruel, only to be kind:
 Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.

Exeunt severally; HAMLET dragging POLONIUS' body.

18

ACT 4, SCENE 1.*

*A room in the castle.
 Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE,
 ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN, and COURTIERS.
 Enter HAMLET.*

CLAUDIUS

Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAMLET

At supper.

CLAUDIUS

At supper! Where?

HAMLET

Not where he eats, but where he is eaten.

CLAUDIUS

What dost you mean by this?

HAMLET

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

CLAUDIUS

(To COURTIER) Go seek him there.

HAMLET

He will stay till ye come.

Exeunt COURTIERS.

CLAUDIUS

Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety, –
 Must send thee hence
 For England.

HAMLET

For England!

CLAUDIUS

Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET

Good.

Exit HAMLET.

CLAUDIUS

(To ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN)

Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard:

Delay it not, I'll have him hence to-night.

Away! For every thing is sealed and done.

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN [with a sealed letter from CLAUDIUS].

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

As my great power thereof may give thee sense,

-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.

Exit CLAUDIUS.

19

ACT 4, SCENE 4.

A plain in Denmark.

Enter FORTINBRAS, a CAPTAIN, and SOLDIERS, marching.

FORTINBRAS

Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;

Tell him that, by his licence, Fortinbras

Craves the conveyance of a promised march

Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.

If that his majesty would aught with us,

We shall express our duty in his eye;

And let him know so.

CAPTAIN

I will do't, my lord.

FORTINBRAS

Go softly on.

Exeunt FORTINBRAS and SOLDIERS.

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

HAMLET

Good sir, whose powers are these?

CAPTAIN

They are of Norway, sir.

HAMLET

How purposed, sir, I pray you?

CAPTAIN

Against some part of Poland.

HAMLET

Who commands them, sir?

CAPTAIN

The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

HAMLET

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

CAPTAIN

Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.

HAMLET

Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

CAPTAIN

Yes, it is already garrisoned.

HAMLET

Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will now debate the question of this straw.

CAPTAIN

God be wi' you, sir.

Exeunt.

20

ACT 4, SCENE 3.

*Elsinore. A room in the castle.
Enter GERTRUDE, HORATIO, and a GENTLEMAN.
Enter OPHELIA.*

OPHELIA

Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

GERTRUDE

How now, Ophelia!

OPHELIA

[Singing]

How should I your true love know
From another one?

GERTRUDE

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPHELIA

Say you? Nay, pray you, mark.

(Singing)

He is dead and gone, lady,

He is dead and gone.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Nay, but, Ophelia,-

OPHELIA

Pray you, mark.

Enter CLAUDIUS.

GERTRUDE

Alas, look here, my lord.

CLAUDIUS

How do you, pretty lady?

OPHELIA

Well, God yield you! Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be.

CLAUDIUS

Pretty Ophelia!

OPHELIA

I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him in the cold ground.

Exit OPHELIA, followed by HORATIO and GENTLEMAN.

CLAUDIUS

O, this is the poison of deep grief.

A noise within.

GERTRUDE

Alack, what noise is this?

Enter LAERTES, armed; DANES following.

LAERTES

Where is this king? Sirs, stand you all without.

DANES

No, let's come in.

LAERTES

I pray you, give me leave.

DANES

We will, we will.

They exit and wait outside the door.

LAERTES

O thou vile king,
Give me my father!

GERTRUDE

Calmly, good Laertes.

CLAUDIUS

What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?
Speak, man.

LAERTES

Where is my father?

CLAUDIUS

Dead.

GERTRUDE

But not by him.

LAERTES

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

CLAUDIUS

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

LAERTES

None but his enemies.

CLAUDIUS

Will you know them then?

LAERTES

To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms.

CLAUDIUS

Why, now you speak
Like a good child and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death.

LAERTES

How now! What noise is that?

Enter OPHELIA.

O heat, dry up my brains! Tears seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!

OPHELIA

(Singing)

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

LAERTES

This nothing's more than matter.

OPHELIA

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray, 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: I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died: they say he made a good end,—

Exit.

LAERTES

Do you see this, you gods?

CLAUDIUS

Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
 Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will.
 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

CLAUDIUS

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

Exeunt.

21

ACT 4, SCENE 6.

*Another room in the castle.
 Enter HORATIO with letters.*

HORATIO

(Reading a letter) '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: I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell. 'He that thou knowest thine, Hamlet.'

Exeunt.

ACT 4, SCENE 7.

*Another room in the castle.
Enter CLAUDIUS and LAERTES.*

LAERTES

And so have I a noble father lost;
A sister driven into desperate terms.

Enter MESSENGER [with letters].

MESSENGER

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

CLAUDIUS

From Hamlet! Who brought them?

MESSENGER

Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not:

*Exit MESSENGER.
CLAUDIUS reads the letter.*

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?
And in a postscript here, he says 'alone.'
Can you advise 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 diest thou.'

CLAUDIUS

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

LAERTES

Ay, my lord.

CLAUDIUS

To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,
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 practise
And call it accident.

LAERTES

My lord, I will be ruled.

CLAUDIUS

Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home:
We'll wager on your heads: he, being remiss,
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practise
Requite him for your father.

LAERTES

I will do't:
And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.

CLAUDIUS

Let's further think of this; if this should fail,
'Twere better not assay'd: therefore this project
Should have a back or second, that might hold,
When in your motion you are hot and dry-
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there.

23

Enter GERTRUDE.

How now, sweet queen!

GERTRUDE

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

LAERTES

Drowned! O, where?

GERTRUDE

There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples:
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up:
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes;
As one incapable of her own distress,
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

Exeunt.

ACT 5, SCENE 1.

A churchyard.

Enter two GRAVEDIGGERS, with spades. They dig.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.

GRAVEDIGGERS

(Singing)

In youth, when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet,
To contract, the time, for my behove,
Methought, there was nothing meet.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

HAMLET

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

GRAVEDIGGERS

(Singing)

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

A GRAVEDIGGER throws up a skull.

HAMLET

That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches.

HORATIO

It might, my lord.

HAMLET

Or of a courtier; which could say "Good morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?" might it not?

HORATIO

Ay, my lord.

GRAVEDIGGERS

(Singing)

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

A GRAVEDIGGER throws up another skull.

HAMLET

Whose grave's this, sirrah?

GRAVEDIGGER

Mine, sir.

HAMLET

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

GRAVEDIGGER

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

HAMLET

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

GRAVEDIGGER

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

HAMLET

What man dost thou dig it for?

GRAVEDIGGER

For no man, sir.

HAMLET

What woman, then?

GRAVEDIGGER

For none, neither.

HAMLET

Who is to be buried in't?

GRAVEDIGGER

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

HAMLET

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

GRAVEDIGGER

Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame old Fortinbras. it was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he that is mad, and sent into England.

HAMLET

Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

GRAVEDIGGER

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

HAMLET

Why?

GRAVEDIGGER

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

*Enter a PRIEST, with others (bearing the body of OPHELIA), LAERTES, CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE and ATTENDANTS in procession.
HAMLET and HORATIO hide.*

LAERTES

What ceremony else?

HAMLET

(Aside) That is Laertes,
A very noble youth: mark.

LAERTES

What ceremony else?

PRIEST

Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
As we have warrantise: her death was doubtful.

LAERTES

Must there no more be done?

PRIEST

No more be done.

LAERTES

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

HAMLET

(Aside) What, the fair Ophelia!

GERTRUDE

Sweets to the sweet: farewell!
(Scattering flowers)
I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife.

LAERTES

O, treble woe! Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.

HAMLET

(Advancing) What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis?
This is I,
Hamlet the Dane.

LAERTES

The devil take thy soul!

Grappling with him.

CLAUDIUS

Pluck them asunder.

GERTRUDE

Hamlet, Hamlet!

ALL

Gentlemen,—

HORATIO

Good my lord, be quiet.

The ATTENDANTS part them.

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.
This is mere madness:

HAMLET

(To Laertes) Hear you, sir;
What is the reason that you use me thus?
I loved you ever.

Exit HAMLET.

CLAUDIUS

I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.

Exit HORATIO.

(To LAERTES)

Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;
We'll put the matter to the present push.

Exeunt.

26

ACT 5, SCENE 2.

*A hall in the castle.
Enter HAMLET [with letters] and HORATIO.*

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Remember it, my lord?

HAMLET

My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Groped I to find out them; had my desire.
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew
To mine own room again; to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio, –
O royal knavery! –an exact command,
My head should be struck off.

[HAMLET shows the letter to HORATIO].

HORATIO

Is't possible?

HAMLET

I sat me down,
Devised a new commission,
An earnest conjuration from the king,
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
He should the bearers put to sudden death.

HORATIO

So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

HAMLET

They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow.

HORATIO

Why, what a king is this!

Enter OSRIC.

OSRIC

Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark. My lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman. The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits.

HAMLET

I will win for him if I can.

Exit OSRIC.

HORATIO

You will lose this wager, my lord.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Nay, good my lord, –

HAMLET

It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

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

27

Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, LAERTES, LORDS, OSRIC, and ATTENDANTS with foils.

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.

LAERTES

I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.

HAMLET

Give us the foils. Come on.

LAERTES

Come, one for me.

They prepare to duel.

OSRIC

Ay, my good lord.

They duel.

HAMLET

One.

LAERTES

No.

HAMLET

Judgment.

OSRIC

A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAERTES

Well; again.

CLAUDIUS

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

Here's to thy health.

Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within.

Give him the cup.

HAMLET

I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile. Come.
Another hit; what say you?

They duel.

LAERTES

A touch, a touch, I do confess.

CLAUDIUS

Our son shall win.

GERTRUDE

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.

GERTURDE drinks.

CLAUDIUS

(Aside) It is the poison'd cup: it is too late.

HAMLET

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

GERTRUDE

Come, let me wipe thy face.

HAMLET

Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

LAERTES

Say you so? Come on.

They duel.

OSRIC

Nothing, neither way.

LAERTES

Have at you now!

*LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then in scuffling, they change foils,
and HAMLET wounds LAERTES.*

CLAUDIUS

Part them; they are incensed.

HAMLET

Nay, come, again.

GERTRUDE falls.

OSRIC

Look to the queen there, ho!

HORATIO

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

OSRIC

How is't, Laertes?

LAERTES

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

HAMLET

How does the queen?

CLAUDIUS

She swoonds to see them bleed.

GERTRUDE

No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Hamlet,—
The drink, the drink! I am poison'd.

GERTRUDE dies.

HAMLET

O villany! Ho! Let the doors be lock'd:
Treachery! Seek it out.

LAERTES

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

HAMLET

The point!—envenom'd too!
Then, venom, to thy work.

HAMLET 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 dies.

LAERTES

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me.

LAERTES dies.

HAMLET

Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!
Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you—
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

HORATIO

Never believe it:
Here's yet some liquor left.

HAMLET

Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll have't.
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.
What warlike noise is this?

March afar off, and shot within.

OSRIC

Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

HAMLET

O, I die, Horatio;
I cannot live to hear the news from England,
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice,
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,
Which have solicited. The rest is silence.

HAMLET dies.

HORATIO

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!
Why does the drum come hither?

March within.

Enter FORTINBRAS, the English AMBASSADOR, and others.

FORTINBRAS

Where is this sight?

HORATIO

What is it ye would see?

If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

FORTINBRAS

This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck?

AMBASSADOR

The sight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late:
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.
Where should we have our thanks?

HORATIO

Not from his mouth,
Had it the ability of life to thank you:
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arriv'd give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view,
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about: so shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I
Truly deliver.

FORTINBRAS

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

HORATIO

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

FORTINBRAS

Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage,
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royally: and, for his passage,
Take up the bodies: such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

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