

UPDATED EDITION

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# *Hamlet*

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WITH DETAILED NOTES FROM  
THE WORLD'S LEADING CENTER  
FOR SHAKESPEARE STUDIES

EDITED BY BARBARA A. MOWAT  
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Barbara A. Mowat is Director of Research *emerita* at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Consulting Editor of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, and author of *The Dramaturgy of Shakespeare's Romances* and of essays on Shakespeare's plays and their editing.

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### EDITORS

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FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

*The Tragedy of*

*Hamlet*

*Prince of Denmark*

By

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

EDITED BY BARBARA A. MOWAT

AND PAUL WERSTINE

AN UPDATED EDITION

**SIMON & SCHUSTER PAPERBACKS**

**NEW YORK LONDON TORONTO SYDNEY NEW DELHI**

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unparalleled collection of early modern books, manuscripts, and artwork connected to Shakespeare, the Folger's holdings have been consulted extensively in the preparation of these texts. The Editions also reflect the expertise gained through the regular performance of Shakespeare's works in the Folger's Elizabethan Theater.

I want to express my deep thanks to editors Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine for creating these indispensable editions of Shakespeare's works, which incorporate the best of textual scholarship with a richness of commentary that is both inspired and engaging. Readers who want to know more about Shakespeare and his plays can follow the paths these distinguished scholars have tread by visiting the Folger either in-person or online, where a range of physical and digital resources exist to supplement the material in these texts. I commend to you these words, and hope that they inspire.

*Michael Witmore*  
Director, Folger Shakespeare Library

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## Editors' Preface

In recent years, ways of dealing with Shakespeare's texts and with the interpretation of his plays have been undergoing significant change. This edition, while retaining many of the features that have always made the Folger Shakespeare so attractive to the general reader, at the same time reflects these current ways of thinking about Shakespeare. For example, modern readers, actors, and teachers have become interested in the differences between, on the one hand, the early forms in which Shakespeare's plays were first published and, on the other hand, the forms in which editors through the centuries have presented them. In response to this interest, we have based our edition on what we consider the best early printed version of a particular play (explaining our rationale in a section called "An Introduction to This Text") and have marked our changes in the text—unobtrusively, we hope, but in such a way that the curious reader can be aware that a change has been made and can consult the "Textual Notes" to discover what appeared in the early printed version.

Current ways of looking at the plays are reflected in our brief introductions, in many of the commentary notes, in the annotated lists of "Further Reading," and especially in each play's "Modern Perspective," an essay written by an outstanding scholar who brings to the reader his or her fresh assessment of the play in the light of today's interests and concerns.

As in the Folger Library General Reader's Shakespeare, which this edition replaces, we include explanatory notes

designed to help make Shakespeare's language clearer to a modern reader, and we hyperlink notes to the lines that they explain. We also follow the earlier edition in including illustrations—of objects, of clothing, of mythological figures—from books and manuscripts in the Folger Shakespeare Library collection. We provide fresh accounts of the life of Shakespeare, of the publishing of his plays, and of the theaters in which his plays were performed, as well as an introduction to the text itself. We also include a section called "Reading Shakespeare's Language," in which we try to help readers learn to "break the code" of Elizabethan poetic language.

For each section of each volume, we are indebted to a host of generous experts and fellow scholars. The "Reading Shakespeare's Language" sections, for example, could not have been written had not Arthur King, of Brigham Young University, and Randal Robinson, author of *Unlocking Shakespeare's Language*, led the way in untangling Shakespearean language puzzles and shared their insights and methodologies generously with us. "Shakespeare's Life" profited by the careful reading given it by S. Schoenbaum; "Shakespeare's Theater" was read and strengthened by Andrew Gurr, John Astington, and William Ingram; and "The Publication of Shakespeare's Plays" is indebted to the comments of Peter W. M. Blayney. We, as editors, take sole responsibility for any errors in our editions.

We are grateful to the authors of the "Modern Perspectives"; to Leeds Barroll and David Bevington for their generous encouragement; to the Huntington and Newberry Libraries for fellowship support; to King's University College for the grants it has provided to Paul Werstine; to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which has provided him with Research Time Stipends; to R.

J. Shroyer of the University of Western Ontario for essential computer support; and to the Folger Institute's Center for Shakespeare Studies for its fortuitous sponsorship of a workshop on "Shakespeare's Texts for Students and Teachers" (funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and led by Richard Knowles of the University of Wisconsin), a workshop from which we learned an enormous amount about what is wanted by college and high-school teachers of Shakespeare today.

In preparing this preface for the publication of *Hamlet* in 1992, we wrote: Our biggest debt is to the Folger Shakespeare Library: to Werner Gundersheimer, Director of the Library, who has made possible our edition; to Jean Miller, the Library's Art Curator, who combed the Library holdings for illustrations, and to Julie Ainsworth, Head of the Photography Department, who carefully photographed them; to Peggy O'Brien, Director of Education, who gave us expert advice about the needs being expressed by Shakespeare teachers and students (and to Martha Christian and other "master teachers" who used our texts in manuscript in their classrooms); to the staff of the Academic Programs Division, especially Paul Menzer (who drafted "Further Reading" material), Mary Tonkinson, Lena Cowen Orlin, Molly Haws, and Jessica Hymowitz; and, finally, to the staff of the Library Reading Room, whose patience and support have been invaluable.

As we revise the play for publication in 2012, we add to the above our gratitude to Gail Kern Paster, Director of the Library from 2002 until July 2011, whose interest and support have been unfailing and whose scholarly expertise has been an invaluable resource; to Stephen Llano, our production editor at Simon & Schuster, whose expertise, attention to detail, and wisdom are essential to this project;

to Deborah Curren-Aquino, who provides extensive editorial and production support; to Alice Falk for her expert copyediting; to Mary Bloodworth and Michael Poston for their unfailing computer support; and to the staff of the Library's Research Division, especially Christina Certo (whose help is crucial), David Schalkwyk (Director of Research), Mimi Godfrey, Kathleen Lynch, Carol Brobeck, Owen Williams, Sarah Werner, and Adrienne Schevchuk. Finally, we once again express our thanks to Jean Miller, who continues to unearth wonderful images, and to the ever-supportive staff of the Library Reading Room.

Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine  
2012

## Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

*Hamlet* is the most popular of Shakespeare's plays for readers and theater audiences, and it is also one of the most puzzling. Many questions about the play continue to fascinate readers and playgoers, making *Hamlet* not only a revenge tragedy but also very much a mystery. What is this Ghost that appears to Hamlet? Is it Hamlet's murdered father returned from the everlasting fire to demand justice upon his murderer? Is it a "goblin damned"—that is, a demon bent on claiming Hamlet's soul by tempting him to assassinate his king? Or is the Ghost "a spirit of health," an angelic messenger revealing to Hamlet that the young man's mission in life is to cleanse the kingdom of Denmark of its corrupt king?

And what happens to Hamlet after the Ghost commands that the throne of Denmark be cleansed? Does Hamlet actually go mad, becoming unhinged by the accusation that his uncle murdered his father or by the ugly picture the Ghost paints of Hamlet's lustful mother? Or does Hamlet merely pretend to be mad, pretend so well that he makes us wonder if we can tell the difference between sanity and madness? Why is he so hostile to women, both to his mother and to the woman whom he once courted and whom he claims to have loved dearly? Why does he wait so long to confirm the guilt of the king after the Ghost has accused the king of murder? And once he is convinced that the king is a murderer, why does Hamlet not act immediately?

And what about Gertrude? Was she unfaithful to her husband during his lifetime? Was she complicit in his

murder? What does she come to believe about Hamlet's madness? And about her new husband?

Beyond such questions about the play and its characters lie deeper issues about the rightness of revenge, about how to achieve an ethical life, and about how to live in a world where tears of sorrow, loving smiles, and friendly words are all suspect because all are "actions that a man might *play*." Hamlet's world is bleak and cold because almost no one and nothing can be trusted. But his world, and Hamlet himself, continue to draw us to them, speaking to every generation of its own problems and its own yearnings. It is a play that seems particularly pertinent today—just as it has seemed particularly pertinent to any number of generations before us.

For "A Modern Perspective" on *Hamlet*, we invite you, after you have read the play, to read the essay by Professor Michael Neill of the University of Auckland, printed at the back of this book.

## Reading Shakespeare's Language: *Hamlet*

For many people today, reading Shakespeare's language can be a problem—but it is a problem that can be solved. Those who have studied Latin (or even French or German or Spanish) and those who are used to reading poetry will have little difficulty understanding the language of poetic drama. Others, however, need to develop the skills of untangling unusual sentence structures and of recognizing and understanding poetic compressions, omissions, and wordplay. And even those skilled in reading unusual sentence structures may have occasional trouble with Shakespeare's words. More than four hundred years of “static”—caused by changes in language and in life—intervene between his speaking and our hearing. Most of his vocabulary is still in use, but a few of his words are no longer used, and many of his words now have meanings quite different from those they had in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the theater, most of these difficulties are solved for us by actors who study the language and articulate it for us so that the essential meaning is heard—or, when combined with stage action, is at least *felt*. When we are reading on our own, we must do what each actor does: go over the lines (often with a dictionary close at hand) until the puzzles are solved and the lines yield up their poetry and the characters speak in words and phrases that are, suddenly, rewarding and wonderfully memorable.

## Shakespeare's Words

As you begin to read the opening scenes of a Shakespeare play, you may notice occasional unfamiliar words. Some are unfamiliar simply because we no longer use them. In the opening scenes of *Hamlet*, for example, we find such words as *parle* (i.e., discussion, meeting), *soft* (an exclamation meaning “hold” or “enough” or “wait a minute”), and *marry* (an oath “by the Virgin Mary,” which had by Shakespeare’s time become a mere interjection, like “indeed”). Words of this kind are explained in notes to the text and will become familiar as you continue to read Shakespeare’s language.

In *Hamlet*, as in all of Shakespeare’s writing, the most problematic are the words that are still in use but now have different meanings. In the first scene of *Hamlet* ([1.1.14](#)), the word *rivals* is used where we would use “companions.” At [1.1.44](#) we find the word *his* where we would use “its” and at [1.1.134](#) the word *still* used (as it most often is in Shakespeare) to mean “always.” At [1.1.67](#), *sensible* means “attested to by the senses”; at [1.1.169](#), *extravagant* means “wandering”; and at [1.2.66](#), *cousin* is used (as it is generally in Shakespeare) to mean simply “kinsman.” And at [1.2.278](#), where Hamlet says, “I doubt some foul play,” we would say, “I suspect some treacherous action.” Again, such words are explained in the notes to the text, but they, too, will become increasingly familiar as you get further into the play.

Some words are strange not because of the “static” introduced by changes in language over the past centuries but because they are used by Shakespeare to build a dramatic world that has its own geography and history and story. *Hamlet*, for example, builds, in its opening scenes, a location, a past history, and a background mythology through references to “the Dane,” to “buried Denmark,” to

Elsinore, to partisans and jointresses, to Hyperion and Niobe and Hercules. These “local” words and references (each of which is explained in notes to this text) build the world of Denmark that Hamlet, Gertrude, and Claudius inhabit; they soon become recognizable features of Shakespeare’s Elsinore.

### Shakespeare’s Sentences

In an English sentence, meaning is quite dependent on the place given each word. “The dog bit the boy” and “The boy bit the dog” mean very different things, even though the individual words are the same. Because English places such importance on the positions of words in sentences, on the way words are arranged, unusual arrangements can puzzle a reader. Shakespeare frequently shifts his sentences away from “normal” English arrangements—often to create the rhythm he seeks, sometimes to use a line’s poetic rhythm to emphasize a particular word, sometimes to give a character his or her own speech patterns or to allow the character to speak in a special way. When we attend a good performance of the play, the actors will have worked out the sentence structures and will articulate the sentences so that the meaning is clear. In reading the play, we need to do as the actor does: that is, when puzzled by a character’s speech, we check to see if the words are being presented in an unusual sequence.

Look first for the placement of subject and verb. Shakespeare often places the verb before the subject (e.g., instead of “He goes,” we find “Goes he”). In the opening scene of *Hamlet*, when, at [line 73](#), Horatio says “So frowned he once,” he is using such a construction, as he is at [line 91](#), when he says “That can I.” Such inversions rarely cause

much confusion. More problematic is Shakespeare's frequent placing of the object before the subject and verb (e.g., instead of "I hit him," we might find "Him I hit"). When Horatio says, at [1.2.216](#)–17, "This to me . . . impart they did," he is using such an inverted construction (the normal order would be "They did impart this to me"). Polonius uses another such inversion at [1.3.126](#)–29 when he says, "These blazes, daughter, / . . . You must not take for fire." Ordinarily one would say "Daughter, you must not take these blazes for fire."

In some plays Shakespeare makes systematic use of inversions (*Julius Caesar* is one such play). In *Hamlet*, he more often uses sentence structures that depend instead on the separation of words that would normally appear together. (This is usually done to create a particular rhythm or to stress a particular word.) Claudius's "which have freely gone / With this affair along" ([1.2.15](#)–16) interrupts the phrase "gone along"; Horatio's "When he the ambitious Norway combated" ([1.1.72](#)) separates the subject and verb ("he combated"), interjecting between them the object of the verb ("the ambitious Norway"). To create for yourself sentences that seem more like the English of everyday speech, you may wish to rearrange the words, putting together the word clusters and placing the remaining words in their more familiar order. You will usually find that the sentences will gain in clarity but will lose their rhythm or shift their emphases. You can then see for yourself why Shakespeare chose his unusual arrangement.

Locating and rearranging words that belong together is especially necessary in passages that separate subjects from verbs and verbs from objects by long delaying or expanding interruptions—a structure that is used frequently in *Hamlet*. For example, when Horatio, at [1.1.92](#)–110, tells the story of

how King Hamlet won the Norwegian lands and how the prince of Norway seeks to regain them, he uses a series of such interrupted constructions:

*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, . . .  
*Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands. . . .*

Now, sir, young *Fortinbras*,  
Of unimprovèd mettle hot and full,  
*Hath* in the skirts of Norway here and there  
*Sharked up a list of lawless resolute. . . .*

Here the interruptions provide details that catch the audience up in Horatio's story. The separation of the basic sentence elements ("our last king was dared to the combat") forces the audience to attend to supporting details while waiting for the basic sentence elements to come together. In the second scene of *Hamlet* (at [1.2.8](#)–14), Claudius uses the same kind of interrupted construction in his opening speech,

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 . . . ,*

where the basic elements of the sentence are simply "we

[i.e., I] have taken to wife our sometime sister [i.e., my former sister-in-law]." Claudius's speech, like Horatio's, is a narrative of past events, but the interrupted sentence structure here seems designed to add formality to the speech and, perhaps, to cover over the bald statement carried in the stripped-down sentence.

Occasionally, rather than separating basic sentence elements, Shakespeare simply holds them back, delaying them until much subordinate material has already been given. Marcellus uses this kind of delaying structure when he says, at [1.1.76](#)–77, "Thus twice before, and jump [i.e., exactly] at this dead hour, / With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch" (where a "normally" constructed English sentence would have begun with the basic sentence elements: "He hath gone by our watch"); Barnardo's sentence that precedes the entrance of the Ghost at [line 46](#) uses this same delayed construction, though the Ghost's entrance breaks off Barnardo's words before the subject of the sentence ("Marcellus and myself") finds a verb. Hamlet, in his first soliloquy ([1.2.133](#)–64), uses a delayed construction when he says (lines 158–61) "Within a month, / Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears / Had left the flushing in her gallèd eyes, / She married."

Shakespeare's sentences are sometimes complicated not because of unusual structures or interruptions or delays but because he omits words and parts of words that English sentences normally require. (In conversation, we, too, often omit words. We say "Heard from him yet?" and our hearer supplies the missing "Have you." Frequent reading of Shakespeare—and of other poets—trains us to supply such missing words.) In plays written five or ten years after *Hamlet*, Shakespeare uses omissions both of verbs and of nouns to great dramatic effect. In *Hamlet* omissions are less

interesting and seem to be used primarily for compressed expression. At [1.1.31](#)–32, for instance, Marcellus says “Therefore I have entreated him along / With us,” omitting the words “to come” or “to go” before “along”; a few lines later, Barnardo omits the word “with” in the construction “let us once again assail your ears [with] . . . what we have . . . seen” ([lines 37](#)–39).

### Shakespearean Wordplay

Shakespeare plays with language so often and so variously that books are written on the topic. Here we will mention only two kinds of wordplay, puns and metaphors. A pun is a play on words that sound the same but have different meanings (or a single word that has more than one meaning). When, in the second scene of *Hamlet*, Claudius calls Hamlet his “son” and asks him why his mood is so cloudy, Hamlet replies that he is, rather, “too much in the sun” (punning on son/sun). In the exchange between Gertrude and Hamlet,

QUEEN

Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET

Ay, madam, it is common.

QUEEN

If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET

“Seems,” madam? Nay, it is. I know not “seems[,]”

([1.2.74](#)–79)

Hamlet's reply is a pun on “seems”; for Gertrude, the question was “Why are you acting as if this death were something particularly awful,” but Hamlet responds as if she

had asked “Why are you putting on this show of grief.” In Polonius’s conversation with Ophelia in the third scene of the play, much of his dialogue is based on puns: the word *tenders*, for example, introduced by Ophelia to mean “offers,” is picked up by Polonius and used, first, to mean “coins” (“legal tender”), then shifted to its verb form “to tender” and used to mean “to regard,” and then, in the phrase “tender me a fool,” to mean, simultaneously, “present me,” “make me look like,” and “show yourself to me.” In many of Shakespeare’s plays, one may not be aware that a character is punning, and the dialogue can seem simply silly or unintelligible; one must thus stay alert to the sounds of words and to the possibility of double meanings. In *Hamlet*, puns carry a heavier burden (Hamlet packs much of his feeling about Claudius into his single-line “aside,” “A little more than kin and less than kind,” where “kind” has the double meaning of “kindred” and “kindhearted”; and many of Polonius’s speeches are unintelligible until one untangles the puns and related plays on words).

A metaphor is a play on words in which one object or idea is expressed as if it were something else, something with which, the metaphor suggests, it shares common features. For instance, when Horatio refers to the appearance of the Ghost as “a mote . . . to trouble the mind’s eye,” he is using metaphoric language: the mind is irritated by a question as the eye is irritated by a speck of dust. Hamlet’s description of the world as “an unweeded garden that grows to seed” uses metaphor to paint for us his bleak vision; behind his description of Gertrude and Claudius’s hasty marriage (“O, most wicked speed, to post / With such dexterity to incestuous sheets”) is the metaphor of post-horses running skillfully and swiftly. Metaphors are often used when the idea being conveyed is hard to express or, for Hamlet,

simply beyond normal expression; through metaphor, the speaker is thus given language that helps to carry the idea or the feeling to his or her onstage listener—and to the audience.

### Implied Stage Action

Finally, in reading Shakespeare's plays we should always remember that what we are reading is a performance script. The dialogue is written to be spoken by actors who, at the same time, are moving, gesturing, picking up objects, weeping, shaking their fists. Some stage action is described in what are called "stage directions"; some is signaled within the dialogue itself. We must learn to be alert to such signals as we stage the play in our imaginations. When, in the first scene of *Hamlet*, Barnardo says "Last night of all, / When yond same star that's westward from the pole / Had made his course t' illume that part of heaven / Where now it burns," it is clear that, on the word "yond," he points toward the imagined star. When Barnardo says of the Ghost "See, it stalks away," the stage action is obvious. It is less obvious, later in the scene, exactly what is to take place when Horatio says "I'll cross it though it blast me" ([line 139](#)). The director and the actor (and the reader, in imagination) must decide whether Horatio makes a cross of his body by spreading his arms, or whether he simply stands in the Ghost's path; as the Ghost once again exits, the lines "Shall I strike it with my partisan?" "Do, if it will not stand," clearly involve some violent action. Marcellus describes their gestures as a "show of violence" and mentions their "vain blows," but the question of who strikes at the Ghost and with how much vigor will be answered variously from production to production. Learning to read the language of stage action

repays one many times over when one reaches a crucial scene like that of the play within the play (3.2) or that of the final duel (5.2), in both of which scenes implied stage action vitally affects our response to the play.

It is immensely rewarding to work carefully with Shakespeare's language—the words, the sentences, the wordplay, and the implied stage actions—as readers for the past four centuries have discovered. It may be more pleasurable to attend a good performance of a play—though not everyone has thought so. But the joy of being able to stage a Shakespeare play in our imaginations, to return to passages that continue to yield further meanings (or further questions) the more we read them—these are pleasures that, for many, rival (or at least augment) those of the performed text, and certainly make it worth considerable effort to “break the code” of Elizabethan poetic drama and let free the remarkable language that makes up a Shakespeare text.

# Shakespeare's Life

Surviving documents that give us glimpses into the life of William Shakespeare show us a playwright, poet, and actor who grew up in the market town of Stratford-upon-Avon, spent his professional life in London, and returned to Stratford a wealthy landowner. He was born in April 1564, died in April 1616, and is buried inside the chancel of Holy Trinity Church in Stratford.

We wish we could know more about the life of the world's greatest dramatist. His plays and poems are testaments to his wide reading—especially to his knowledge of Virgil, Ovid, Plutarch, Holinshed's *Chronicles*, and the Bible—and to his mastery of the English language, but we can only speculate about his education. We know that the King's New School in Stratford-upon-Avon was considered excellent. The school was one of the English "grammar schools" established to educate young men, primarily in Latin grammar and literature. As in other schools of the time, students began their studies at the age of four or five in the attached "petty school," and there learned to read and write in English, studying primarily the catechism from the Book of Common Prayer. After two years in the petty school, students entered the lower form (grade) of the grammar school, where they began the serious study of Latin grammar and Latin texts that would occupy most of the remainder of their school days. (Several Latin texts that Shakespeare used repeatedly in writing his plays and poems were texts that schoolboys memorized and recited.) Latin

comedies were introduced early in the lower form; in the upper form, which the boys entered at age ten or eleven, students wrote their own Latin orations and declamations, studied Latin historians and rhetoricians, and began the study of Greek using the Greek New Testament.



Title page of a 1573 Latin and Greek catechism for children.  
From Alexander Nowell, *Catechismus paruus pueris primum Latine . . .* (1573).

Since the records of the Stratford “grammar school” do not survive, we cannot prove that William Shakespeare attended the school; however, every indication (his father’s position as an alderman and bailiff of Stratford, the

playwright's own knowledge of the Latin classics, scenes in the plays that recall grammar-school experiences—for example, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 4.1) suggests that he did. We also lack generally accepted documentation about Shakespeare's life after his schooling ended and his professional life in London began. His marriage in 1582 (at age eighteen) to Anne Hathaway and the subsequent births of his daughter Susanna (1583) and the twins Judith and Hamnet (1585) are recorded, but how he supported himself and where he lived are not known. Nor do we know when and why he left Stratford for the London theatrical world, nor how he rose to be the important figure in that world that he had become by the early 1590s.

We do know that by 1592 he had achieved some prominence in London as both an actor and a playwright. In that year was published a book by the playwright Robert Greene attacking an actor who had the audacity to write blank-verse drama and who was “in his own conceit [i.e., opinion] the only Shake-scene in a country.” Since Greene's attack includes a parody of a line from one of Shakespeare's early plays, there is little doubt that it is Shakespeare to whom he refers, a “Shake-scene” who had aroused Greene's fury by successfully competing with university-educated dramatists like Greene himself. It was in 1593 that Shakespeare became a published poet. In that year he published his long narrative poem *Venus and Adonis*; in 1594, he followed it with *The Rape of Lucrece*. Both poems were dedicated to the young earl of Southampton (Henry Wriothesley), who may have become Shakespeare's patron.

It seems no coincidence that Shakespeare wrote these narrative poems at a time when the theaters were closed because of the plague, a contagious epidemic disease that devastated the population of London. When the theaters

reopened in 1594, Shakespeare apparently resumed his double career of actor and playwright and began his long (and seemingly profitable) service as an acting-company shareholder. Records for December of 1594 show him to be a leading member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men. It was this company of actors, later named the King's Men, for whom he would be a principal actor, dramatist, and shareholder for the rest of his career.

So far as we can tell, that career spanned about twenty years. In the 1590s, he wrote his plays on English history as well as several comedies and at least two tragedies (*Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet*). These histories, comedies, and tragedies are the plays credited to him in 1598 in a work, *Palladis Tamia*, that in one chapter compares English writers with "Greek, Latin, and Italian Poets." There the author, Francis Meres, claims that Shakespeare is comparable to the Latin dramatists Seneca for tragedy and Plautus for comedy, and calls him "the most excellent in both kinds for the stage." He also names him "Mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare": "I say," writes Meres, "that the Muses would speak with Shakespeare's fine filed phrase, if they would speak English." Since Meres also mentions Shakespeare's "sugared sonnets among his private friends," it is assumed that many of Shakespeare's sonnets (not published until 1609) were also written in the 1590s.

In 1599, Shakespeare's company built a theater for themselves across the river from London, naming it the Globe. The plays that are considered by many to be Shakespeare's major tragedies (*Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*) were written while the company was resident in this theater, as were such comedies as *Twelfth Night* and *Measure for Measure*. Many of Shakespeare's plays were

performed at court (both for Queen Elizabeth I and, after her death in 1603, for King James I), some were presented at the Inns of Court (the residences of London's legal societies), and some were doubtless performed in other towns, at the universities, and at great houses when the King's Men went on tour; otherwise, his plays from 1599 to 1608 were, so far as we know, performed only at the Globe. Between 1608 and 1612, Shakespeare wrote several plays—among them *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*—presumably for the company's new indoor Blackfriars theater, though the plays were performed also at the Globe and at court. Surviving documents describe a performance of *The Winter's Tale* in 1611 at the Globe, for example, and performances of *The Tempest* in 1611 and 1613 at the royal palace of Whitehall.

Shakespeare seems to have written very little after 1612, the year in which he probably wrote *King Henry VIII*. (It was at a performance of *Henry VIII* in 1613 that the Globe caught fire and burned to the ground.) Sometime between 1610 and 1613, according to many biographers, he returned to live in Stratford-upon-Avon, where he owned a large house and considerable property, and where his wife and his two daughters lived. (His son Hamnet had died in 1596.) However, other biographers suggest that Shakespeare did not leave London for good until much closer to the time of his death. During his professional years in London, Shakespeare had presumably derived income from the acting company's profits as well as from his own career as an actor, from the sale of his play manuscripts to the acting company, and, after 1599, from his shares as an owner of the Globe. It was presumably that income, carefully invested in land and other property, that made him the wealthy man that surviving documents show him to have become. It is also assumed that William Shakespeare's growing wealth

and reputation played some part in inclining the Crown, in 1596, to grant John Shakespeare, William's father, the coat of arms that he had so long sought. William Shakespeare died in Stratford on April 23, 1616 (according to the epitaph carved under his bust in Holy Trinity Church) and was buried on April 25. Seven years after his death, his collected plays were published as *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (the work now known as the First Folio).



Ptolemaic universe.

From Marcus Manilius, *The sphere of . . .* (1675).

The years in which Shakespeare wrote were among the most exciting in English history. Intellectually, the

discovery, translation, and printing of Greek and Roman classics were making available a set of works and worldviews that interacted complexly with Christian texts and beliefs. The result was a questioning, a vital intellectual ferment, that provided energy for the period's amazing dramatic and literary output and that fed directly into Shakespeare's plays. The Ghost in *Hamlet*, for example, is wonderfully complicated in part because he is a figure from Roman tragedy—the spirit of the dead returning to seek revenge—who at the same time inhabits a Christian hell (or purgatory); Hamlet's description of humankind reflects at one moment the Neoplatonic wonderment at mankind ("What a piece of work is a man!") and, at the next, the Christian attitude toward sinful humanity ("And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?").

As intellectual horizons expanded, so also did geographical and cosmological horizons. New worlds—both North and South America—were explored, and in them were found human beings who lived and worshiped in ways radically different from those of Renaissance Europeans and Englishmen. The universe during these years also seemed to shift and expand. Copernicus had earlier theorized that the earth was not the center of the cosmos but revolved as a planet around the sun. Galileo's telescope, created in 1609, allowed scientists to see that Copernicus had been correct: the universe was not organized with the earth at the center, nor was it so nicely circumscribed as people had, until that time, thought. In terms of expanding horizons, the impact of these discoveries on people's beliefs—religious, scientific, and philosophical—cannot be overstated.

London, too, rapidly expanded and changed during the years (from the early 1590s to around 1610) that Shakespeare lived there. London—the center of England's

government, its economy, its royal court, its overseas trade—was, during these years, becoming an exciting metropolis, drawing to it thousands of new citizens every year. Troubled by overcrowding, by poverty, by recurring epidemics of the plague, London was also a mecca for the wealthy and the aristocratic, and for those who sought advancement at court, or power in government or finance or trade. One hears in Shakespeare's plays the voices of London—the struggles for power, the fear of venereal disease, the language of buying and selling. One hears as well the voices of Stratford-upon-Avon—references to the nearby Forest of Arden, to sheepherding, to small-town gossip, to village fairs and markets. Part of the richness of Shakespeare's work is the influence felt there of the various worlds in which he lived: the world of metropolitan London, the world of small-town and rural England, the world of the theater, and the worlds of craftsmen and shepherds.

That Shakespeare inhabited such worlds we know from surviving London and Stratford documents, as well as from the evidence of the plays and poems themselves. From such records we can sketch the dramatist's life. We know from his works that he was a voracious reader. We know from legal and business documents that he was a multifaceted theater man who became a wealthy landowner. We know a bit about his family life and a fair amount about his legal and financial dealings. Most scholars today depend upon such evidence as they draw their picture of the world's greatest playwright. Such, however, has not always been the case. Until the late eighteenth century, the William Shakespeare who lived in most biographies was the creation of legend and tradition. This was the Shakespeare who was supposedly caught poaching deer at Charlecote, the estate of Sir Thomas Lucy close by Stratford; this was the

Shakespeare who fled from Sir Thomas's vengeance and made his way in London by taking care of horses outside a playhouse; this was the Shakespeare who reportedly could barely read, but whose natural gifts were extraordinary, whose father was a butcher who allowed his gifted son sometimes to help in the butcher shop, where William supposedly killed calves "in a high style," making a speech for the occasion. It was this legendary William Shakespeare whose Falstaff (in *1* and *2 Henry IV*) so pleased Queen Elizabeth that she demanded a play about Falstaff in love, and demanded that it be written in fourteen days (hence the existence of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*). It was this legendary Shakespeare who reached the top of his acting career in the roles of the Ghost in *Hamlet* and old Adam in *As You Like It*—and who died of a fever contracted by drinking too hard at "a merry meeting" with the poets Michael Drayton and Ben Jonson. This legendary Shakespeare is a rambunctious, undisciplined man, as attractively "wild" as his plays were seen by earlier generations to be. Unfortunately, there is no trace of evidence to support these wonderful stories.

Perhaps in response to the disreputable Shakespeare of legend—or perhaps in response to the fragmentary and, for some, all-too-ordinary Shakespeare documented by surviving records—some people since the mid-nineteenth century have argued that William Shakespeare could not have written the plays that bear his name. These persons have put forward some dozen names as more likely authors, among them Queen Elizabeth, Sir Francis Bacon, Edward de Vere (earl of Oxford), and Christopher Marlowe. Such attempts to find what for these people is a more believable author of the plays is a tribute to the regard in which the plays are held. Unfortunately for their claims, the

documents that exist that provide evidence for the facts of Shakespeare's life tie him inextricably to the body of plays and poems that bear his name. Unlikely as it seems to those who want the works to have been written by an aristocrat, a university graduate, or an "important" person, the plays and poems seem clearly to have been produced by a man from Stratford-upon-Avon with a very good "grammar-school" education and a life of experience in London and in the world of the London theater. How this particular man produced the works that dominate the cultures of much of the world four centuries after his death is one of life's mysteries—and one that will continue to tease our imaginations as we continue to delight in his plays and poems.

# Shakespeare's Theater

The actors of Shakespeare's time are known to have performed plays in a great variety of locations. They played at court (that is, in the great halls of such royal residences as Whitehall, Hampton Court, and Greenwich); they played in halls at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and at the Inns of Court (the residences in London of the legal societies); and they also played in the private houses of great lords and civic officials. Sometimes acting companies went on tour from London into the provinces, often (but not only) when outbreaks of bubonic plague in the capital forced the closing of theaters to reduce the possibility of contagion in crowded audiences. In the provinces the actors usually staged their plays in churches (until around 1600) or in guildhalls. While surviving records show only a handful of occasions when actors played at inns while on tour, London inns were important playing places up until the 1590s.

The building of theaters in London had begun only shortly before Shakespeare wrote his first plays in the 1590s. These theaters were of two kinds: outdoor or public playhouses that could accommodate large numbers of playgoers, and indoor or private theaters for much smaller audiences. What is usually regarded as the first London outdoor public playhouse was called simply the Theatre. James Burbage—the father of Richard Burbage, who was perhaps the most famous actor in Shakespeare's company—built it in 1576 in an area north of the city of London called Shoreditch. Among the more famous of the other public

playhouses that capitalized on the new fashion were the Curtain and the Fortune (both also built north of the city), the Rose, the Swan, the Globe, and the Hope (all located on the Bankside, a region just across the Thames south of the city of London). All these playhouses had to be built outside the jurisdiction of the city of London because many civic officials were hostile to the performance of drama and repeatedly petitioned the royal council to abolish it.



A stylized representation of the Globe theater.

From Claes Jansz Visscher, *Londinum florentissima Britanniae urbs* . . . [c. 1625].

The theaters erected on the Bankside (a region under the authority of the Church of England, whose head was the monarch) shared the neighborhood with houses of

prostitution and with the Paris Garden, where the blood sports of bearbaiting and bullbaiting were carried on. There may have been no clear distinction between playhouses and buildings for such sports, for we know that the Hope was used for both plays and baiting and that Philip Henslowe, owner of the Rose and, later, partner in the ownership of the Fortune, was also a partner in a monopoly on baiting. All these forms of entertainment were easily accessible to Londoners by boat across the Thames or over London Bridge.

Evidently Shakespeare's company prospered on the Bankside. They moved there in 1599. Threatened by difficulties in renewing the lease on the land where their first theater (the Theatre) had been built, Shakespeare's company took advantage of the Christmas holiday in 1598 to dismantle the Theatre and transport its timbers across the Thames to the Bankside, where, in 1599, these timbers were used in the building of the Globe. The weather in late December 1598 is recorded as having been especially harsh. It was so cold that the Thames was "nigh [nearly] frozen," and there was heavy snow. Perhaps the weather aided Shakespeare's company in eluding their landlord, the snow hiding their activity and the freezing of the Thames allowing them to slide the timbers across to the Bankside without paying tolls for repeated trips over London Bridge. Attractive as this narrative is, it remains just as likely that the heavy snow hampered transport of the timbers in wagons through the London streets to the river. It also must be remembered that the Thames was, according to report, only "nigh frozen," and therefore did not necessarily provide solid footing. Whatever the precise circumstances of this fascinating event in English theater history, Shakespeare's company was able to begin playing at their new Globe

theater on the Bankside in 1599. After this theater burned down in 1613 during the staging of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* (its thatch roof was set alight by cannon fire called for in performance), Shakespeare's company immediately rebuilt on the same location. The second Globe seems to have been a grander structure than its predecessor. It remained in use until the beginning of the English Civil War in 1642, when Parliament officially closed the theaters. Soon thereafter it was pulled down.

The public theaters of Shakespeare's time were very different buildings from our theaters today. First of all, they were open-air playhouses. As recent excavations of the Rose and the Globe confirm, some were polygonal or roughly circular in shape; the Fortune, however, was square. The most recent estimates of their size put the diameter of these buildings at 72 feet (the Rose) to 100 feet (the Globe), but we know that they held vast audiences of two or three thousand, who must have been squeezed together quite tightly. Some of these spectators paid extra to sit or stand in the two or three levels of roofed galleries that extended, on the upper levels, all the way around the theater and surrounded an open space. In this space were the stage and, perhaps, the tiring house (what we would call dressing rooms), as well as the so-called yard. In the yard stood the spectators who chose to pay less, the ones whom Hamlet contemptuously called "groundlings." For a roof they had only the sky, and so they were exposed to all kinds of weather. They stood on a floor that was sometimes made of mortar and sometimes of ash mixed with the shells of hazelnuts, which, it has recently been discovered, were standard flooring material in the period.

Unlike the yard, the stage itself was covered by a roof. Its ceiling, called "the heavens," is thought to have been

elaborately painted to depict the sun, moon, stars, and planets. The exact size of the stage remains hard to determine. We have a single sketch of part of the interior of the Swan. A Dutchman named Johannes de Witt visited this theater around 1596 and sent a sketch of it back to his friend, Arend van Buchel. Because van Buchel found de Witt's letter and sketch of interest, he copied both into a book. It is van Buchel's copy, adapted, it seems, to the shape and size of the page in his book, that survives. In this sketch, the stage appears to be a large rectangular platform that thrusts far out into the yard, perhaps even as far as the center of the circle formed by the surrounding galleries. This drawing, combined with the specifications for the size of the stage in the building contract for the Fortune, has led scholars to conjecture that the stage on which Shakespeare's plays were performed must have measured approximately 43 feet in width and 27 feet in depth, a vast acting area. But the digging up of a large part of the Rose by late-twentieth-century archaeologists has provided evidence of a quite different stage design. The Rose stage was a platform tapered at the corners and much shallower than what seems to be depicted in the van Buchel sketch. Indeed, its measurements seem to be about 37.5 feet across at its widest point and only 15.5 feet deep. Because the surviving indications of stage size and design differ from each other so much, it is possible that the stages in other theaters, like the Theatre, the Curtain, and the Globe (the outdoor playhouses where we know that Shakespeare's plays were performed), were different from those at both the Swan and the Rose.

After about 1608 Shakespeare's plays were staged not only at the Globe but also at an indoor or private playhouse in Blackfriars. This theater had been constructed in 1596 by James Burbage in an upper hall of a former Dominican

priory or monastic house. Although Henry VIII had dissolved all English monasteries in the 1530s (shortly after he had founded the Church of England), the area remained under church, rather than hostile civic, control. The hall that Burbage had purchased and renovated was a large one in which Parliament had once met. In the private theater that he constructed, the stage, lit by candles, was built across the narrow end of the hall, with boxes flanking it. The rest of the hall offered seating room only. Because there was no provision for standing room, the largest audience it could hold was less than a thousand, or about a quarter of what the Globe could accommodate. Admission to Blackfriars was correspondingly more expensive. Instead of a penny to stand in the yard at the Globe, it cost a minimum of sixpence to get into Blackfriars. The best seats at the Globe (in the Lords' Room in the gallery above and behind the stage) cost sixpence; but the boxes flanking the stage at Blackfriars were half a crown, or five times sixpence. Some spectators who were particularly interested in displaying themselves paid even more to sit on stools on the Blackfriars stage.

Whether in the outdoor or indoor playhouses, the stages of Shakespeare's time were different from ours. They were not separated from the audience by the dropping of a curtain between acts and scenes. Therefore the playwrights of the time had to find other ways of signaling to the audience that one scene (to be imagined as occurring in one location at a given time) had ended and the next (to be imagined at perhaps a different location at a later time) had begun. The customary way used by Shakespeare and many of his contemporaries was to have everyone on stage exit at the end of one scene and have one or more different characters enter to begin the next. In a few cases, where characters remain onstage from one scene to another, the

dialogue or stage action makes the change of location clear, and the characters are generally to be imagined as having moved from one place to another. For example, in *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo and his friends remain onstage in Act 1 from scene 4 to scene 5, but they are represented as having moved between scenes from the street that leads to Capulet's house into Capulet's house itself. The new location is signaled in part by the appearance onstage of Capulet's servingmen carrying table napkins, something they would not take into the streets. Playwrights had to be quite resourceful in the use of hand properties, like the napkin, or in the use of dialogue to specify where the action was taking place in their plays because, in contrast to most of today's theaters, the playhouses of Shakespeare's time did not fill the stage with scenery to make the setting precise. A consequence of this difference was that the playwrights of Shakespeare's time did not have to specify exactly where the action of their plays was set when they did not choose to do so, and much of the action of their plays is tied to no specific place.

Usually Shakespeare's stage is referred to as a "bare stage," to distinguish it from the stages of the last two or three centuries with their elaborate sets. But the stage in Shakespeare's time was not completely bare. Philip Henslowe, owner of the Rose, lists in his inventory of stage properties a rock, three tombs, and two mossy banks. Stage directions in plays of the time also call for such things as thrones (or "states"), banquets (presumably tables with plaster replicas of food on them), and beds and tombs to be pushed onto the stage. Thus the stage often held more than the actors.

The actors did not limit their performing to the stage alone. Occasionally they went beneath the stage, as the

Ghost appears to do in the first act of *Hamlet*. From there they could emerge onto the stage through a trapdoor. They could retire behind the hangings across the back of the stage, as, for example, the actor playing Polonius does when he hides behind the arras. Sometimes the hangings could be drawn back during a performance to “discover” one or more actors behind them. When performance required that an actor appear “above,” as when Juliet is imagined to stand at the window of her chamber in the famous and misnamed “balcony scene,” then the actor probably climbed the stairs to the gallery over the back of the stage and temporarily shared it with some of the spectators. The stage was also provided with ropes and winches so that actors could descend from, and reascend to, the “heavens.”

Perhaps the greatest difference between dramatic performances in Shakespeare’s time and ours was that in Shakespeare’s England the roles of women were played by boys. (Some of these boys grew up to take male roles in their maturity.) There were no women in the acting companies. It was not so in Europe, and had not always been so in the history of the English stage. There are records of women on English stages in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, two hundred years before Shakespeare’s plays were performed. After the accession of James I in 1603, the queen of England and her ladies took part in entertainments at court called masques, and with the reopening of the theaters in 1660 at the restoration of Charles II, women again took their place on the public stage.

The chief competitors of such acting companies as the one to which Shakespeare belonged and for which he wrote were companies of exclusively boy actors. The competition was most intense in the early 1600s. There were then two principal children’s companies: the Children of Paul’s (the

choirboys from St. Paul's Cathedral, whose private playhouse was near the cathedral); and the Children of the Chapel Royal (the choirboys from the monarch's private chapel, who performed at the Blackfriars theater built by Burbage in 1596). In *Hamlet* Shakespeare writes of "an aerie [nest] of children, little eyases [hawks], that cry out on the top of question and are most tyrannically clapped for 't. These are now the fashion and . . . berattle the common stages [attack the public theaters]." In the long run, the adult actors prevailed. The Children of Paul's dissolved around 1606. By about 1608 the Children of the Chapel Royal had been forced to stop playing at the Blackfriars theater, which was then taken over by the King's Men, Shakespeare's own troupe.

Acting companies and theaters of Shakespeare's time seem to have been organized in various ways. For example, with the building of the Globe, Shakespeare's company apparently managed itself, with the principal actors, Shakespeare among them, having the status of "sharers" and the right to a share in the takings, as well as the responsibility for a part of the expenses. Five of the sharers, including Shakespeare, owned the Globe. As actor, as sharer in an acting company and in ownership of theaters, and as playwright, Shakespeare was about as involved in the theatrical industry as one could imagine. Although Shakespeare and his fellows prospered, their status under the law was conditional upon the protection of powerful patrons. "Common players"—those who did not have patrons or masters—were classed in the language of the law with "vagabonds and sturdy beggars." So the actors had to secure for themselves the official rank of servants of patrons. Among the patrons under whose protection Shakespeare's

company worked were the lord chamberlain and, after the accession of King James in 1603, the king himself.

In the early 1990s we began to learn a great deal more about the theaters in which Shakespeare and his contemporaries performed—or, at least, began to open up new questions about them. At that time about 70 percent of the Rose had been excavated, as had about 10 percent of the second Globe, the one built in 1614. Excavation was halted at that point, but London has come to value the sites of its early playhouses, and takes what opportunities it can to explore them more deeply, both on the Bankside and in Shoreditch. Information about the playhouses of Shakespeare's London is therefore a constantly changing resource.

# The Publication of Shakespeare's Plays

Eighteen of Shakespeare's plays found their way into print during the playwright's lifetime, but there is nothing to suggest that he took any interest in their publication. These eighteen appeared separately in editions in quarto or, in the case of *Henry VI, Part 3*, octavo format. The quarto pages are not much larger than a modern mass-market paperback book, and the octavo pages are even smaller; these little books were sold unbound for a few pence. The earliest of the quartos that still survive were printed in 1594, the year that both *Titus Andronicus* and a version of the play now called *Henry VI, Part 2* became available. While almost every one of these early quartos displays on its title page the name of the acting company that performed the play, only about half provide the name of the playwright, Shakespeare. The first quarto edition to bear the name Shakespeare on its title page is *Love's Labor's Lost* of 1598. A few of the quartos were popular with the book-buying public of Shakespeare's lifetime; for example, quarto *Richard II* went through five editions between 1597 and 1615. But most of the quartos were far from best sellers; *Love's Labor's Lost* (1598), for instance, was not reprinted in quarto until 1631. After Shakespeare's death, two more of his plays appeared in quarto format: *Othello* in 1622 and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, coauthored with John Fletcher, in 1634.

In 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* was published. This printing offered readers in a single book thirty-six of the thirty-eight plays now thought to have been

written by Shakespeare, including eighteen that had never been printed before. And it offered them in a style that was then reserved for serious literature and scholarship. The plays were arranged in double columns on pages nearly a foot high. This large page size is called “folio,” as opposed to the smaller “quarto,” and the 1623 volume is usually called the Shakespeare First Folio. It is reputed to have sold for the lordly price of a pound. (One copy at the Folger Shakespeare Library is marked fifteen shillings—that is, three-quarters of a pound.)

In a preface to the First Folio entitled “To the great Variety of Readers,” two of Shakespeare’s former fellow actors in the King’s Men, John Heminge and Henry Condell, wrote that they themselves had collected their dead companion’s plays. They suggested that they had seen his own papers: “we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.” The title page of the Folio declared that the plays within it had been printed “according to the True Original Copies.” Comparing the Folio to the quartos, Heminge and Condell disparaged the quartos, advising their readers that “before you were abused with divers stolen and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors.” Many Shakespeareans of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries believed Heminge and Condell and regarded the Folio plays as superior to anything in the quartos.

Once we begin to examine the Folio plays in detail, it becomes less easy to take at face value the word of Heminge and Condell about the superiority of the Folio texts. For example, of the first nine plays in the Folio (one-quarter of the entire collection), four were essentially reprinted from earlier quarto printings that Heminge and Condell had disparaged, and four have now been identified as printed

from copies written in the hand of a professional scribe of the 1620s named Ralph Crane; the ninth, *The Comedy of Errors*, was apparently also printed from a manuscript, but one whose origin cannot be readily identified. Evidently, then, eight of the first nine plays in the First Folio were not printed, in spite of what the Folio title page announces, “according to the True Originall Copies,” or Shakespeare’s own papers, and the source of the ninth is unknown. Since today’s editors have been forced to treat Heminge and Condell’s pronouncements with skepticism, they must choose whether to base their own editions upon quartos or the Folio on grounds other than Heminge and Condell’s story of where the quarto and Folio versions originated.

Editors have often fashioned their own narratives to explain what lies behind the quartos and Folio. They have said that Heminge and Condell meant to criticize only a few of the early quartos, the ones that offer much shorter and sometimes quite different, often garbled, versions of plays. Among the examples of these are the 1600 quarto of *Henry V* (the Folio offers a much fuller version) or the 1603 *Hamlet* quarto. (In 1604 a different, much longer form of the play got into print as a quarto.) Early twentieth-century editors speculated that these questionable texts were produced when someone in the audience took notes from the plays’ dialogue during performances and then employed “hack poets” to fill out the notes. The poor results were then sold to a publisher and presented in print as Shakespeare’s plays. More recently this story has given way to another in which the shorter versions are said to be re-creations from memory of Shakespeare’s plays by actors who wanted to stage them in the provinces but lacked manuscript copies. Most of the quartos offer much better texts than these so-called bad quartos. Indeed, in most of the quartos we find texts that are

at least equal to or better than what is printed in the Folio. Many Shakespeare enthusiasts persuaded themselves that most of the quartos were set into type directly from Shakespeare's own papers, although there is nothing on which to base this conclusion except the desire for it to be true. Thus speculation continues about how the Shakespeare plays got to be printed. All that we have are the printed texts.

The book collector who was most successful in bringing together copies of the quartos and the First Folio was Henry Clay Folger, founder of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. While it is estimated that there survive around the world only about 230 copies of the First Folio, Mr. Folger was able to acquire more than seventy-five copies, as well as a large number of fragments, for the library that bears his name. He also amassed a substantial number of quartos. For example, only fourteen copies of the First Quarto of *Love's Labor's Lost* are known to exist, and three are at the Folger Shakespeare Library. As a consequence of Mr. Folger's labors, scholars visiting the Folger Shakespeare Library have been able to learn a great deal about sixteenth- and seventeenth-century printing and, particularly, about the printing of Shakespeare's plays. And Mr. Folger did not stop at the First Folio, but collected many copies of later editions of Shakespeare, beginning with the Second Folio (1632), the Third (1663–64), and the Fourth (1685). Each of these later folios was based on its immediate predecessor and was edited anonymously. The first editor of Shakespeare whose name we know was Nicholas Rowe, whose first edition came out in 1709. Mr. Folger collected this edition and many, many more by Rowe's successors, and the collecting continues.

## An Introduction to This Text

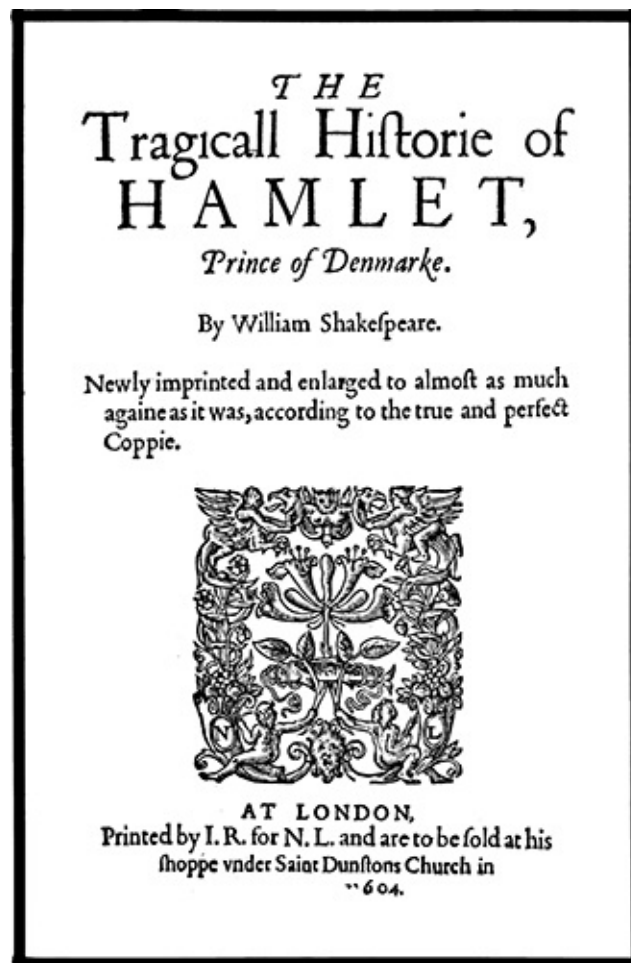
The play we call *Hamlet* was printed in three different versions in the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

In 1603 appeared *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmark* by William Shake-speare, a quarto or pocket-size book that provides a version of the play markedly different from the two subsequent printings and from the play most readers know. This version is little more than half as long as the others. Some of the characters have different names; for example, Polonius is called Corambis and his servant Reynaldo appears as Montano. The action of the play also varies considerably. Most scholars have found many passages in this version extremely difficult to read and have concluded that it is so full of errors that it is generally unreliable as a witness to what was written for the stage. This First Quarto has therefore been dubbed a “bad quarto.”

The Second Quarto, often called the “good quarto,” is dated in some copies 1604, in others 1605. Although it has exactly the same title as the First Quarto, the Second Quarto’s title page goes on to represent it as “Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie.”

The third version to see print is found in the First Folio of Shakespeare’s plays, published in 1623. Entitled *The Tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke*, the Folio play has some eighty-five or so lines not found in the Second Quarto; but the Folio lacks about two hundred of the Second Quarto’s lines. These two versions also differ from each other in their readings of hundreds of words.

Most modern editions offer various combinations of the Second Quarto and Folio versions. It is impossible in any edition to combine the whole of these two forms of the play, because they often provide alternative readings that are mutually exclusive; for example, when the Second Quarto has Hamlet wish that his “too too sallied flesh would melt,” the Folio prints “solid” for “sallied.” In such cases (and there are a great many such cases) editors must choose whether to be guided by the Second Quarto, by the Folio, or perhaps even by the First Quarto in selecting what to print.



Title page of *Hamlet* Second Quarto, 1604.  
From the Folger Shakespeare Library collection.

Twentieth-century editors made the decision about which version to prefer according to their theories about the origins of the three early printed texts. Most such editors have preferred the Second Quarto's readings in the belief that it was printed either directly from Shakespeare's own manuscript or from a scribe's copy of it. A few have, instead, adopted Folio readings in the belief that the Folio was set into type from a theater manuscript, and they wanted to give their readers the play as it was performed on Shakespeare's stage. Still fewer editors have granted the First Quarto much influence over their choices, since many believe that the First Quarto prints a manuscript put together from memory by a small-part actor who had a role in the play as it was performed outside of London. Editors who have been convinced of this story about the First Quarto sometimes have depended on it as a record of what was acted. In recent years, some editors have come to believe that the Second Quarto and Folio are distinct, independent Shakespearean versions of the play that ought never to be combined with each other in an edition. Nevertheless, as today's scholars reexamine the narratives about the origins of the printed texts, we discover that the evidence upon which they are based is questionable, and we become more skeptical about ever identifying with any certainty how the play assumed the forms in which it was printed.

The present edition is based upon a fresh examination of the early printed texts rather than upon any modern edition. It is designed both for those who prefer the traditional text of *Hamlet*, which is the combination of Second Quarto and First Folio, and for those who prefer to regard the Second Quarto and First Folio as distinct versions of the play. The present edition resembles most other modern editions in offering its readers a text of the Second Quarto combined

with as much of the First Folio as it has been possible to include. It also resembles most other editions in its efforts to correct what are believed to be errors or deficiencies in the Second Quarto by substituting or introducing alternatives either from the First Folio or from the editorial tradition. Yet the present edition is unique in marking all passages that are found only in the Second Quarto and all words and passages found only in the Folio. Thus it becomes possible for a reader to use this book to discover the major and even many of the minor differences between the Second Quarto and First Folio versions of *Hamlet*. This edition ignores the First Quarto version because the First Quarto is so widely different from the Second Quarto and the Folio.

In order to enable its readers to tell the difference between the Folio and Second Quarto versions, the present edition uses a variety of signals:

(1) All the words in this edition that are printed only in the Folio version but not in the Second Quarto appear in pointed parentheses (< >).

(2) All lines that are found only in the Second Quarto and not in the Folio are printed in square brackets ([ ]).

(3) Sometimes neither the Second Quarto nor the Folio seems to offer a satisfactory reading, and it is necessary to print a word different from what is offered by either. Such words (called “emendations” by editors) are printed within superior half-brackets (⌈ ⌋).

Whenever we change the wording of the Second Quarto or add anything to its stage directions, we mark the change because we want our readers to be immediately aware that we have intervened. (Only when we correct an obvious typographical error in the Second Quarto or the First Folio does the change not get marked.) Whenever we change the Second Quarto’s or First Folio’s wording or their

punctuation so that meaning changes, we list the change in the textual notes at the back of the book, even if all we have done is fix an obvious error. Those who wish to find the Folio's alternatives to the Second Quarto's readings will be able to find these in the textual notes.

For the convenience of the reader, we have modernized the punctuation and the spelling of both the Second Quarto and the Folio. Thus, for example, our text supplies the modern standard spelling "sullied" for the Second Quarto's variant spelling "sallied." Sometimes we go so far as to modernize certain old forms of words; for example, usually when *a* means "he," we change it to *he*; we change *mo* to *more*, *ye* to *you*, and *god buy to you* to *good-bye to you*. It is not our practice in editing any of the plays to modernize words that sound distinctly different from modern forms. For example, when the early printed texts read *sith* or *apricocks* or *porpentine*, we have not modernized to *since*, *apricots*, *porcupine*. When the forms *an*, *and*, or *and if* appear instead of the modern form *if*, we have reduced *and* to *an* but have not changed any of these forms to their modern equivalent, *if*. We also modernize *and*, where necessary, correct passages in foreign languages, unless an error in the early printed text can be reasonably explained as a joke.

We correct or regularize a number of the proper names in the dialogue and in the stage directions, as is the usual practice in editions of the play. For example, the Second Quarto's "Gertrard" or "Gertrad" is changed to Folio's "Gertrude" because "Gertrude" has become the familiar form of the name; and there are a number of other comparable adjustments in the names.

This edition differs from many earlier ones in its efforts to aid the reader in imagining the play as a performance. Thus

stage directions are written with reference to the stage. For example, the present edition reproduces the Second Quarto direction: “Ghost cries under the stage” ([1.5.168](#)). Whenever it is reasonably certain, in our view, that a speech is accompanied by a particular action, we provide a stage direction describing the action. (Occasional exceptions to this rule occur when the action is so obvious that to add a stage direction would insult the reader.) Stage directions for the entrance of characters in mid-scene are, with rare exceptions, placed so that they immediately precede the characters’ participation in the scene, even though these entrances may appear somewhat earlier in the early printed texts. Whenever we move a stage direction, we record this change in the textual notes. Latin stage directions (e.g., *Exeunt*) are translated into English (e.g., *They exit*).

We expand the often severely abbreviated forms of names used as speech headings in early printed texts into the full names of the characters. We also regularize the speakers’ names in speech headings, using only a single designation for each character, even though the early printed texts sometimes use a variety of designations. Variations in the speech headings of the early printed texts are recorded in the textual notes.

In the present edition, as well, we mark with a dash any change of address within a speech, unless a stage direction intervenes. When the *-ed* ending of a word is to be pronounced, we mark it with an accent. Like editors for the last two centuries, we print metrically linked lines in the following way:

MARCELLUS

It is offended.

BARNARDO

See, it stalks away.

However, when there are a number of short verse-lines that can be linked in more than one way, we do not, with rare exceptions, indent any of them.

### The Explanatory Notes

The notes that appear in the commentary at the end of the text are designed to provide readers with the help that they may need to enjoy the play. Whenever the meaning of a word in the text is not readily accessible in a good contemporary dictionary, we offer the meaning in a note. Sometimes we provide a note even when the relevant meaning is to be found in the dictionary but when the word has acquired since Shakespeare's time other potentially confusing meanings. In our notes, we try to offer modern synonyms for Shakespeare's words. We also try to indicate to the reader the connection between the word in the play and the modern synonym. For example, Shakespeare sometimes uses the word *head* to mean "source," but, for modern readers, there may be no connection evident between these two words. We provide the connection by explaining Shakespeare's usage as follows: "**head:** fountainhead, source." On some occasions, a whole phrase or clause needs explanation. Then, if space allows, we rephrase in our own words the difficult passage, and add at the end synonyms for individual words in the passage. When scholars have been unable to determine the meaning of a word or phrase, we acknowledge the uncertainty. Biblical quotations are from the Geneva Bible (1560), with spelling modernized.

*The Tragedy of*  
HAMLET,  
*Prince of Denmark*

# Characters in the Play

THE GHOST

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

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

KING CLAUDIUS, brother to the late King Hamlet

OPHELIA

LAERTES, her brother

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

REYNALDO, servant to Polonius

HORATIO, Hamlet's friend and confidant

VOLTEMAND  
CORNELIUS  
ROSENCRANTZ  
GUILDENSTERN  
OSRIC  
Gentlemen  
A Lord

*courtiers at the Danish court*

FRANCISCO  
BARNARDO  
MARCELLUS

*Danish soldiers*

FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway

A Captain in Fortinbras's army

Ambassadors to Denmark from England

Players who take the roles of Prologue, Player King, Player Queen, and Lucianus in *The Murder of Gonzago*

Two Messengers

Sailors

Gravedigger

Gravedigger's companion

Doctor of Divinity

Attendants, Lords, Guards, Musicians, Laertes's Followers,  
Soldiers, Officers



*The Tragedy of*  
**HAMLET,**  
*Prince of Denmark*



ACT 1



# ⟨ACT 1⟩

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## ⟨Scene 1⟩

*Enter Barnardo and Francisco, two sentinels.*

BARNARDO Who's there? 1

FRANCISCO

Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself. 2

BARNARDO Long live the King! 3

FRANCISCO Barnardo? 4

BARNARDO He. 5

FRANCISCO

You come most carefully upon your hour. 6

BARNARDO

'Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco. 7

FRANCISCO

For this relief much thanks. 'Tis bitter cold, 8

And I am sick at heart. 9

BARNARDO Have you had quiet guard? 10

FRANCISCO Not a mouse stirring. 11

BARNARDO Well, good night. 12

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus, 13

The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste. 14

*Enter Horatio and Marcellus.*

FRANCISCO

I think I hear them.—Stand ho! Who is there? 15

HORATIO Friends to this ground. 16

MARCELLUS And liegemen to the Dane. 17

FRANCISCO Give you good night. 18

MARCELLUS

O farewell, honest <soldier.> Who hath relieved	19
you?	20
FRANCISCO	
Barnardo hath my place. Give you good night.	21
	<i>Francisco exits.</i>
MARCELLUS Holla, Barnardo.	22
BARNARDO Say, <u>what</u> , is Horatio there?	23
HORATIO A piece of him.	24
BARNARDO	
Welcome, Horatio.—Welcome, good Marcellus.	25
HORATIO	
What, has this thing appeared again tonight?	26
BARNARDO I have seen nothing.	27
MARCELLUS	
Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy	28
And will not let belief take hold of him	29
Touching this dreaded sight twice seen <u>of us</u> .	30
Therefore I have entreated him along	31
With us to <u>watch</u> the minutes of this night,	32
That, if again this apparition come,	33
He may <u>approve our eyes</u> and speak to it.	34
HORATIO	
Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.	35
BARNARDO Sit down awhile,	36
And let us once again assail your ears,	37
That are so fortified against our story,	38
What we have two nights seen.	39
HORATIO Well, sit we down,	40
And let us hear Barnardo speak of this.	41
BARNARDO Last night of all,	42
When yond same star that's westward from the <u>pole</u>	43
Had made <u>his</u> course t' illume that part of heaven	44
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,	45
The bell then beating one—	46

*Enter Ghost.*

MARCELLUS		
Peace, break thee off! Look where it comes again.		47
BARNARDO		
In the same figure like the King that's dead.		48
MARCELLUS, 「to Horatio」		
Thou art a scholar. Speak to it, Horatio.		49
BARNARDO		
Looks he not like the King? Mark it, Horatio.		50
HORATIO		
Most like. It <harrows> me with fear and wonder.		51
BARNARDO		
It would be spoke to.		52
MARCELLUS	Speak to it, Horatio.	53
HORATIO		
What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,		54
Together with that fair and warlike form		55
In which the majesty of <u>buried Denmark</u>		56
Did <u>sometimes</u> march? By heaven, I charge thee,		57
speak.		58
MARCELLUS		
It is offended.		59
BARNARDO	See, it stalks away.	60
HORATIO		
Stay! speak! speak! I charge thee, speak!		61
	<i>Ghost exits.</i>	
MARCELLUS	'Tis gone and will not answer.	62
BARNARDO		
How now, Horatio, you tremble and look pale.		63
Is not this something more than fantasy?		64
What think you <u>on't</u> ?		65
HORATIO		
Before my God, I might not this believe		66
Without the <u>sensible</u> and true <u>avouch</u>		67
Of mine own eyes.		68
MARCELLUS	Is it not like the King?	69
HORATIO	As thou art to thyself.	70

Such was the very armor he had on	71
When he the ambitious <u>Norway</u> combated.	72
So frowned he once when, in an angry <u>parle</u> ,	73
He <u>smote</u> the <u>sledged</u> <u>「Polacks」</u> on the ice.	74
'Tis strange.	75
MARCELLUS	
Thus twice before, and <u>jump</u> at this dead hour,	76
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.	77
HORATIO	
<u>In what particular thought to work I know not,</u>	78
<u>But in the gross and scope of mine opinion</u>	79
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.	80
MARCELLUS	
<u>Good now</u> , sit down, and tell me, he that knows,	81
Why this same strict and most observant <u>watch</u>	82
So nightly <u>toils</u> the <u>subject of the land</u> ,	83
And <why> such daily <cast> of brazen cannon	84
And <u>foreign mart</u> for implements of war,	85
Why such <u>impress</u> of shipwrights, whose sore task	86
Does not divide the Sunday from the week.	87
What might be <u>toward</u> that this sweaty haste	88
Doth make the night joint laborer with the day?	89
Who is 't that can inform me?	90
HORATIO	
That can I.	91
At least the whisper goes so: our last king,	92
Whose image even but now appeared to us,	93
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,	94
<u>Thereto pricked on by a most emulate pride</u> ,	95
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet	96
(For so this side of our known world esteemed him)	97
Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a <u>sealed compact</u> ,	98
Well ratified by <u>law and heraldry</u> ,	99
Did forfeit, with his life, all <those> his lands	100
Which he <u>stood seized of</u> , to the conqueror.	101
Against the which <u>a moiety competent</u>	102

Was <u>gagèd</u> by our king, <u>which had</u> ‹returned›	103
To the <u>inheritance</u> of Fortinbras	104
Had he been vanquisher, as, by the same <u>comart</u>	105
And <u>carriage of the article</u> ‹ <u>designed,</u> ›	106
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,	107
Of <u>unimprovèd</u> mettle hot and full,	108
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there	109
<u>Sharked up</u> a list of lawless resolute	110
<u>For food and diet to</u> some enterprise	111
That hath a <u>stomach</u> in 't; which is no other	112
(As it doth well appear unto our state)	113
But to recover of us, by strong hand	114
And terms compulsory, those foresaid lands	115
So by his father lost. And this, I take it,	116
Is the main motive of our preparations,	117
The source of this our watch, and the chief <u>head</u>	118
Of this <u>posthaste</u> and <u>rummage</u> in the land.	119
[ BARNARDO	
I think it be no other but e'en so.	120
<u>Well may it sort</u> that this portentous figure	121
Comes armèd through our watch so like the king	122
That was and is the question of these wars.	123
HORATIO	
A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.	124
In the most high and <u>palmy</u> state of Rome,	125
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,	126
The graves stood tenantless, and the <u>sheeted</u> dead	127
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;	128
<u>As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,</u>	129
<u>Disasters in the sun</u> ; and the <u>moist star</u> ,	130
<u>Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,</u>	131
Was sick almost to <u>doomsday</u> with eclipse.	132
And <u>even the like precurse</u> of ‹feared› events,	133
As harbingers preceding <u>still the fates</u>	134

And prologue to the <u>omen</u> coming on,	135
Have heaven and Earth together demonstrated	136
Unto our <u>climatures</u> and countrymen.]	137
<i>Enter Ghost.</i>	
But <u>soft</u> , behold! Lo, where it comes again!	138
I'll <u>cross it</u> though it <u>blast me</u> .—Stay, illusion!	139
<i>It spreads his arms.</i>	
If thou hast any sound or use of voice,	140
Speak to me.	141
If there be any good thing to be done	142
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,	143
Speak to me.	144
If thou art privy to thy country's fate,	145
Which <u>happily</u> foreknowing may avoid,	146
O, speak!	147
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life	148
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,	149
For which, they say, <you> spirits oft walk in death,	150
Speak of it.	151
<i>The cock crows.</i>	
Stay and speak!—Stop it, Marcellus.	152
MARCELLUS	
Shall I strike it with my <u>partisan</u> ?	153
HORATIO Do, if it will not stand.	154
BARNARDO 'Tis here.	155
HORATIO 'Tis here.	156
<i>&lt;Ghost exits.&gt;</i>	
MARCELLUS 'Tis gone.	157
We do it wrong, being so majestic,	158
To offer it the show of violence,	159
For it is as the air, invulnerable,	160
And our vain blows malicious mockery.	161
BARNARDO	
It was about to speak when the <u>cock</u> crew.	162

HORATIO

And then it started like a guilty thing 163  
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard 164  
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn, 165  
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat 166  
Awake the god of day, and at his warning, 167  
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air, 168  
Th' extravagant and erring spirit hies 169  
To his confine, and of the truth herein 170  
This present object made probation. 171

MARCELLUS

It faded on the crowing of the cock. 172  
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes 173  
Wherein our Savior's birth is celebrated, 174  
This bird of dawning singeth all night long; 175  
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad, 176  
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike, 177  
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm, 178  
So hallowed and so gracious is that time. 179

HORATIO

So have I heard and do in part believe it. 180  
But look, the morn in russet mantle clad 181  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill. 182  
Break we our watch up, and by my advice 183  
Let us impart what we have seen tonight 184  
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life, 185  
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him. 186  
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it 187  
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty? 188

MARCELLUS

Let's do 't, I pray, and I this morning know 189  
Where we shall find him most convenient. 190

*They exit.*

〈Scene 2〉

*Flourish.* Enter Claudius, King of Denmark, Gertrude the Queen, 「the」  
Council, as Polonius, and his son Laertes, Hamlet, with others, 「among  
them Voltemand and Cornelius.」<sup>1</sup>

KING

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death	1
The memory be green, and that it us befitted	2
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom	3
To be contracted in one brow of woe,	4
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature	5
That we with wisest sorrow think on him	6
Together with remembrance of ourselves.	7
Therefore <u>our sometime sister</u> , now our queen,	8
Th' imperial <u>jointress</u> to this warlike state,	9
Have we (as 'twere with a defeated joy,	10
<u>With an auspicious and a dropping eye</u> ,	11
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,	12
In <u>equal scale</u> weighing delight and dole)	13
Taken to wife. Nor have we herein barred	14
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone	15
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.	16
Now follows <u>that you know</u> . Young Fortinbras,	17
Holding <u>a weak supposal of our worth</u>	18
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death	19
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,	20
<u>Colleaguèd</u> with this dream of his <u>advantage</u> ,	21
He hath not failed to pester us with message	22
Importing the surrender of those lands	23
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,	24
To our most valiant brother—so much for him.	25
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting.	26
Thus much the business is: we have here writ	27
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,	28
Who, <u>impotent</u> and <u>bedrid</u> , scarcely hears	29

Of this his nephew's purpose, to suppress	30
His further <u>gait</u> herein, <u>in that the levies,</u>	31
<u>The lists, and full proportions are all made</u>	32
<u>Out of his subject</u> ; and we here dispatch	33
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltemand,	34
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,	35
Giving to you no further personal power	36
<u>To business</u> with the King more than the scope	37
Of <u>these dilated articles</u> allow.	38
「Giving them a paper.」	
Farewell, and <u>let your haste commend your duty.</u>	39
CORNELIUS/VOLTEMAND	
In that and all things will we show our duty.	40
KING	
We doubt it <u>nothing</u> . Heartily farewell.	41
〈Voltemand and Cornelius exit.〉	
And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?	42
You told us of some suit. What is 't, Laertes?	43
You cannot speak of reason to the <u>Dane</u>	44
And <u>lose your voice</u> . What wouldst thou beg,	45
Laertes,	46
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?	47
The head is not more <u>native</u> to the heart,	48
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,	49
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.	50
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?	51
LAERTES	
My dread lord,	52
Your leave and favor to return to France,	53
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark	54
To show my duty in your coronation,	55
Yet now I must confess, that duty done,	56
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France	57
And bow them to your gracious <u>leave and pardon</u> .	58
KING	
Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?	59

POLONIUS

Hath, my lord, [wrung from me my slow leave 60

By laborsome petition, and at last 61

Upon his will I sealed my hard consent.] 62

I do beseech you give him leave to go. 63

KING

Take thy fair hour, Laertes. Time be thine, 64

And thy best graces spend it at thy will.— 65

But now, my cousin Hamlet and my son— 66

HAMLET, 「*aside*」

A little more than kin and less than kind. 67

KING

How is it that the clouds still hang on you? 68

HAMLET

Not so, my lord; I am too much in the sun. 69

QUEEN

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off, 70

And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark. 71

Do not forever with thy vailèd lids 72

Seek for thy noble father in the dust. 73

Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die, 74

Passing through nature to eternity. 75

HAMLET

Ay, madam, it is common. 76

QUEEN If it be, 77

Why seems it so particular with thee? 78

HAMLET

“Seems,” madam? Nay, it is. I know not “seems.” 79

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, 〈good〉 mother, 80

Nor customary suits of solemn black, 81

Nor windy suspiration of forced breath, 82

No, nor the fruitful river in the eye, 83

Nor the dejected havior of the visage, 84

Together with all forms, moods, 「shapes」 of grief, 85

That can 〈denote〉 me truly. These indeed “seem,” 86

For they are actions that a man might <u>play</u> ;	87
But I have that within which passes show,	88
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.	89
KING	
'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,	90
Hamlet,	91
To give these mourning duties to your father.	92
But you must know your father lost a father,	93
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound	94
In filial obligation for some term	95
To do <u>obsequious</u> sorrow. But to persever	96
In <u>obstinate condolment</u> is a course	97
Of impious stubbornness. 'Tis unmanly grief.	98
It shows a will most <u>incorrect to heaven</u> ,	99
A heart unfortified, <a> mind impatient,	100
An understanding <u>simple</u> and unschooled.	101
For what we know must be and is as common	102
<u>As any the most vulgar thing to sense</u> ,	103
Why should we in our peevish opposition	104
Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven,	105
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,	106
To reason most absurd, whose common theme	107
Is death of fathers, and who <u>still</u> hath cried,	108
From the first <u>corse</u> till he that died today,	109
"This must be so." We pray you, throw to earth	110
This <u>unprevailing</u> woe and think of us	111
As of a father; for let the world take note,	112
You are the <u>most immediate</u> to our throne,	113
And with no less nobility of love	114
Than that which dearest father bears his son	115
Do I <u>impart toward</u> you. For your intent	116
In going back to school in Wittenberg,	117
It is most <u>retrograde</u> to our desire,	118
And we beseech you, <u>bend you</u> to remain	119

Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,	120
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.	121
QUEEN	
Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet.	122
I pray thee, stay with us. Go not to Wittenberg.	123
HAMLET	
I shall in all my best obey you, madam.	124
KING	
Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.	125
Be as ourself in Denmark.—Madam, come.	126
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet	127
Sits smiling to my heart, in grace whereof	128
No <u>jocund health</u> that Denmark drinks today	129
But the great cannon to the clouds shall <u>tell</u> ,	130
And the King's <u>rouse</u> the heaven shall <u>bruit again</u> ,	131
Respeaking <u>earthly thunder</u> . Come away.	132
<i>Flourish. All but Hamlet exit.</i>	
HAMLET	
O, that this too, too <u>sullied</u> flesh would melt,	133
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,	134
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed	135
His <u>canon</u> 'gainst ⟨self-slaughter!⟩ O God, God,	136
How ⟨weary,⟩ stale, flat, and unprofitable	137
Seem to me all the uses of this world!	138
Fie on 't, ah fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden	139
That grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature	140
Possess it merely. That it should come ⟨to this:⟩	141
But two months dead—nay, not so much, not two.	142
So excellent a king, <u>that was to this</u>	143
<u>Hyperion to a satyr</u> ; so loving to my mother	144
That he <u>might not beteem</u> the winds of heaven	145
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and Earth,	146
Must I remember? Why, she ⟨would⟩ hang on him	147
As if increase of appetite had grown	148

By what it fed on. And yet, within a month 149  
 (Let me not think on 't; frailty, thy name is woman!), 150  
 A little month, or ere those shoes were old 151  
 With which she followed my poor father's body, 152  
 Like Niobe, all tears—why she, <even she> 153  
 (O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason 154  
 Would have mourned longer!), married with my 155  
 uncle, 156  
 My father's brother, but no more like my father 157  
 Than I to Hercules. Within a month, 158  
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears 159  
Had left the flushing in her gallèd eyes, 160  
 She married. O, most wicked speed, to post 161  
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets! 162  
 It is not, nor it cannot come to good. 163  
 But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue. 164

*Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo.*

HORATIO Hail to your Lordship. 165  
 HAMLET I am glad to see you well. 166  
 Horatio—or I do forget myself! 167  
 HORATIO  
 The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever. 168  
 HAMLET  
 Sir, my good friend. I'll change that name with you. 169  
 And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?— 170  
 Marcellus? 171  
 MARCELLUS My good lord. 172  
 HAMLET  
 I am very glad to see you. 「*To Barnardo.*」 Good 173  
 even, sir.— 174  
 But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg? 175  
 HORATIO  
 A truant disposition, good my lord. 176  
 HAMLET

I would not hear your enemy say so,	177
Nor shall you do my ear that violence	178
To make it truster of your own report	179
Against yourself. I know you are no truant.	180
But what is your affair in Elsinore?	181
We'll teach you to drink <deep> ere you depart.	182
HORATIO	
My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.	183
HAMLET	
I prithee, do not mock me, fellow student.	184
I think it was to <see> my mother's wedding.	185
HORATIO	
Indeed, my lord, it followed <u>hard upon</u> .	186
HAMLET	
Thrift, thrift, Horatio. The funeral baked meats	187
Did <u>coldly</u> furnish forth the marriage tables.	188
Would I had met my <u>dearest</u> foe in heaven	189
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!	190
My father—methinks I see my father.	191
HORATIO	
Where, my lord?	192
HAMLET In my mind's eye, Horatio.	193
HORATIO	
I saw him once. He was a <u>goodly</u> king.	194
HAMLET	
He was a man. Take him for all in all,	195
I shall not look upon his like again.	196
HORATIO	
My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.	197
HAMLET Saw who?	198
HORATIO	
My lord, the King your father.	199
HAMLET The King my father?	200
HORATIO	
<u>Season your admiration</u> for a while	201
With an <u>attent</u> ear, till I may <u>deliver</u>	202

Upon the witness of these gentlemen	203
This marvel to you.	204
HAMLET For God's love, let me hear!	205
HORATIO	
Two nights together had these gentlemen,	206
Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch,	207
In the dead waste and middle of the night,	208
Been thus encountered: a figure like your father,	209
Armed <u>at point exactly, cap-à-pie,</u>	210
Appears before them and with solemn march	211
Goes slow and stately by them. Thrice he walked	212
By their <u>oppressed and fear-surprisèd</u> eyes	213
Within his <u>truncheon's</u> length, whilst they, distilled	214
Almost to jelly with <u>the act of fear,</u>	215
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me	216
In dreadful secrecy impart they did,	217
And I with them the third night kept the watch,	218
「Where, as」 they had delivered, both in time,	219
Form of the thing (each word made true and good),	220
The apparition comes. I knew your father;	221
These hands are not more like.	222
HAMLET But where was this?	223
MARCELLUS	
My lord, upon the platform where we watch.	224
HAMLET	
Did you not speak to it?	225
HORATIO My lord, I did,	226
But answer made it none. Yet once <u>methought</u>	227
It lifted up its head and <u>did address</u>	228
<u>Itself to motion, like as it would speak;</u>	229
But <u>even then</u> the morning cock crew loud,	230
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away	231
And vanished from our sight.	232
HAMLET 'Tis very strange.	233

HORATIO	
As I do live, my honored lord, 'tis true.	234
And we did think it writ down in our duty	235
To let you know of it.	236
HAMLET Indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.	237
Hold you the watch tonight?	238
ALL We do, my lord.	239
HAMLET	
Armed, say you?	240
ALL Armed, my lord.	241
HAMLET From top to toe?	242
ALL My lord, from head to foot.	243
HAMLET Then saw you not his face?	244
HORATIO	
O, yes, my lord, he wore his <u>beaver</u> up.	245
HAMLET What, looked he frowningly?	246
HORATIO	
A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.	247
HAMLET Pale or <u>red</u> ?	248
HORATIO	
Nay, very pale.	249
HAMLET And fixed his eyes upon you?	250
HORATIO	
Most constantly.	251
HAMLET I <u>would</u> I had been there.	252
HORATIO It would have much amazed you.	253
HAMLET Very like. Stayed it long?	254
HORATIO	
While one with moderate haste might <u>tell</u> a	255
hundred.	256
BARNARDO/MARCELLUS Longer, longer.	257
HORATIO	
Not when I saw 't.	258
HAMLET His beard was <u>grizzled</u> , no?	259
HORATIO	
It was as I have seen it in his life,	260

	A sable silvered.	261
HAMLET	I will watch 'tonight.'	262
	Perchance 'twill walk again.	263
HORATIO	I warrant it will.	264
HAMLET		
	If it assume my noble father's person,	265
	I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape	266
	And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,	267
	If you have hitherto concealed this sight,	268
	Let it be <u>tenable</u> in your silence still;	269
	And whatsoever else shall hap tonight,	270
	Give it an understanding but no tongue.	271
	I will requite your loves. So fare you well.	272
	Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,	273
	I'll visit you.	274
ALL	Our duty to your Honor.	275
HAMLET		
	Your loves, as mine to you. Farewell.	276
	<i>'All but Hamlet' exit.</i>	
	My father's spirit—in arms! All is not well.	277
	I <u>doubt some foul play</u> . Would the night were come!	278
	Till then, sit still, my soul. <Foul> deeds will rise,	279
	Though all the earth <u>o'erwhelm</u> them, to men's	280
	eyes.	281

*He exits.*

### <Scene 3>

*Enter Laertes and Ophelia, his sister.*

LAERTES		
	My necessities are embarked. Farewell.	1
	And, sister, as the winds give benefit	2
	And <u>convey</u> <u>&lt;is&gt; assistant</u> , do not sleep,	3

But let me hear from you.	4
OPHELIA Do you doubt that?	5
LAERTES	
<u>For</u> Hamlet, and the <u>trifling of his favor</u> ,	6
Hold it a <u>fashion</u> and a <u>toy in blood</u> ,	7
A violet <u>in the youth of primy nature</u> ,	8
<u>Forward</u> , not permanent, sweet, not lasting,	9
The <u>perfume and suppliance of a minute</u> ,	10
No more.	11
OPHELIA No more but so?	12
LAERTES Think it no more.	13
For <u>nature, crescent, does not grow alone</u>	14
<u>In thews and &lt;bulk,&gt;</u> but, as <u>this temple waxes</u> ,	15
The inward service of the mind and soul	16
Grows wide <u>withal</u> . Perhaps he loves you now,	17
And now no <u>soil</u> nor <u>cautel</u> doth besmirch	18
The virtue of his will; but you must fear,	19
His <u>greatness</u> weighed, his will is not his own,	20
<For he himself is subject to his <u>birth</u> .>	21
He may not, as unvalued persons do,	22
<u>Carve</u> for himself, for on his choice depends	23
The safety and <sup>the</sup> health of this whole state.	24
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed	25
Unto the <u>voice and yielding</u> of <u>that body</u>	26
Whereof he is the head. Then, if he says he loves	27
you,	28
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it	29
As he in his particular act and place	30
May <u>give his saying deed</u> , which is no further	31
Than the main voice of Denmark goes <u>withal</u> .	32
Then weigh what loss your honor may sustain	33
If with too <u>credent</u> ear you <u>list</u> his songs	34
Or lose your heart or <u>your chaste treasure open</u>	35
<u>To his unmastered importunity</u> .	36

Fear it, Ophelia; fear it, my dear sister,	37
And <u>keep you in the rear of your affection</u> ,	38
Out of the shot and danger of desire.	39
The <u>chariest maid</u> is prodigal enough	40
If she unmask her beauty to the moon.	41
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious <u>strokes</u> .	42
<u>The canker galls the infants of the spring</u>	43
Too oft before their <u>buttons be disclosed</u> ,	44
And, in the morn and liquid dew of youth,	45
<u>Contagious blastments</u> are most imminent.	46
Be wary, then; best safety lies in fear.	47
<u>Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.</u>	48
OPHELIA	
I shall the effect of this good lesson keep	49
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,	50
Do not, as some <u>ungracious</u> pastors do,	51
<u>Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven</u> ,	52
<u>Whiles, &lt;like&gt; a puffed and reckless libertine</u> ,	53
<u>Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads</u>	54
And <u>recks not his own rede</u> .	55
LAERTES	
O, fear me not.	
<i>Enter Polonius.</i>	56
I stay too long. But here my father comes.	57
<u>A double blessing is a double grace</u> .	58
<u>Occasion smiles upon</u> a second <u>leave</u> .	59
POLONIUS	
Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!	60
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,	61
And you are stayed for. There, my blessing with	62
thee.	63
And these few precepts in thy memory	64
<u>Look thou character</u> . Give thy thoughts no tongue,	65
Nor any <u>unproportioned</u> thought <u>his</u> act.	66
Be thou <u>familiar</u> , but by no means <u>vulgar</u> .	67

Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,	68
Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel,	69
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment	70
Of each new-hatched, <u>unfledged courage</u> . Beware	71
Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,	72
Bear 't that th' opposèd may beware of thee.	73
Give every man thy ear, but few thy <u>voice</u> .	74
Take each man's <u>censure</u> , but reserve thy judgment.	75
Costly thy <u>habit</u> as thy purse can buy,	76
But not expressed in fancy (rich, not gaudy),	77
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,	78
And they in France of the best rank and station	79
<u>&lt;Are&gt; of a most select and generous chief in that.</u>	80
Neither a borrower nor a lender <be,>	81
For <loan> oft loses both itself and friend,	82
And borrowing <dulls the> edge of <u>husbandry</u> .	83
This above all: to thine own self be true,	84
And it must follow, as the night the day,	85
Thou canst not then be false to any man.	86
Farewell. My blessing season this in thee.	87
LAERTES	
Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.	88
POLONIUS	
The time <u>invests</u> you. Go, your servants <u>tend</u> .	89
LAERTES	
Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well	90
What I have said to you.	91
OPHELIA 'Tis in my memory locked,	92
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.	93
LAERTES Farewell.	94
	<i>Laertes exits.</i>
POLONIUS	
What is 't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?	95
OPHELIA	
So please you, something touching the Lord	96

Hamlet.	97
POLONIUS <u>Marry</u> , well <u>bethought</u> .	98
'Tis told me he hath very oft of late	99
Given private time to you, and you yourself	100
Have of your audience been most free and	101
bounteous.	102
If it be so (as <u>so 'tis put on me</u> ,	103
And that in way of caution), I must tell you	104
You do not understand yourself so clearly	105
As it behooves my daughter and your honor.	106
What is between you? Give me up the truth.	107
OPHELIA	
He hath, my lord, of late made many <u>tenders</u>	108
<u>Of his affection to me</u> .	109
POLONIUS	
Affection, puh! You speak like a <u>green</u> girl	110
<u>Unsifted in</u> such perilous circumstance.	111
Do you believe his " <u>tenders</u> ," as you call them?	112
OPHELIA	
I do not know, my lord, what I should think.	113
POLONIUS	
Marry, I will teach you. Think yourself a baby	114
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,	115
Which are not sterling. <u>Tender yourself more dearly</u> ,	116
Or ( <u>not to crack the wind of the poor phrase</u> ,	117
<u>['Running'] it thus</u> ) you'll <u>tender me a fool</u> .	118
OPHELIA	
My lord, he hath importuned me with love	119
In honorable fashion—	120
POLONIUS	
Ay, "fashion" you may call it. Go to, go to!	121
OPHELIA	
And hath <u>given countenance to</u> his speech, my lord,	122
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.	123
POLONIUS	

Ay, <springes> to catch <u>woodcocks</u> . I do know,	124
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul	125
Lends the tongue vows. These blazes, daughter,	126
Giving more light than heat, <u>extinct in both</u>	127
<u>Even in their promise as it is a-making,</u>	128
You must not take for fire. From this time	129
Be something scanter of your maiden presence.	130
<u>Set your entreatments at a higher rate</u>	131
Than a <u>command to parle</u> . For Lord Hamlet,	132
Believe so much in him that he is young,	133
And with a larger <tether> may he walk	134
Than may be given you. <u>In few</u> , Ophelia,	135
Do not believe his vows, for they are <u>brokers</u> ,	136
<u>Not of that dye which their investments show,</u>	137
<u>But mere &lt;implorators&gt; of unholy suits,</u>	138
<u>Breathing like sanctified and pious 「bawds」</u>	139
<u>The better to &lt;beguile.&gt;</u> This is for all:	140
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth	141
Have you so <u>slander</u> any moment leisure	142
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.	143
Look to 't, I charge you. Come your ways.	144
OPHELIA I shall obey, my lord.	145

*They exit.*

#### 「Scene 4」

*Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.*

HAMLET	
The air bites <u>shrewdly</u> ; it is very cold.	1
HORATIO	
It is <a> nipping and an <u>eager</u> air.	2
HAMLET What hour now?	3
HORATIO I think it lacks of twelve.	4
MARCELLUS No, it is struck.	5

HORATIO

Indeed, I heard it not. It then draws near the season 6

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk. 7

*A flourish of trumpets and two pieces goes off.*

What does this mean, my lord? 8

HAMLET

The King doth wake tonight and takes his rouse, 9

Keeps wassail, and the swagg'ring upspring reels; 10

And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down, 11

The kettledrum and trumpet thus bray out 12

The triumph of his pledge. 13

HORATIO Is it a custom? 14

HAMLET Ay, marry, is 't, 15

But, to my mind, though I am native here 16

And to the manner born, it is a custom 17

More honored in the breach than the observance. 18

[This heavy-headed 'revel' east and west 19

Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations. 20

They clepe us drunkards and with swinish phrase 21

Soil our addition. And, indeed, it takes 22

From our achievements, though performed at 23

height, 24

The pith and marrow of our attribute. 25

So oft it chances in particular men 26

That for some vicious mole of nature in them, 27

As in their birth (wherein they are not guilty, 28

Since nature cannot choose his origin), 29

By 'the' o'ergrowth of some complexion 30

(Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason), 31

Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens 32

The form of plausive manners—that these men, 33

Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect, 34

Being nature's livery or fortune's star, 35

His virtues else, be they as pure as grace, 36

As infinite as man may undergo, 37  
Shall in the general censure take corruption 38  
From that particular fault. The dram of 「evil」 39  
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt 40  
To his own scandal.] 41

*Enter Ghost.*

HORATIO Look, my lord, it comes. 42  
HAMLET

Angels and ministers of grace, defend us! 43  
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned, 44  
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from 45  
hell, 46  
Be thy intents wicked or charitable, 47  
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape 48  
That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee "Hamlet," 49  
"King," "Father," "Royal Dane." O, answer me! 50  
Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell 51  
Why thy canonized bones, hearsèd in death, 52  
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulcher, 53  
Wherein we saw thee quietly interred, 54  
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws 55  
To cast thee up again. What may this mean 56  
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel, 57  
Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon, 58  
Making night hideous, and we fools of nature 59  
So horridly to shake our disposition 60  
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls? 61  
Say, why is this? Wherefore? What should we do? 62

*⟨Ghost⟩ beckons.*

HORATIO  
It beckons you to go away with it 63  
As if it some impartment did desire 64  
To you alone. 65

MARCELLUS Look with what courteous action 66

	It waves you to a more removed ground.	67
	But do not go with it.	68
HORATIO	No, by no means.	69
HAMLET		
	It will not speak. Then I will follow it.	70
HORATIO		
	Do not, my lord.	71
HAMLET	Why, what should be the fear?	72
	I do not set my life at <u>a pin's fee</u> .	73
	<u>And for</u> my soul, what can it do to that,	74
	Being a thing immortal as itself?	75
	It waves me forth again. I'll follow it.	76
HORATIO		
	What if it tempt you toward the <u>flood</u> , my lord?	77
	Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff	78
	That <u>beetles o'er his base</u> into the sea,	79
	And there assume some other horrible form	80
	Which might <u>deprive your sovereignty of reason</u>	81
	And draw you into madness? Think of it.	82
	[The very place puts <u>toys of desperation</u> ,	83
	Without more motive, into every brain	84
	That looks so many fathoms to the sea	85
	And hears it roar beneath.]	86
HAMLET		
	It waves me still.—Go on, I'll follow thee.	87
MARCELLUS		
	You shall not go, my lord.	88
	<i>「They hold back Hamlet.」</i>	
HAMLET	Hold off your hands.	89
HORATIO		
	Be ruled. You shall not go.	90
HAMLET	My fate cries out	91
	And makes each petty <u>arture</u> in this body	92
	As hardy as the <u>Nemean lion's nerve</u> .	93
	Still am I called. Unhand me, gentlemen.	94

By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that <u>lets me</u> !	95
I say, away!—Go on. I'll follow thee.	96
<i>Ghost and Hamlet exit.</i>	
HORATIO	
He waxes desperate with imagination.	97
MARCELLUS	
Let's follow. 'Tis not fit thus to obey him.	98
HORATIO	
<u>Have after</u> . To what issue will this come?	99
MARCELLUS	
Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.	100
HORATIO	
Heaven will direct it.	101
MARCELLUS	
Nay, let's follow him.	102
<i>They exit.</i>	

「Scene 5」

*Enter Ghost and Hamlet.*

HAMLET	
Whither wilt thou lead me? Speak. I'll go no	1
further.	2
GHOST	
<u>Mark me</u> .	3
HAMLET I will.	4
GHOST	
My hour is almost come	5
When I to sulf'rous and tormenting flames	6
Must render up myself.	7
HAMLET	
Alas, poor ghost!	8
GHOST	
Pity me not, but <u>lend thy serious hearing</u>	9
To what I shall <u>unfold</u> .	10
HAMLET	
Speak. I am <u>bound</u> to hear.	11
GHOST	
So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.	12

HAMLET	What?	13
GHOST	I am thy father's spirit,	14
	Doomed for a certain term to walk the night	15
	<u>And for</u> the day confined to fast in fires	16
	Till the foul <u>crimes</u> done in my days of nature	17
	Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid	18
	To tell the secrets of my prison house,	19
	I could a tale unfold whose lightest word	20
	Would <u>harrow up</u> thy soul, freeze thy young blood,	21
	Make thy two eyes, like <u>stars, start from their</u>	22
	<u>spheres,</u>	23
	Thy <u>knotted and combinèd locks</u> to part,	24
	And each particular hair to stand <u>an end,</u>	25
	Like quills upon the <u>fearful porpentine.</u>	26
	But this <u>eternal blazon</u> must not be	27
	To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O list!	28
	If thou didst ever thy dear father love—	29
HAMLET	O God!	30
GHOST		
	Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.	31
HAMLET	Murder?	32
GHOST		
	Murder most foul, as in the best it is,	33
	But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.	34
HAMLET		
	Haste me to know 't, that I, with wings as swift	35
	As meditation or the thoughts of love	36
	May sweep to my revenge.	37
GHOST	I find thee apt;	38
	And <u>duller shouldst thou be</u> than the <u>fat</u> weed	39
	That roots itself in ease on <u>Lethe wharf,</u>	40
	<u>Wouldst thou not</u> stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear.	41
	'Tis given out that, sleeping in my <u>orchard,</u>	42
	A serpent stung me. So the whole ear of Denmark	43
	Is by a <u>forgèd process</u> of my death	44

<u>Rankly abused</u> . But know, thou noble youth,	45
The serpent that did sting thy father's life	46
Now wears his crown.	47
HAMLET O, my prophetic soul! My uncle!	48
GHOST	
Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,	49
With witchcraft of his wits, with traitorous gifts—	50
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power	51
So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust	52
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.	53
O Hamlet, what <a> falling off was there!	54
From me, whose love was of that dignity	55
That it went hand in hand even with the vow	56
I made to her in marriage, and to <u>decline</u>	57
<u>Upon</u> a wretch whose natural gifts were poor	58
To those of mine.	59
But virtue, as it never will be <u>moved</u> ,	60
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,	61
So, <lust,> though to a radiant angel linked,	62
Will <sate> itself in a celestial bed	63
And prey on garbage.	64
But <u>soft</u> , methinks I scent the morning air.	65
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,	66
My custom always of the afternoon,	67
<u>Upon my secure hour</u> thy uncle stole	68
With juice of cursèd <u>hebona</u> in a vial	69
And in the porches of my ears did pour	70
The <u>leprous distilment</u> , whose effect	71
Holds such an enmity with blood of man	72
That swift as quicksilver it courses through	73
The natural gates and alleys of the body,	74
And with a sudden vigor it doth <posset>	75
And curd, like <u>eager</u> droppings into milk,	76
The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine,	77

And a most instant tetter barked about, 78  
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust 79  
All my smooth body. 80  
 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand 81  
 Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched, 82  
 Cut off, even in the blossoms of my sin, 83  
Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled, 84  
No reck'ning made, but sent to my account 85  
 With all my imperfections on my head. 86  
 O horrible, O horrible, most horrible! 87  
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not. 88  
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be 89  
 A couch for luxury and damnèd incest. 90  
 But, howsomever thou pursues this act, 91  
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive 92  
 Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven 93  
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge 94  
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once. 95  
 The glowworm shows the matin to be near 96  
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire. 97  
 Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me. 98

⟨*He exits.*⟩

HAMLET

O all you host of heaven! O Earth! What else? 99  
 And shall I couple hell? O fie! Hold, hold, my heart, 100  
 And you, my sinews, grow not instant old, 101  
 But bear me ⟨stiffly⟩ up. Remember thee? 102  
 Ay, thou poor ghost, whiles memory holds a seat 103  
 In this distracted globe. Remember thee? 104  
 Yea, from the table of my memory 105  
 I'll wipe away all trivial, fond records, 106  
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past, 107  
 That youth and observation copied there, 108  
 And thy commandment all alone shall live 109

Within the book and volume of my brain, 110  
 Unmixed with baser matter. Yes, by heaven! 111  
 O most pernicious woman! 112  
 O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain! 113  
 My tables—meet it is I set it down 114  
 That one may smile and smile and be a villain. 115  
 At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark. 116

「*He writes.*」

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word. 117  
 It is “adieu, adieu, remember me.” 118  
 I have sworn ’t. 119

*Enter Horatio and Marcellus.*

HORATIO My lord, my lord! 120  
 MARCELLUS Lord Hamlet. 121  
 HORATIO Heavens secure him! 122  
 HAMLET So be it. 123  
 MARCELLUS Illo, ho, ho, my lord! 124  
 HAMLET Hillo, ho, ho, boy! Come, <bird,> come! 125  
 MARCELLUS  
     How is ’t, my noble lord? 126  
 HORATIO                      What news, my lord? 127  
 HAMLET O, wonderful! 128  
 HORATIO  
     Good my lord, tell it. 129  
 HAMLET                      No, you will reveal it. 130  
 HORATIO  
     Not I, my lord, by heaven. 131  
 MARCELLUS                      Nor I, my lord. 132  
 HAMLET  
     How say you, then? Would heart of man once think 133  
         it? 134  
     But you’ll be secret? 135  
 HORATIO/MARCELLUS      Ay, by heaven, <my lord.> 136  
 HAMLET

	There's never a villain dwelling in all Denmark	137
	But he's an <u>arrant</u> knave.	138
HORATIO		
	There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave	139
	To tell us this.	140
HAMLET	Why, right, you are in the right.	141
	And so, without more <u>circumstance</u> at all,	142
	I hold it fit that we shake hands and part,	143
	You, as your business and desire shall point you	144
	(For every man hath business and desire,	145
	Such as it is), and for my own poor part,	146
	I will go pray.	147
HORATIO		
	These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.	148
HAMLET		
	I am sorry they offend you, heartily;	149
	Yes, faith, heartily.	150
HORATIO	There's no offense, my lord.	151
HAMLET		
	Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,	152
	And much offense, too. Touching this vision here,	153
	It is an <u>honest</u> ghost—that let me tell you.	154
	For your desire to know what is between us,	155
	O'ermaster 't as you may. And now, good friends,	156
	As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,	157
	Give me one poor request.	158
HORATIO	What is 't, my lord? We will.	159
HAMLET		
	Never make known what you have seen tonight.	160
HORATIO/MARCELLUS	My lord, we will not.	161
HAMLET	Nay, but swear 't.	162
HORATIO	In faith, my lord, not I.	163
MARCELLUS	Nor I, my lord, in faith.	164
HAMLET		
	Upon my <u>sword</u> .	165

MARCELLUS	We have sworn, my lord, already.	166
HAMLET	Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.	167
GHOST	<i>cries under the stage</i> Swear.	168
HAMLET		
	Ha, ha, boy, sayst thou so? Art thou there,	169
	<u>truepenny</u> ?—	170
	Come on, you hear this fellow in the cellarage.	171
	Consent to swear.	172
HORATIO	Propose the oath, my lord.	173
HAMLET		
	Never to speak of this that you have seen,	174
	Swear by my sword.	175
GHOST	「 <i>beneath</i> 」 Swear.	176
HAMLET		
	<u>Hic et ubique</u> ? Then we'll shift our ground.	177
	Come hither, gentlemen,	178
	And lay your hands again upon my sword.	179
	Swear by my sword	180
	Never to speak of this that you have heard.	181
GHOST	「 <i>beneath</i> 」 Swear by his sword.	182
HAMLET		
	Well said, old mole. Canst work i' th' earth so fast?—	183
	A worthy <u>pioneer</u> ! Once more <u>remove</u> , good friends.	184
HORATIO		
	O day and night, but this is wondrous strange.	185
HAMLET		
	And therefore <u>as a stranger give it welcome</u> .	186
	There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,	187
	Than are dreamt of in <u>your philosophy</u> . But come.	188
	Here, as before, <u>never, so help you mercy,</u>	189
	<u>How strange or odd some'er I bear myself</u>	190
	<u>(As I perchance hereafter shall think meet</u>	191
	<u>To put an antic disposition on)</u>	192
	<u>That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,</u>	193
	<u>With arms encumbered thus, or this headshake,</u>	194

<u>Or by pronouncing of some doubtful</u> phrase,	195
<u>As “Well, well, we know,” or “We could an if we</u>	196
<u>would,”</u>	197
<u>Or “If we list to speak,” or “There be an if they</u>	198
<u>might,”</u>	199
<u>Or such ambiguous giving-out, to note</u>	200
<u>That you know aught of me—this do swear,</u>	201
<u>So grace and mercy at your most need help you.</u>	202
GHOST, 「 <i>beneath</i> 」 Swear.	203
HAMLET	
<u>Rest, rest, perturbèd spirit.</u> —So, gentlemen,	204
With all my love I do commend me to you,	205
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is	206
May do t’ express his love and friending to you,	207
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together,	208
And <u>still your fingers on your lips</u> , I pray.	209
The time is out of joint. O cursèd <u>spite</u>	210
That ever I was born to set it right!	211
<u>Nay, come</u> , let’s go together.	212

*They exit.*



*The Tragedy of*  
**HAMLET,**  
*Prince of Denmark*



ACT 2



## ⟨ACT 2⟩

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### 「Scene 1」

*Enter old Polonius with his man ⟨Reynaldo.⟩*

POLONIUS

Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo. 1

REYNALDO I will, my lord. 2

POLONIUS

You shall do marvelous wisely, good Reynaldo, 3

Before you visit him, to make inquire 4

Of his behavior. 5

REYNALDO My lord, I did intend it. 6

POLONIUS

Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir, 7

Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris; 8

And how, and who, what means, and where they 9

keep, 10

What company, at what expense; and finding 11

By this encompassment and drift of question 12

That they do know my son, come you more nearer 13

Than your particular demands will touch it. 14

Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him, 15

As thus: “I know his father and his friends 16

And, in part, him.” Do you mark this, Reynaldo? 17

REYNALDO Ay, very well, my lord. 18

POLONIUS

“And, in part, him, but,” you may say, “not well. 19

But if 't be he I mean, he's very wild, 20

Addicted so and so.” And there put on him 21

What <u>forgeries</u> you please—marry, none so <u>rank</u>	22
As may dishonor him, take heed of that,	23
But, sir, such <u>wanton</u> , wild, and usual slips	24
As <u>are companions noted and most known</u>	25
<u>To youth and liberty</u> .	26
REYNALDO As <u>gaming</u> , my lord.	27
POLONIUS Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing,	28
Quarreling, <u>drabbing</u> —you may go so far.	29
REYNALDO My lord, that would dishonor him.	30
POLONIUS	
Faith, <no,> as you may <u>season it in the charge</u> .	31
You must not put another scandal on him	32
That he is <u>open to incontinency</u> ;	33
That's not my meaning. But <u>breathe</u> his faults so	34
<u>quaintly</u>	35
That they may seem the <u>taints of liberty</u> ,	36
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,	37
<u>A savageness in unreclaimèd blood</u> ,	38
<u>Of general assault</u> .	39
REYNALDO But, my good lord—	40
POLONIUS <u>Wherefore</u> should you do this?	41
REYNALDO Ay, my lord, I would know that.	42
POLONIUS Marry, sir, here's my drift,	43
And I believe it is a <u>fetch of wit</u> .	44
You, laying these slight sullies on my son,	45
As 'twere a thing a little <u>soiled &lt;i&gt;th'&lt;/i&gt; working</u> ,	46
Mark you, your party in converse, him you would	47
<u>sound</u> ,	48
Having ever seen in the <u>prenominate crimes</u>	49
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured	50
He <u>closes with you in this consequence</u> :	51
"Good sir," or so, or "friend," or "gentleman,"	52
According to the phrase or the <u>addition</u>	53
Of man and country—	54

REYNALDO	Very good, my lord.	55
POLONIUS	And then, sir, does he this, he does—what	56
	was I about to say? By the Mass, I was about to say	57
	something. Where did I leave?	58
REYNALDO	At “closes in the consequence,” <at “friend,	59
	or so,” and “gentleman.”>	60
POLONIUS		
	At “closes in the consequence”—ay, marry—	61
	He closes thus: “I know the gentleman.	62
	I saw him yesterday,” or “th’ other day”	63
	(Or then, or then, with such or such), “and as you	64
	say,	65
	There was he gaming, there <u>&lt;o’ertook&gt; in ’s rouse,</u>	66
	There falling out at tennis”; or perchance	67
	“I saw him enter such a house of sale”—	68
	<u>Videlicet,</u> a brothel—or so forth. <u>See you now</u>	69
	<u>Your bait of falsehood take this carp of truth;</u>	70
	And thus do we of wisdom and of <u>reach,</u>	71
	With <u>windlasses and with assays of bias,</u>	72
	By indirections find directions out.	73
	So by my former lecture and advice	74
	<u>Shall you my son.</u> You have me, have you not?	75
REYNALDO		
	My lord, I have.	76
POLONIUS	God be wi’ you. Fare you well.	77
REYNALDO	Good my lord.	78
POLONIUS		
	Observe his inclination <u>in yourself.</u>	79
REYNALDO	I shall, my lord.	80
POLONIUS	And let him ply his music.	81
REYNALDO	Well, my lord.	82
POLONIUS		
	Farewell.	83

*Reynaldo exits.*

*Enter Ophelia.*

	How now, Ophelia, what's the matter?	84
OPHELIA		
	O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!	85
POLONIUS	With what, i' th' name of God?	86
OPHELIA		
	My lord, as I was sewing in my <u>closet</u> ,	87
	Lord Hamlet, with his <u>doublet</u> all <u>unbraced</u> ,	88
	No hat upon his head, his stockings <u>fouled</u> ,	89
	Ungartered, and <u>down-gyvèd to his ankle</u> ,	90
	Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,	91
	And with a look so piteous in purport	92
	As if he had been loosèd out of hell	93
	To speak of horrors—he comes before me.	94
POLONIUS		
	Mad for thy love?	95
OPHELIA	My lord, I do not know,	96
	But truly I do fear it.	97
POLONIUS	What said he?	98
OPHELIA		
	He took me by the wrist and held me hard.	99
	Then goes he to the length of all his arm,	100
	And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,	101
	He falls to such perusal of my face	102
	As he would draw it. Long stayed he so.	103
	At last, a little shaking of mine arm,	104
	And thrice his head thus waving up and down,	105
	He raised a sigh so piteous and profound	106
	As it did seem to shatter all his bulk	107
	And end his being. That done, he lets me go,	108
	And, with his head over his shoulder turned,	109
	He seemed to find his way without his eyes,	110
	For out o' doors he went without their helps	111
	And to the last bended their light on me.	112
POLONIUS		
	Come, go with me. I will go seek the King.	113

This is the very <u>ecstasy</u> of love,	114
Whose <u>violent property fordoes</u> itself	115
And leads the will to desperate undertakings	116
As oft as any passions under heaven	117
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.	118
What, have you given him any hard words of late?	119
OPHELIA	
No, my good lord, but as you did command	120
I did repel his letters and denied	121
His access to me.	122
POLONIUS                      That hath made him mad.	123
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment	124
I had not <u>coted</u> him. I feared he did but trifle	125
And meant to <u>wrack</u> thee. But <u>besREW my jealousy!</u>	126
By heaven, it is as <u>proper to our age</u>	127
To <u>cast beyond ourselves</u> in our opinions	128
As it is common for the younger sort	129
To lack <u>discretion</u> . Come, go we to the King.	130
This must be known, which, being kept <u>close</u> , <u>might</u>	131
<u>move</u>	132
<u>More grief to hide than hate to utter love.</u>	133
Come.	134
<i>They exit.</i>	

〈Scene 2〉

*Flourish. Enter King and Queen, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and Attendants.<sup>1</sup>*

KING	
Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.	1
Moreover that we much did long to see you,	2
The need we have to use you did provoke	3
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard	4
Of Hamlet's transformation, so call it,	5

<u>Sith nor th' exterior nor</u> the inward man	6
Resembles that it was. What it should be,	7
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him	8
So much from th' understanding of himself	9
I cannot dream of. I entreat you both	10
That, being of so young days brought up with him	11
And sith so <u>neighbored to</u> his <u>youth and havior</u> ,	12
That you <u>vouchsafe your rest</u> here in our court	13
Some little time, so by your companies	14
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather	15
So much as from occasion you may glean,	16
[Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus]	17
That, <u>opened</u> , lies within our remedy.	18
QUEEN	
Good gentlemen, he hath much talked of you,	19
And sure I am two men there is not living	20
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you	21
To show us so much <u>gentry</u> and goodwill	22
As to expend your time with us awhile	23
For the <u>supply and profit of our hope</u> ,	24
Your visitation shall receive such thanks	25
As fits a king's remembrance.	26
ROSENCRANTZ	
Both your Majesties	27
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,	28
Put your dread pleasures more into command	29
Than to entreaty.	30
GUILDENSTERN	
But we both obey,	31
And here give up ourselves <u>in the full bent</u>	32
To lay our service freely at your feet,	33
To be commanded.	34
KING	
Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.	35
QUEEN	
Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz.	36
And I beseech you instantly to visit	37

	My too much changèd son.—Go, some of you,	38
	And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.	39
GUILDENSTERN		
	Heavens make our presence and our <u>practices</u>	40
	Pleasant and helpful to him!	41
QUEEN	Ay, amen!	42
	<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit</i>	
	<i>「with some Attendants.」</i>	
	<i>Enter Polonius.</i>	
POLONIUS		
	Th' ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,	43
	Are joyfully returned.	44
KING		
	Thou <u>still</u> hast been the father of good news.	45
POLONIUS		
	Have I, my lord? I assure my good liege	46
	I hold my duty as I hold my soul,	47
	Both to my God and to my gracious king,	48
	And I do think, or else this brain of mine	49
	<u>Hunts not the trail of policy so sure</u>	50
	As it hath used to do, that I have found	51
	The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.	52
KING		
	O, speak of that! That do I long to hear.	53
POLONIUS		
	Give first admittance to th' ambassadors.	54
	My news shall be the <u>fruit</u> to that great feast.	55
KING		
	Thyself <u>do grace to</u> them and bring them in.	56
	<i>「Polonius exits.」</i>	
	He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found	57
	The <u>head and source</u> of all your son's <u>distemper</u> .	58
QUEEN		
	I <u>doubt</u> it is no other but <u>the main</u> —	59
	His father's death and our ⟨o'erhasty⟩ marriage.	60

KING

Well, we shall sift him. 61

*Enter Ambassadors (Voltemand and Cornelius 「with」 Polonius.)*

Welcome, my good friends. 62

Say, Voltemand, what from our brother Norway? 63

VOLTEMAND

Most fair return of greetings and desires. 64

Upon our first, he sent out to suppress 65

His nephew's levies, which to him appeared 66

To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack, 67

But, better looked into, he truly found 68

It was against your Highness. Whereat, grieved 69

That so his sickness, age, and impotence 70

Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests 71

On Fortinbras, which he, in brief, obeys, 72

Receives rebuke from Norway, and, in fine, 73

Makes vow before his uncle never more 74

To give th' assay of arms against your Majesty. 75

Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy, 76

Gives him three-score thousand crowns in annual 77

fee 78

And his commission to employ those soldiers, 79

So levied as before, against the Polack, 80

With an entreaty, herein further shown, 81

*「He gives a paper.」*

That it might please you to give quiet pass 82

Through your dominions for this enterprise, 83

On such regards of safety and allowance 84

As therein are set down. 85

KING It likes us well, 86

And, at our more considered time, we'll read, 87

Answer, and think upon this business. 88

Meantime, we thank you for your well-took labor. 89

Go to your rest. At night we'll feast together. 90

Most welcome home!	91
「Voltemand and Cornelius」 <i>exit.</i>	
POLONIUS                      This business is well ended.	92
My liege, and madam, to <u>expostulate</u>	93
What majesty should be, what duty is,	94
Why day is day, night night, and time is time	95
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.	96
Therefore, <since> <u>brevity is the soul of wit</u> ,	97
And tediousness the limbs and outward <u>flourishes</u> ,	98
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad.	99
“Mad” call I it, for, to define true madness,	100
What is ’t but to be nothing else but mad?	101
But let that go.	102
QUEEN <u>More matter with less art.</u>	103
POLONIUS	
Madam, I swear <u>I use no art</u> at all.	104
That he’s mad, ’tis true; ’tis true ’tis pity,	105
And pity ’tis ’tis true—a foolish <u>figure</u> ,	106
But farewell it, for I will use no art.	107
Mad let us grant him then, and now remains	108
That we find out the cause of this effect,	109
Or, rather say, the cause of this defect,	110
For this effect defective comes by cause.	111
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.	112
<u>Perpend.</u>	113
I have a daughter (have while she is mine)	114
Who, in her duty and obedience, <u>mark</u> ,	115
Hath given me this. Now <u>gather</u> and <u>surmise</u> .	116
「He reads.」 <u>To the celestial, and my soul’s idol, the</u>	117
<u>most beautified Ophelia—</u>	118
That’s an ill phrase, a vile phrase; “beautified” is a	119
vile phrase. But you shall hear. Thus:	120
「He reads.」	
<u>In her excellent white bosom, these, etc.—</u>	121

QUEEN Came this from Hamlet to her? 122

POLONIUS

Good madam, stay awhile. I will be faithful. 123

「He reads the」 letter.

Doubt thou the stars are fire, 124

Doubt that the sun doth move, 125

Doubt truth to be a liar, 126

But never doubt I love. 127

O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers. I have not 128

art to reckon my groans, but that I love thee best, O 129

most best, believe it. Adieu. 130

Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst 131

this machine is to him, Hamlet. 132

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me, 133

And more ⟨above⟩ hath his solicitings, 134

As they fell out by time, by means, and place, 135

All given to mine ear. 136

KING But how hath she received his love? 137

POLONIUS What do you think of me? 138

KING

As of a man faithful and honorable. 139

POLONIUS

I would fain prove so. But what might you think, 140

When I had seen this hot love on the wing 141

(As I perceived it, I must tell you that, 142

Before my daughter told me), what might you, 143

Or my dear Majesty your queen here, think, 144

If I had played the desk or table-book 145

Or given my heart a ⟨winking⟩ mute and dumb, 146

Or looked upon this love with idle sight? 147

What might you think? No, I went round to work, 148

And my young mistress thus I did bespeak: 149

“Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star. 150

This must not be.” And then I prescripts gave her, 151

That she should lock herself from ⟨his⟩ resort, 152

Admit no messengers, receive no <u>tokens</u> ;	153
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice,	154
And <u>he, repelled (a short tale to make),</u>	155
<u>Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,</u>	156
<u>Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,</u>	157
<u>Thence to <math>\langle a \rangle</math> lightness, and, by this declension,</u>	158
<u>Into the madness</u> wherein now he raves	159
And all we mourn for.	160
KING, $\lceil$ to Queen $\rceil$ Do you think $\langle$ 'tis $\rangle$ this?	161
QUEEN It may be, very like.	162
POLONIUS	
Hath there been such a time (I would fain know	163
that)	164
That I have positively said "'Tis so,"	165
When it proved otherwise?	166
KING Not that I know.	167
POLONIUS	
<u>Take this from this</u> , if this be otherwise.	168
If circumstances lead me, I will find	169
Where truth is hid, though it were hid, indeed,	170
Within the <u>center</u> .	171
KING How may we <u>try</u> it further?	172
POLONIUS	
You know sometimes he walks four hours together	173
Here in the <u>lobby</u> .	174
QUEEN So he does indeed.	175
POLONIUS	
At such a time I'll <u>loose</u> my daughter to him.	176
$\lceil$ To the King. $\rceil$ Be you and I behind an <u>arras</u> then.	177
Mark the encounter. If he love her not,	178
And be not from his reason fall'n <u>thereon</u> ,	179
Let me be no <u>assistant for a state</u> ,	180
But <u>keep a farm and carters</u> .	181
KING We will try it.	182

*Enter Hamlet (reading on a book.)*

QUEEN

But look where sadly the poor wretch comes 183  
reading. 184

POLONIUS

Away, I do beseech you both, away. 185  
I'll board him presently. O, give me leave. 186

*King and Queen exit [with Attendants.]*

How does my good Lord Hamlet? 187

HAMLET Well, God-a-mercy. 188

POLONIUS Do you know me, my lord? 189

HAMLET Excellent well. You are a fishmonger. 190

POLONIUS Not I, my lord. 191

HAMLET Then I would you were so honest a man. 192

POLONIUS Honest, my lord? 193

HAMLET Ay, sir. To be honest, as this world goes, is to 194  
be one man picked out of ten thousand. 195

POLONIUS That's very true, my lord. 196

HAMLET For if the sun breed maggots in a dead 197  
dog, being a good kissing carrion—Have you a 198  
daughter? 199

POLONIUS I have, my lord. 200

HAMLET Let her not walk i' th' sun. Conception is a 201  
blessing, but, as your daughter may conceive, 202  
friend, look to 't. 203

POLONIUS, *[aside]* How say you by that? Still harping on 204  
my daughter. Yet he knew me not at first; he said I 205  
was a fishmonger. He is far gone. And truly, in my 206  
youth, I suffered much extremity for love, very near 207  
this. I'll speak to him again.—What do you read, my 208  
lord? 209

HAMLET Words, words, words. 210

POLONIUS What is the matter, my lord? 211

HAMLET Between who? 212

POLONIUS I mean the matter that you read, my lord. 213

HAMLET Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here 214  
that old men have gray beards, that their faces are 215  
wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and 216  
plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of 217  
wit, together with most weak hams; all which, sir, 218  
though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I 219  
hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for 220  
yourself, sir, shall grow old as I am, if, like a crab, 221  
you could go backward. 222

POLONIUS, *aside* Though this be madness, yet there is 223  
method in 't.—Will you walk out of the air, my lord? 224

HAMLET Into my grave? 225

POLONIUS Indeed, that's out of the air. *Aside.* How 226  
pregnant sometimes his replies are! A happiness 227  
that often madness hits on, which reason and 228  
⟨sanity⟩ could not so prosperously be delivered of. I 229  
will leave him ⟨and suddenly contrive the means of 230  
meeting between him⟩ and my daughter.—My lord, 231  
I will take my leave of you. 232

HAMLET You cannot, ⟨sir,⟩ take from me anything that I 233  
will more willingly part withal—except my life, 234  
except my life, except my life. 235

POLONIUS Fare you well, my lord. 236

HAMLET, *aside* These tedious old fools. 237

*Enter Guildenstern and Rosencrantz.*

POLONIUS You go to seek the Lord Hamlet. There he is. 238

ROSENCRANTZ, *to Polonius* God save you, sir. 239

*Polonius exits.*

GUILDENSTERN My honored lord. 240

ROSENCRANTZ My most dear lord. 241

HAMLET My ⟨excellent⟩ good friends! How dost thou, 242  
Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do 243

you both?	244
ROSENCRANTZ	
<u>As the indifferent children of the earth.</u>	245
GUILDENSTERN	
Happy in that we are not <overhappy.>	246
On <u>Fortune's</u> <cap,> we are not <u>the very button.</u>	247
HAMLET Nor the soles of her shoe?	248
ROSENCRANTZ Neither, my lord.	249
HAMLET Then you live about her waist, or in the	250
middle of her favors?	251
GUILDENSTERN Faith, her <u>privates</u> we.	252
HAMLET In the secret parts of <u>Fortune</u> ? O, most true!	253
She is a strumpet. What news?	254
ROSENCRANTZ None, my lord, but <that> the world's	255
grown honest.	256
HAMLET Then is <u>doomsday</u> near. But your news is not	257
true. <Let me question more in particular. What	258
have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of	259
<u>Fortune</u> that she sends you to prison hither?	260
GUILDENSTERN Prison, my lord?	261
HAMLET Denmark's a prison.	262
ROSENCRANTZ Then is the world one.	263
HAMLET A <u>goodly</u> one, in which there are many <u>con-</u>	264
<u>fin</u> es, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o'	265
th' worst.	266
ROSENCRANTZ We think not so, my lord.	267
HAMLET Why, then, 'tis none to you, for there is	268
nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it	269
so. To me, it is a prison.	270
ROSENCRANTZ Why, then, your ambition makes it one.	271
'Tis too narrow for your mind.	272
HAMLET O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and	273
count myself a king of infinite space, were it not	274
that I have bad dreams.	275
GUILDENSTERN Which dreams, indeed, are ambition,	276

	for the very substance of the ambitious is merely	277
	the shadow of a dream.	278
HAMLET	A dream itself is but a shadow.	279
ROSENCRANTZ	Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy	280
	and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.	281
HAMLET	Then are our <u>beggars bodies, and our mon-</u>	282
	<u>archs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shad-</u>	283
	<u>ows</u> . Shall we to th' court? For, by my <u>fay</u> , I cannot	284
	reason.	285
ROSENCRANTZ/GUILDENSTERN	We'll <u>wait upon</u> you.	286
HAMLET	No such matter. I will not <u>sort you with</u> the	287
	rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an	288
	honest man, I am most dreadfully attended.} But,	289
	in the beaten way of friendship, <u>what make you at</u>	290
	Elsinore?	291
ROSENCRANTZ	To visit you, my lord, no other <u>occasion</u> .	292
HAMLET	Beggar that I am, I am <even> poor in thanks;	293
	but I thank you, and <u>sure</u> , dear friends, my thanks	294
	are <u>too dear a halfpenny</u> . Were you not sent for?	295
	Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation?	296
	Come, come, deal justly with me. Come, come; nay,	297
	speak.	298
GUILDENSTERN	What should we say, my lord?	299
HAMLET	Anything <u>but to th' purpose</u> . You were sent	300
	for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks	301
	which your modesties have not craft enough to	302
	color. I know the good king and queen have sent for	303
	you.	304
ROSENCRANTZ	To what end, my lord?	305
HAMLET	That you must teach me. But let me conjure	306
	you by the rights of our fellowship, by <u>the conso-</u>	307
	<u>nancy of our youth</u> , by the obligation of our ever-	308
	preserved love, and <u>by what more dear</u> a better	309
	<u>proposer</u> can <u>charge you withal</u> : be <u>even</u> and direct	310

with me whether you were sent for or no.	311
ROSENCRANTZ, 「 <i>to Guildenstern</i> 」 What say you?	312
HAMLET, 「 <i>aside</i> 」 Nay, then, I have an eye <u>of</u> you.—If	313
you love me, hold not off.	314
GUILDENSTERN My lord, we were sent for.	315
HAMLET I will tell you why; so shall <u>my anticipation</u>	316
<u>prevent your discovery</u> , and <u>your secrecy to the</u>	317
<u>King and Queen molt no feather</u> . I have of late, but	318
<u>wherefore</u> I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all	319
custom of exercises, and, indeed, <u>it goes so heavily</u>	320
<u>with my disposition</u> that this goodly <u>frame</u> , the	321
Earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most	322
excellent <u>canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'er-</u>	323
<u>hanging firmament, this majestical roof, fretted</u>	324
with golden fire—why, it appeareth nothing to me	325
but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors.	326
What ⟨a⟩ piece of work is a man, how noble in	327
reason, how infinite in <u>faculties</u> , in form and mov-	328
ing how <u>express</u> and admirable; in action how like	329
an angel, in <u>apprehension</u> how like a god: the	330
beauty of the world, the paragon of animals—and	331
yet, to me, what is this <u>quintessence</u> of dust? Man	332
delights not me, ⟨no,⟩ nor women neither, though by	333
your smiling you seem to say so.	334
ROSENCRANTZ My lord, there was no such stuff in my	335
thoughts.	336
HAMLET Why did you laugh, then, when I said “man	337
delights not me”?	338
ROSENCRANTZ To think, my lord, if you delight not in	339
man, what <u>Lenten entertainment</u> the players shall	340
receive from you. We <u>coted</u> them on the way, and	341
hither are they coming to offer you service.	342
HAMLET He that plays the king shall be welcome—his	343
Majesty shall have <u>tribute on</u> me. The adventurous	344

knight shall use his foil and target, the lover shall 345  
 not sigh gratis, the humorous man shall end his 346  
 part in peace, <the clown shall make those laugh 347  
 whose lungs are 「tickle」 o' th' sear,> and the lady 348  
 shall say her mind freely, or the <blank> verse shall 349  
halt for 't. What players are they? 350  
 ROSENCRANTZ Even those you were wont to take such 351  
 delight in, the tragedians of the city. 352  
 HAMLET How chances it they travel? Their residence, 353  
 both in reputation and profit, was better both ways. 354  
 ROSENCRANTZ I think their inhibition comes by the 355  
means of the late innovation. 356  
 HAMLET Do they hold the same estimation they did 357  
 when I was in the city? Are they so followed? 358  
 ROSENCRANTZ No, indeed are they not. 359  
 <HAMLET How comes it? Do they grow rusty? 360  
 ROSENCRANTZ Nay, their endeavor keeps in the wont- 361  
ed pace. But there is, sir, an aerie of children, little 362  
eyases, that cry out on the top of question and are 363  
 most tyrannically clapped for 't. These are now the 364  
 fashion and so 「berattle」 the common stages (so 365  
 they call them) that many wearing rapiers are afraid 366  
of goose quills and dare scarce come thither. 367  
 HAMLET What, are they children? Who maintains 'em? 368  
 How are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality 369  
no longer than they can sing? Will they not say 370  
 afterwards, if they should grow themselves to com- 371  
mon players (as it is 「most like,」 if their means are 372  
 no better), their writers do them wrong to make 373  
 them exclaim against their own succession? 374  
 ROSENCRANTZ Faith, there has been much 「to-do」 on 375  
 both sides, and the nation holds it no sin to tar 376  
 them to controversy. There was for a while no 377

money bid for argument unless the poet and the 378  
player went to cuffs in the question. 379

HAMLET Is 't possible? 380

GUILDENSTERN O, there has been much throwing 381  
about of brains. 382

HAMLET Do the boys carry it away? 383

ROSENCRANTZ Ay, that they do, my lord—Hercules 384  
and his load too. 385

HAMLET It is not very strange; for my uncle is King of 386  
Denmark, and those that would make mouths at 387  
him while my father lived give twenty, forty, fifty, 388  
a hundred ducats apiece for his picture in little. 389  
'Sblood, there is something in this more than nat- 390  
ural, if philosophy could find it out. 391

*A flourish (for the Players.)*

GUILDENSTERN There are the players. 392

HAMLET Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. 393  
Your hands, come then. Th' appurtenance of wel- 394  
come is fashion and ceremony. Let me comply 395  
with you in this garb, (lest my extent to the players, 396  
which, I tell you, must show fairly outwards, should 397  
more appear like entertainment than yours. You are 398  
welcome. But my uncle-father and aunt-mother are 399  
deceived. 400

GUILDENSTERN In what, my dear lord? 401

HAMLET I am but mad north-north-west. When the 402  
wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw. 403

*Enter Polonius.*

POLONIUS Well be with you, gentlemen. 404

HAMLET Hark you, Guildenstern, and you too—at 405  
each ear a hearer! That great baby you see there is 406  
not yet out of his swaddling clouts. 407

ROSENCRANTZ Haply he is the second time come to 408  
them, for they say an old man is twice a child. 409

HAMLET	I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the	410
	players; mark it.—You say right, sir, a Monday	411
	morning, 'twas then indeed.	412
POLONIUS	My lord, I have news to tell you.	413
HAMLET	My lord, I have news to tell you: when <u>Roscius</u>	414
	was an actor in Rome—	415
POLONIUS	The actors are come hither, my lord.	416
HAMLET	<u>Buzz, buzz.</u>	417
POLONIUS	Upon my honor—	418
HAMLET	Then came each actor on his ass.	419
POLONIUS	The best actors in the world, either for	420
	tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comi-	421
	cal, historical-pastoral, <tragical-historical, tragical-	422
	comical-historical-pastoral,> <u>scene individable, or</u>	423
	<u>poem unlimited.</u> <u>Seneca</u> cannot be too <u>heavy</u> , nor	424
	<u>Plautus</u> too light. <u>For the law of writ and the liberty,</u>	425
	these are the only men.	426
HAMLET	O <u>Jephthah</u> , judge of Israel, what a treasure	427
	hadst thou!	428
POLONIUS	What a treasure had he, my lord?	429
HAMLET	Why,	430
	<i>One fair daughter, and no more,</i>	431
	<i>The which he lovèd <u>passing</u> well.</i>	432
POLONIUS,	<sup>「aside」</sup> Still on my daughter.	433
HAMLET	Am I not i' th' right, old Jephthah?	434
POLONIUS	If you call me “Jephthah,” my lord: I have a	435
	daughter that I love passing well.	436
HAMLET	Nay, that follows not.	437
POLONIUS	What follows then, my lord?	438
HAMLET	Why,	439
	<i>As by <u>lot</u>, God <u>wot</u></i>	440
	and then, you know,	441
	<i>It came to pass, as most like it was—</i>	442
	the first <u>row</u> of the pious <u>chanson</u> will show you	443

more, for look where my abridgment comes. 444

*Enter the Players.*

You are welcome, masters; welcome all.—I am glad 445  
to see thee well.—Welcome, good friends.—O ⟨my⟩ 446  
old friend! Why, thy face is valanced since I saw thee 447  
last. Com'st thou to beard me in Denmark?—What, 448  
my young lady and mistress! ⟨By'r⟩ Lady, your lady- 449  
ship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by 450  
the altitude of a chopine. Pray God your voice, like a 451  
piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the 452  
ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to 't 453  
like ⟨French⟩ falconers, fly at anything we see. We'll 454  
have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your 455  
quality. Come, a passionate speech. 456

⟨FIRST⟩ PLAYER What speech, my good lord? 457

HAMLET I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it 458  
was never acted, or, if it was, not above once; for 459  
the play, I remember, pleased not the million: 460  
'twas caviary to the general. But it was (as I 461  
received it, and others whose judgments in such 462  
matters cried in the top of mine) an excellent play, 463  
well digested in the scenes, set down with as much 464  
modesty as cunning. I remember one said there 465  
were no sallets in the lines to make the matter 466  
savory, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict 467  
the author of affection, but called it an honest 468  
method, [as wholesome as sweet and, by very much, 469  
more handsome than fine.] One speech in 't I 470  
chiefly loved. 'Twas Aeneas' ⟨tale⟩ to Dido, and 471  
thereabout of it especially when he speaks of 472  
Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at 473  
this line—let me see, let me see: 474

*The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrceanian beast—* 475

'tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus: 476

<i>The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable <u>arms</u>,</i>	477
<i>Black as his purpose, did the night resemble</i>	478
<i>When he lay couchèd in th' ominous <u>horse</u>,</i>	479
<i>Hath now <u>this dread and black complexion</u> smeared</i>	480
<i>With heraldry more dismal. Head to foot,</i>	481
<i>Now is he total <u>gules</u>, horridly <u>tricked</u></i>	482
<i>With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,</i>	483
<i>Baked and <u>impasted</u> with the <u>parching</u> streets,</i>	484
<i>That lend a <u>tyrannous</u> and a damnèd light</i>	485
<i>To <u>their lord's murder</u>. Roasted in wrath and fire,</i>	486
<i>And thus <u>o'ersizèd</u> with coagulate gore,</i>	487
<i>With eyes like <u>carbuncles</u>, the hellish Pyrrhus</i>	488
<i>Old grandsire Priam seeks.</i>	489
<i>So, proceed you.</i>	490
POLONIUS    'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good	491
accent and good <u>discretion</u> .	492
⟨FIRST⟩ PLAYER                      Anon he finds him	493
<i>Striking too short at Greeks. His antique sword,</i>	494
<i>Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,</i>	495
<i><u>Repugnant to</u> command. Unequal matched,</i>	496
<i>Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide;</i>	497
<i>But with the whiff and wind of his <u>fell</u> sword</i>	498
<i>Th' unnervèd father falls. ⟨Then <u>senseless Ilium</u>,⟩</i>	499
<i>Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top</i>	500
<i>Stoops to <u>his base</u>, and with a hideous crash</i>	501
<i>Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear. For lo, his sword,</i>	502
<i>Which was <u>declining</u> on the milky head</i>	503
<i>Of reverend Priam, seemed i' th' air to stick.</i>	504
<i>So as a painted tyrant Pyrrhus stood</i>	505
<i>⟨And,⟩ like a neutral to his <u>will and matter</u>,</i>	506
<i>Did nothing.</i>	507
<i>But as we often see <u>against</u> some storm</i>	508
<i>A silence in the heavens, the <u>rack</u> stand still,</i>	509
<i>The bold winds speechless, and the <u>orb</u> below</i>	510

As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder 511  
 Doth rend the region; so, after Pyrrhus' pause, 512  
 Arousèd vengeance sets him new a-work, 513  
 And never did the *Cyclops'* hammers fall 514  
 On *Mars's* armor, forged *for proof eterne*, 515  
 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword 516  
 Now falls on Priam. 517  
*Out*, out, thou *strumpet* Fortune! All you gods 518  
 In general synod take away her power, 519  
 Break all the spokes and *fellies* from her *wheel*, 520  
 And bowl the round *nave* down the hill of heaven 521  
 As low as to the fiends! 522  
 POLONIUS This is too long. 523  
 HAMLET It shall to the barber's with your beard.— 524  
 Prithee say on. He's for a *jig* or a tale of bawdry, or 525  
 he sleeps. Say on; come to *Hecuba*. 526  
 〈FIRST〉 PLAYER  
 But who, ah woe, had seen the *moblèd* queen— 527  
 HAMLET “The moblèd queen”? 528  
 POLONIUS That's good. 〈“Moblèd” queen is good.〉 529  
 〈FIRST〉 PLAYER  
 Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames 530  
 With *bisson rheum*, a *clout* upon that head 531  
 Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe, 532  
 About her *lank and all o'erteemèd* loins 533  
 A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up— 534  
 Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steeped, 535  
 '*Gainst Fortune's state would treason have* 536  
*pronounced*. 537  
 But if the gods themselves did see her then 538  
 When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport 539  
 In mincing with his sword her *husband's* limbs, 540  
 The instant burst of clamor that she made 541  
 (Unless things mortal move them not at all) 542

Would have made <i>milch</i> the burning eyes of heaven	543
And <i>passion</i> in the gods.	544
POLONIUS Look <i>whē'er</i> he has not turned his color and	545
has tears in 's eyes. Prithee, no more.	546
HAMLET 'Tis well. I'll have thee speak out the rest of	547
this soon.—Good my lord, will you see the players	548
well <i>bestowed</i> ? Do you hear, let them be well used,	549
for they are the <i>abstract</i> and brief chronicles of the	550
time. After your death you were better have a bad	551
epitaph than their <i>ill</i> report while you live.	552
POLONIUS My lord, I will use them according to their	553
desert.	554
HAMLET <i>God's &lt;bodykins,&gt;</i> man, much better! Use ev-	555
ery man after his desert and who shall 'scape	556
whipping? Use them after your own honor and	557
dignity. The less they deserve, the more merit is in	558
your bounty. Take them in.	559
POLONIUS Come, sirs.	560
HAMLET Follow him, friends. We'll hear a play tomor-	561
row. <i>As Polonius and Players exit, Hamlet speaks to</i>	562
<i>the First Player.</i> <sup>1</sup> Dost thou hear me, old friend? Can	563
you play "The Murder of Gonzago"?	564
「FIRST」 PLAYER Ay, my lord.	565
HAMLET We'll ha 't tomorrow night. You could, for <a>	566
need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen	567
lines, which I would set down and insert in 't,	568
could you not?	569
「FIRST」 PLAYER Ay, my lord.	570
HAMLET Very well. Follow that lord—and look you	571
mock him not. <i>First Player exits.</i> <sup>1</sup> My good friends,	572
I'll leave you till night. You are welcome to Elsinore.	573
ROSENCRANTZ Good my lord.	574
HAMLET	
Ay, so, good-bye to you.	575

「*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*」*exit.*

Now I am alone. 576

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I! 577

Is it not monstrous that this player here, 578

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion, 579

Could force his soul so to his own conceit 580

That from her working all <his> visage wanned, 581

Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect, 582

A broken voice, and his whole function suiting 583

With forms to his conceit—and all for nothing! 584

For Hecuba! 585

What's Hecuba to him, or he to <Hecuba,> 586

That he should weep for her? What would he do 587

Had he the motive and <the cue> for passion 588

That I have? He would drown the stage with tears 589

And cleave the general ear with horrid speech, 590

Make mad the guilty and appall the free, 591

Confound the ignorant and amaze indeed 592

The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I, 593

A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak 594

Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause, 595

And can say nothing—no, not for a king 596

Upon whose property and most dear life 597

A damned defeat was made. Am I a coward? 598

Who calls me “villain”? breaks my pate across? 599

Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face? 600

Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' th' throat 601

As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this? 602

Ha! 'Swounds, I should take it! For it cannot be 603

But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall 604

To make oppression bitter, or ere this 605

I should <have> fatted all the region kites 606

With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain! 607

Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless 608

villain!	609
⟨O vengeance!⟩	610
Why, what an ass am I! This is most <u>brave</u> ,	611
That I, the son of a dear ʿfatherʿ murdered,	612
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,	613
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words	614
And fall a-cursing like a very <u>drab</u> ,	615
A <u>stallion</u> ! Fie upon ʿt! Foh!	616
<u>About</u> , my brains!—Hum, I have heard	617
That guilty creatures sitting at a play	618
Have, by the very <u>cunning</u> of the <u>scene</u> ,	619
Been struck so to the soul that <u>presently</u>	620
They have proclaimed their malefactions;	621
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak	622
With most miraculous organ. Iʼll have these players	623
Play something like the murder of my father	624
Before mine uncle. Iʼll observe his looks;	625
Iʼll <u>tent</u> him to the quick. If he do blench,	626
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen	627
May be a ⟨devil,⟩ and the ⟨devil⟩ hath power	628
Tʼ assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps,	629
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,	630
As he is very potent with such <u>spirits</u> ,	631
<u>Abuses</u> me to damn me. Iʼll have grounds	632
More <u>relative</u> than this. The playʼs the thing	633
Wherein Iʼll catch the conscience of the King.	634

*He exits.*



*The Tragedy of*  
**HAMLET,**  
*Prince of Denmark*



ACT 3



## 「ACT 3」

---

### 「Scene 1」

*Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, <and>  
Lords.*

KING

And can you by no drift of conference 1  
Get from him why he puts on this confusion, 2  
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet 3  
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy? 4

ROSENCRANTZ

He does confess he feels himself distracted, 5  
But from what cause he will by no means speak. 6

GUILDENSTERN

Nor do we find him forward to be sounded, 7  
But with a crafty madness keeps aloof 8  
When we would bring him on to some confession 9  
Of his true state. 10

QUEEN Did he receive you well? 11

ROSENCRANTZ Most like a gentleman. 12

GUILDENSTERN

But with much forcing of his disposition. 13

ROSENCRANTZ

Niggard of question, but of our demands 14  
Most free in his reply. 15

QUEEN Did you assay him to any pastime? 16

ROSENCRANTZ

Madam, it so fell out that certain players 17  
We o'erraught on the way. Of these we told him, 18

	And there did seem in him a kind of joy	19
	To hear of it. They are here about the court,	20
	And, as I think, they have already <u>order</u>	21
	This night to play before him.	22
POLONIUS	'Tis most true,	23
	And he beseeched me to entreat your Majesties	24
	To hear and see the matter.	25
KING		
	With all my heart, and it doth much content me	26
	To hear him so inclined.	27
	Good gentlemen, <u>give him a further edge</u>	28
	And drive his purpose into these delights.	29
ROSENCRANTZ		
	We shall, my lord.	30
	<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern</i>	
	<i>「and Lords」 exit.</i>	
KING	Sweet Gertrude, leave us 〈too,〉	31
	For we have <u>closely</u> sent for Hamlet hither,	32
	That he, as 'twere by accident, may here	33
	<u>Affront</u> Ophelia.	34
	Her father and myself, 〈lawful <u>espials</u> ,〉	35
	〈Will〉 so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,	36
	We may of their encounter frankly judge	37
	And gather by him, <u>as he is behaved</u> ,	38
	If 't be th' affliction of his love or no	39
	That thus he suffers for.	40
QUEEN	I shall obey you.	41
	And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish	42
	That your good beauties be the happy cause	43
	Of Hamlet's wildness. So shall I hope your virtues	44
	Will bring him to his wonted way again,	45
	To both your honors.	46
OPHELIA	Madam, I wish it may.	47
	<i>「Queen exits.」</i>	
POLONIUS		

Ophelia, walk you here.—Gracious, so please you,	48
We will bestow ourselves. 「 <i>To Ophelia.</i> 」 Read on this	49
book,	50
That <u>show of such an exercise may color</u>	51
<u>Your &lt;loneliness.&gt;</u> —We are oft <u>to blame</u> in this	52
(’Tis too much proved), that with devotion’s visage	53
And pious action we do sugar o’er	54
The devil himself.	55
KING, 「 <i>aside</i> 」 O, ’tis too true!	56
How smart a lash that speech doth give my	57
conscience.	58
<u>The harlot’s cheek beautied with plast’ring art</u>	59
<u>Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it</u>	60
<u>Than is my deed to my most painted word.</u>	61
O heavy burden!	62
POLONIUS	
I hear him coming. <Let’s> withdraw, my lord.	63
「 <i>They withdraw.</i> 」	
<i>Enter Hamlet.</i>	
HAMLET	
To be or not to be—that is <u>the question</u> :	64
Whether ’tis nobler in the mind to suffer	65
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,	66
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles	67
And, by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep—	68
No more—and by a sleep to say we end	69
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks	70
<u>That flesh is heir to</u> —’tis a <u>consummation</u>	71
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep—	72
To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there’s the <u>rub</u> ,	73
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,	74
When we have <u>shuffled off this mortal coil</u> ,	75
Must give us pause. There’s the <u>respect</u>	76
That <u>makes calamity of so long life.</u>	77

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, 78  
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, 79  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay, 80  
The insolence of office, and the spurns 81  
That patient merit of th' unworthy takes, 82  
When he himself might his quietus make 83  
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear, 84  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life, 85  
But that the dread of something after death, 86  
The undiscovered country from whose ourn 87  
No traveler returns, puzzles the will 88  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have 89  
Than fly to others that we know not of? 90  
Thus conscience does make cowards (of us all,) 91  
And thus the native hue of resolution 92  
Is (sicklied) o'er with the pale cast of thought, 93  
And enterprises of great pitch and moment 94  
With this regard their currents turn awry 95  
And lose the name of action.—Soft you now, 96  
The fair Ophelia.—Nymph, in thy orisons 97  
Be all my sins remembered. 98

OPHELIA                                  Good my lord,                                  99

How does your Honor for this many a day? 100

HAMLET I humbly thank you, well. 101

OPHELIA

My lord, I have remembrances of yours 102

That I have longèd long to redeliver. 103

I pray you now receive them. 104

# HAMLET

No, not I. I never gave you aught. 105

OPHELIA

My honored lord, you know right well you did, 106

And with them words of so sweet breath composed 107

As made ⟨the⟩ things more rich. Their perfume

lost, 109

Take these again, for to the noble mind	110
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.	111
There, my lord.	112
HAMLET Ha, ha, are you <u>honest</u> ?	113
OPHELIA My lord?	114
HAMLET Are you <u>fair</u> ?	115
OPHELIA What means your Lordship?	116
HAMLET That if you be honest and fair, <your <u>honesty</u> >	117
should admit no <u>discourse to</u> your beauty.	118
OPHELIA Could beauty, my lord, have better com-	119
merce than with honesty?	120
HAMLET Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will sooner	121
transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than	122
the force of honesty can translate beauty into <u>his</u>	123
likeness. This was <u>sometime</u> a <u>paradox</u> , but now	124
<u>the time</u> gives it proof. I did love you once.	125
OPHELIA Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.	126
HAMLET You should not have believed me, for <u>virtue</u>	127
<u>cannot so &lt;inoculate&gt; our old stock but we shall</u>	128
<u>relish</u> of it. I loved you not.	129
OPHELIA I was the more deceived.	130
HAMLET Get thee <to> a <u>nunnery</u> . Why wouldst thou be	131
a breeder of sinners? I am myself <u>indifferent hon-</u>	132
<u>est</u> , but yet I could accuse me of such things that it	133
were better my mother had not borne me: I am	134
very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more of-	135
fenses at my beck than I have thoughts to put them	136
in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act	137
them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling	138
between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves	139
<all;> believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery.	140
Where's your father?	141
OPHELIA At home, my lord.	142
HAMLET Let the doors be shut upon him that he may	143

	play the fool nowhere but in 's own house. Farewell.	144
OPHELIA	O, help him, you sweet heavens!	145
HAMLET	If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague	146
	for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as	147
	snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a	148
	nunnery, farewell. Or if thou wilt needs marry,	149
	marry a fool, for wise men know well enough what	150
	<u>monsters</u> you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and	151
	quickly too. Farewell.	152
OPHELIA	Heavenly powers, restore him!	153
HAMLET	I have heard of your <u>paintings</u> <u>&lt;too,&gt;</u> well	154
	enough. God hath given you one face, and you	155
	make yourselves another. You jig and amble, and	156
	you <u>&lt;lisp;&gt;</u> you <u>nickname</u> God's creatures and <u>make</u>	157
	<u>your wantonness</u> <u>&lt;your&gt;</u> <u>ignorance</u> . Go to, I'll no	158
	more <u>on 't</u> . It hath made me mad. I say we will have	159
	no more marriage. Those that are married already,	160
	all but one, shall live. The rest shall keep as they are.	161
	To a nunnery, go.	162
	<i>He exits.</i>	
OPHELIA		
	O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!	163
	The <u>courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue,</u>	164
	<u>sword,</u>	165
	<u>&lt;Th' expectancy&gt;</u> and <u>rose</u> of the fair state,	166
	The <u>glass of fashion</u> and the <u>mold of form,</u>	167
	Th' observed of all observers, quite, quite down!	168
	And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,	169
	That sucked the honey of his musicked vows,	170
	Now see <u>&lt;that&gt;</u> noble and most sovereign reason,	171
	Like sweet bells jangled, <u>out of time</u> and harsh;	172
	That unmatched form and stature of <u>blown</u> youth	173
	<u>Blasted with ecstasy</u> . O, woe is me	174
	T' have seen what I have seen, see what I see!	175

KING, 「*advancing with*」 Polonius

Love? His affections do not that way tend; 176  
Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little, 177  
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul 178  
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood, 179  
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose 180  
Will be some danger; which for to prevent, 181  
I have in quick determination 182  
Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England 183  
For the demand of our neglected tribute. 184  
Haply the seas, and countries different, 185  
With variable objects, shall expel 186  
This something-settled matter in his heart, 187  
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus 188  
From fashion of himself. What think you on 't? 189

POLONIUS

It shall do well. But yet do I believe 190  
The origin and commencement of his grief 191  
Sprung from neglected love.—How now, Ophelia? 192  
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said; 193  
We heard it all.—My lord, do as you please, 194  
But, if you hold it fit, after the play 195  
Let his queen-mother all alone entreat him 196  
To show his grief. Let her be round with him; 197  
And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear 198  
Of all their conference. If she find him not, 199  
To England send him, or confine him where 200  
Your wisdom best shall think. 201

KING                                It shall be so.                                202  
    Madness in great ones must not ⟨unwatched⟩ go.                                203

*They exit.*

「Scene 2」

*Enter Hamlet and three of the Players.*

HAMLET    Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced  
it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth  
it, as many of 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 of your passion, you must acquire and  
beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O,  
it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious,  
periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very  
rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the  
most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable  
dumb shows and noise. I would have such a fellow  
whipped for o'erdoing Termagant. It out-Herods  
Herod. Pray you, avoid it.

PLAYER I warrant your Honor. 16

HAMLET Be not too tame neither, but let your own  
discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the  
word, the word to the action, with this special  
observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of  
nature. For anything so o'erdone is from the pur-  
pose of playing, whose end, both at the first and  
now, was and is to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to  
nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her  
own image, and the very age and body of the time  
his form and pressure. Now this overdone or come  
tardy off, though it makes the unskillful laugh,  
cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure  
of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh  
a whole theater of others. O, there be players that I  
have seen play and heard others praise (and that  
highly), not to speak it profanely, that, neither  
having th' accent of Christians nor the gait of

Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and	34
bellowed that I have thought some of nature's	35
<u>journeymen</u> had made men, and not made them	36
well, they imitated humanity so abominably.	37
PLAYER I hope we have reformed that <u>indifferently</u>	38
with us, <sir.>	39
HAMLET O, reform it altogether. And let those that play	40
your <u>clowns</u> speak no more than is set down for	41
them, for there be <u>of them</u> that will themselves	42
laugh, to set on some quantity of <u>barren</u> spectators	43
to laugh too, though in the meantime some neces-	44
sary <u>question</u> of the play be then to be considered.	45
That's villainous and shows a most pitiful ambition	46
in the fool that uses it. Go make you ready.	47
<i>&lt;Players exit.&gt;</i>	
<i>Enter Polonius, Guildenstern, and Rosencrantz.</i>	
How now, my lord, will the King hear this piece of	48
work?	49
POLONIUS And the Queen too, and that <u>presently</u> .	50
HAMLET Bid the players make haste.	51
<i>&lt;Polonius exits.&gt;</i>	
Will you two help to hasten them?	52
ROSENCRANTZ Ay, my lord.	53
<i>They exit.</i>	
HAMLET What ho, Horatio!	54
<i>Enter Horatio.</i>	
HORATIO Here, sweet lord, at your service.	55
HAMLET	
Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man	56
As e'er <u>my conversation coped withal</u> .	57
HORATIO	
O, my dear lord—	58
<HAMLET> Nay, do not think I flatter,	59

For what advancement may I hope from thee	60
That no <u>revenue</u> hast but thy good spirits	61
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be	62
flattered?	63
No, let <u>the candied tongue lick absurd pomp</u>	64
And crook the <u>pregnant</u> hinges of the knee	65
Where <u>thrif</u> t may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?	66
Since my <u>dear</u> soul was mistress of her choice	67
And could of men distinguish, her <u>election</u>	68
Hath sealed thee for herself. For thou hast been	69
As one in suffering all that suffers nothing,	70
A man that <u>Fortune's buffets and rewards</u>	71
Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and blessed are those	72
Whose <u>blood</u> and judgment are so well	73
<u>commeddled</u>	74
That they are not a <u>pipe</u> for <u>Fortune's</u> finger	75
To <u>sound</u> what <u>stop</u> she please. Give me that man	76
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him	77
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,	78
As I do thee.—Something too much of this.—	79
There is a play tonight before the King.	80
One scene of it comes near the circumstance	81
Which I have told thee of my father's death.	82
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,	83
Even with the very <u>comment</u> of thy soul	84
Observe my uncle. If his <u>occulted</u> guilt	85
Do not itself <u>unkennel</u> in one speech,	86
It is a damnèd ghost that we have seen,	87
And my imaginations are as foul	88
As <u>Vulcan's stithy</u> . Give him heedful note,	89
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,	90
And, after, we will both our judgments join	91
In <u>censure of</u> his <u>seeming</u> .	92
HORATIO	93
Well, my lord.	

If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing	94
And 'scape <detecting>, I will pay the theft.	95
<i>&lt;Sound a flourish.&gt;</i>	
HAMLET They are coming to the play. I must be <u>idle</u> .	96
Get you a place.	97
<i>Enter <u>Trumpets and Kettle Drums</u>. &lt;Enter&gt; King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, &lt;Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and other Lords attendant with the King's&gt; guard carrying torches.&gt;</i>	
KING How <u>fares</u> our cousin Hamlet?	98
HAMLET Excellent, i' faith, of the <u>chameleon's dish</u> . I	99
eat the air, promise-crammed. You cannot feed	100
capons so.	101
KING I <u>have nothing with</u> this answer, Hamlet. These	102
words <u>are not mine</u> .	103
HAMLET No, nor mine <u>now</u> . <i>['To Polonius.']</i> My lord, you	104
<u>played</u> once i' th' university, you say?	105
POLONIUS That did I, my lord, and was accounted a	106
good actor.	107
HAMLET What did you enact?	108
POLONIUS I did enact Julius Caesar. I was killed i' th'	109
Capitol. Brutus killed me.	110
HAMLET It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a	111
calf there.—Be the players ready?	112
ROSENCRANTZ Ay, my lord. They <u>stay upon your pa-</u>	113
<u>tience</u> .	114
QUEEN Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.	115
HAMLET No, good mother. <u>Here's metal more</u>	116
<u>attractive</u> .	117
<i>['Hamlet takes a place near Ophelia.']</i>	
<u>POLONIUS, ['to the King'] Oh, ho! Do you mark that?</u>	118
<u>HAMLET Lady, shall I lie in your lap?</u>	119
<u>OPHELIA No, my lord.</u>	120
<u>&lt;HAMLET I mean, my head upon your lap?</u>	121

<u>OPHELIA</u>	<u>Ay, my lord.</u>	122
<u>HAMLET</u>	<u>Do you think I meant country matters?</u>	123
<u>OPHELIA</u>	<u>I think nothing, my lord.</u>	124
<u>HAMLET</u>	<u>That's a fair thought to lie between maids'</u> <u>legs.</u>	125 126
<u>OPHELIA</u>	<u>What is, my lord?</u>	127
<u>HAMLET</u>	<u>Nothing.</u>	128
<u>OPHELIA</u>	<u>You are merry, my lord.</u>	129
<u>HAMLET</u>	<u>Who, I?</u>	130
<u>OPHELIA</u>	<u>Ay, my lord.</u>	131
HAMLET	O God, <u>your only jig-maker</u> . What should a man do but be merry? For look you how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died <u>within 's</u> two hours.	132 133 134 135
OPHELIA	Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.	136
HAMLET	So long? Nay, then, let the devil wear <u>black</u> , for I'll have <u>a suit of sables</u> . 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. But, by'r Lady, he must build churches, then, or else shall he <u>suffer not thinking on</u> , with <u>the</u> <u>hobby-horse</u> , whose epitaph is "For oh, for oh, the hobby-horse is forgot."	137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144
<i>The trumpets sounds. <u>Dumb show</u> follows.</i>		
<i>Enter a King and a Queen, &lt;very lovingly,&gt; the Queen embracing him and he her. &lt;She kneels and makes show of protestation unto him.&gt; He takes her up and declines his head upon her neck. He lies him down upon a bank of flowers. She, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon &lt;comes&gt; in another man, takes off <u>his crown</u>, kisses it, pours poison in the sleeper's ears, and leaves him. The Queen returns, finds the King dead, <u>makes passionate action</u>. The poisoner with some three or four come in again, seem to condole with her. The dead body is carried away. The</i>		145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154

poisoner woos the Queen with gifts. She seems harsh 155  
awhile but in the end accepts <his> love. 156

「Players exit.」

OPHELIA What means this, my lord? 157

HAMLET Marry, this <is miching mallecho. It means 158  
mischief. 159

OPHELIA Belike this show imports the argument of the 160  
play. 161

*Enter Prologue.*

HAMLET We shall know by this fellow. The players 162  
cannot keep <counsel;> they'll tell all. 163

OPHELIA Will he tell us what this show meant? 164

HAMLET Ay, or any show that you will show him. Be 165  
not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you 166  
what it means. 167

OPHELIA You are naught, you are naught. I'll mark the 168  
play. 169

PROLOGUE

*For us and for our tragedy,* 170

*Here stooping to your clemency,* 171

*We beg your hearing patiently.* 172

「He exits.」

HAMLET Is this a prologue or the posy of a ring? 173

OPHELIA 'Tis brief, my lord. 174

HAMLET As woman's love. 175

*Enter 「the Player」 King and Queen.*

PLAYER KING

Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round 176

Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' <orbèd> ground, 177

*And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen* 178

*About the world have times twelve thirties been* 179

*Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands* 180

*Unite commutual in most sacred bands.* 181

PLAYER QUEEN

*So many journeys may the sun and moon* 182  
*Make us again count o'er ere love be done!* 183  
*But woe is me! You are so sick of late,* 184  
*So far from cheer and from ⟨your⟩ former state,* 185  
*That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,* 186  
*Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must.* 187  
*[For women fear too much, even as they love,]* 188  
*And women's fear and love hold quantity,* 189  
*In neither aught, or in extremity.* 190  
*Now what my ⟨love⟩ is, proof hath made you know,* 191  
*And, as my love is sized, my fear is so:* 192  
*[Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;* 193  
*Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.]* 194

PLAYER KING

*Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too.* 195  
*My operant powers their functions leave to do.* 196  
*And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,* 197  
*Honored, beloved; and haply one as kind* 198  
*For husband shalt thou—* 199

PLAYER QUEEN                      O, confound the rest! 200

*Such love must needs be treason in my breast.* 201  
*In second husband let me be accurst.* 202  
*None wed the second but who killed the first.* 203

HAMLET    That's wormwood! 204

PLAYER QUEEN

*The instances that second marriage move* 205  
*Are base respects of thrift, but none of love.* 206  
*A second time I kill my husband dead* 207  
*When second husband kisses me in bed.* 208

PLAYER KING

*I do believe you think what now you speak,* 209  
*But what we do determine oft we break.* 210  
*Purpose is but the slave to memory,* 211

Of violent birth, but poor validity, 212  
 Which now, the fruit unripe, sticks on the tree 213  
 But fall unshaken when they mellow be. 214  
Most necessary 'tis that we forget 215  
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt. 216  
 What to ourselves in passion we propose, 217  
 The passion ending, doth the purpose lose. 218  
 The violence of either grief or joy 219  
 Their own enactures with themselves destroy. 220  
 Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament; 221  
Grief {joys,} joy grieves, on slender accident. 222  
 This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange 223  
 That even our loves should with our fortunes change; 224  
 For 'tis a question left us yet to prove 225  
 Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love. 226  
 The great man down, you mark his favorite flies; 227  
 The poor, advanced, makes friends of enemies. 228  
 And hitherto doth love on fortune tend, 229  
 For who not needs shall never lack a friend, 230  
 And who in want a hollow friend doth try 231  
 Directly seasons him his enemy. 232  
 But, orderly to end where I begun: 233  
 Our wills and fates do so contrary run 234  
 That our devices still are overthrown; 235  
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own. 236  
 So think thou wilt no second husband wed, 237  
 But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead. 238

PLAYER QUEEN

Nor Earth to me give food, nor heaven light, 239  
 Sport and repose lock from me day and night, 240  
 [To desperation turn my trust and hope, 241  
‘An’ anchor’s cheer in prison be my scope.] 242  
 Each opposite that blanks the face of joy 243  
 Meet what I would have well and it destroy. 244

	<i>Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,</i>	245
	<i>If, once a widow, ever I be wife.</i>	246
HAMLET	<u>If she should break it now!</u>	247
PLAYER KING		
	<i>'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile.</i>	248
	<i>My spirits grow dull, and <u>fain</u> I would <u>beguile</u></i>	249
	<i>The tedious day with sleep.</i>	250
	<i>⟨Sleeps.⟩</i>	
PLAYER QUEEN	<i>Sleep <u>rock</u> thy brain,</i>	251
	<i>And never come mischance between us twain.</i>	252
	<i>⌈Player Queen exits.⌋</i>	
HAMLET	<i>Madam, how like you this play?</i>	253
QUEEN	<i>The lady doth protest too much, <u>methinks</u>.</i>	254
HAMLET	<i>O, but she'll keep her word.</i>	255
KING	<i>Have you heard the <u>argument</u>? Is there no</i>	256
	<i>offense in 't?</i>	257
HAMLET	<i>No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest. No</i>	258
	<i>offense i' th' world.</i>	259
KING	<i>What do you call the play?</i>	260
HAMLET	<i>"The Mousetrap." <u>Marry, how? Tropically.</u></i>	261
	<i>This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna.</i>	262
	<i>Gonzago is the duke's name, his wife Baptista. You</i>	263
	<i>shall see <u>anon</u>. 'Tis a <u>knavish</u> piece of work, but</i>	264
	<i>what of that? Your Majesty and we that have <u>free</u></i>	265
	<i>souls, it touches us not. <u>Let the galled jade wince;</u></i>	266
	<i><u>our withers are unwrung.</u></i>	267
	<i>Enter Lucianus.</i>	
	<i>This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.</i>	268
OPHELIA	<i>You are as good as <u>a chorus</u>, my lord.</i>	269
HAMLET	<i><u>I could interpret between you and your love,</u></i>	270
	<i><u>if I could see the puppets dallying.</u></i>	271
OPHELIA	<i>You are keen, my lord, you are keen.</i>	272
HAMLET	<i>It would cost you a groaning to <u>take off mine</u></i>	273

	edge.	274
OPHELIA	Still <u>better and worse</u> .	275
HAMLET	<u>So you mis-take</u> your husbands.—Begin,	276
	murderer. <Pox,> leave thy damnable faces and	277
	begin. Come, <u>the croaking raven doth bellow for</u>	278
	<u>revenge</u> .	279
LUCIANUS		
	<i>Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time</i>	280
	<i>agreeing,</i>	281
	<i>&lt;Confederate&gt; season, else no creature seeing,</i>	282
	<i>Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,</i>	283
	<i>With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice &lt;infected,&gt;</i>	284
	<i>Thy natural magic and dire property</i>	285
	<i>On wholesome life &lt;usurp&gt; immediately.</i>	286
	<i>&lt;Pours the poison in his ears.&gt;</i>	
HAMLET	He poisons him i' th' garden for his estate. His	287
	name's Gonzago. The story is extant and written in	288
	very choice Italian. You shall see anon how the	289
	murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.	290
	<i>「Claudius rises.」</i>	
OPHELIA	The King rises.	291
<HAMLET	What, frightened with <u>false fire</u> ?	292
QUEEN	How fares my lord?	293
POLONIUS	Give o'er the play.	294
KING	Give me some light. Away!	295
POLONIUS	Lights, lights, lights!	296
	<i>All but Hamlet and Horatio exit.</i>	
HAMLET		
	<i>Why, let the stricken deer go weep,</i>	297
	<i>The hart ungallèd play.</i>	298
	<i>For some must <u>watch</u>, while some must sleep:</i>	299
	<i>Thus runs the world away.</i>	300
	Would not this, sir, and a forest of <u>feathers</u> (if the	301
	rest of my fortunes <u>turn Turk with me</u> ) with <two>	302
	<u>Provincial roses</u> on my <u>razed</u> shoes, get me <u>a</u>	303

	<u>fellowship in a cry of players?</u>	304
HORATIO	Half a share.	305
HAMLET	A whole one, I.	306
	<i>For thou dost know, O <u>Damon</u> dear,</i>	307
	<i>This realm <u>dismantled</u> was</i>	308
	<i>Of <u>Jove</u> himself, and now reigns here</i>	309
	<i>A very very—<u>pajock</u>.</i>	310
HORATIO	You might have <u>rhymed</u> .	311
HAMLET	O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?	312 313
HORATIO	Very well, my lord.	314
HAMLET	Upon the talk of the poisoning?	315
HORATIO	I did very well note him.	316
HAMLET	Ah ha! Come, some music! Come, the <u>record-</u> <u>ers</u> !	317 318
	<i>For if the King like not the comedy,</i>	319
	<i>Why, then, belike he likes it not, <u>perdy</u>.</i>	320
	Come, some music!	321
	<i>Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.</i>	
GUILDENSTERN	Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.	322 323
HAMLET	Sir, a whole history.	324
GUILDENSTERN	The King, sir—	325
HAMLET	Ay, sir, what of him?	326
GUILDENSTERN	Is in his <u>retirement</u> marvelous <u>distem-</u> <u>pered</u> .	327 328
HAMLET	With drink, sir?	329
GUILDENSTERN	No, my lord, with <u>choler</u> .	330
HAMLET	Your wisdom should show itself more richer to <u>signify</u> this to the doctor, for for me to put him to his <u>purgation</u> would perhaps plunge him into more choler.	331 332 333 334
GUILDENSTERN	Good my lord, put your discourse into some <u>frame</u> and <u>&lt;start&gt;</u> not so wildly from my	335 336

affair.	337
HAMLET I am tame, sir. Pronounce.	338
GUILDENSTERN The Queen your mother, in most great	339
affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.	340
HAMLET You are welcome.	341
GUILDENSTERN Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not	342
of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me	343
a <u>wholesome</u> answer, I will do your mother's	344
commandment. If not, your <u>pardon</u> and my return	345
shall be the end of ⟨my⟩ business.	346
HAMLET Sir, I cannot.	347
ROSENCRANTZ What, my lord?	348
HAMLET Make you a wholesome answer. My wit's	349
diseased. But, sir, such answer as I can make, you	350
shall command—or, rather, <u>as you say, my mother</u> .	351
Therefore no more but to the matter. My mother,	352
you say—	353
ROSENCRANTZ Then thus she says: your behavior hath	354
struck her into amazement and <u>admiration</u> .	355
HAMLET O wonderful son that can so 'stonish a moth-	356
er! But is there no sequel at the heels of this	357
mother's admiration? Impart.	358
ROSENCRANTZ She desires to speak with you in her	359
<u>closet</u> ere you go to bed.	360
HAMLET We shall obey, were she ten times our moth-	361
er. Have you any further <u>trade</u> with us?	362
ROSENCRANTZ My lord, you once did love me.	363
HAMLET And do still, <u>by these pickers and stealers</u> .	364
ROSENCRANTZ Good my lord, what is your cause of	365
distemper? You do surely bar the door upon your	366
own liberty if you <u>deny your griefs</u> to your friend.	367
HAMLET Sir, I lack advancement.	368
ROSENCRANTZ How can that be, when you have the	369
voice of the King himself for your succession in	370

Denmark?	371
HAMLET Ay, sir, but " <u>While the grass grows</u> "—the	372
proverb is <u>something musty</u> .	373
<i>Enter the Players with recorders.</i>	
O, the recorders! Let me see one. <sup>1</sup> <i>He takes a</i>	374
<i>recorder and turns to Guildenstern.</i> <sup>1</sup> To withdraw	375
with you: why do you <u>go about to recover the wind</u>	376
<u>of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?</u>	377
GUILDENSTERN O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my	378
love is too unmannerly.	379
HAMLET I do not well understand that. Will you play	380
upon <u>this pipe?</u>	381
GUILDENSTERN My lord, I cannot.	382
HAMLET I pray you.	383
GUILDENSTERN Believe me, I cannot.	384
HAMLET I do beseech you.	385
GUILDENSTERN I know no touch of it, my lord.	386
HAMLET It is as easy as lying. Govern these <u>ventages</u>	387
with your fingers and ⟨thumb,⟩ give it breath with	388
your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent	389
music. Look you, these are the stops.	390
GUILDENSTERN But these cannot I command to any	391
utt'rance of harmony. I have not the skill.	392
HAMLET Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing	393
you make of me! You would play upon me, you	394
would seem to know my stops, you would pluck	395
out the heart of my mystery, you would <u>sound me</u>	396
from my lowest note to ⟨the top of⟩ my <u>compass</u> ;	397
and there is much music, excellent voice, in this	398
little <u>organ</u> , yet cannot you make it speak. ' <u>Sblood</u> ,	399
do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe?	400
Call me what instrument you will, though you ⟨can⟩	401
<u>fret</u> me, you cannot play upon me.	402

*Enter Polonius.*

God bless you, sir.	403
POLONIUS My lord, the Queen would speak with you,	404
and <u>presently</u> .	405
HAMLET Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in	406
shape of a camel?	407
POLONIUS By th' Mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.	408
HAMLET Methinks it is like a weasel.	409
POLONIUS It is backed like a weasel.	410
HAMLET Or like a whale.	411
POLONIUS Very like a whale.	412
⟨HAMLET⟩ Then I will come to my mother <u>by and by</u> .	413
「Aside.」 They <u>fool</u> me to the <u>top of my bent</u> .—I will	414
come by and by.	415
⟨POLONIUS⟩ I will say so.	416
⟨HAMLET⟩ “By and by” is easily said. Leave me,	417
friends.	418

*「All but Hamlet exit.」*

'Tis now the very witching time of night,	419
When <u>churchyards yawn</u> and hell itself ⟨breathes⟩	420
out	421
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot	422
blood	423
And do such ⟨bitter⟩ business as the day	424
Would quake to look on. <u>Soft</u> , now to my mother.	425
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever	426
The soul of <u>Nero</u> enter this firm bosom.	427
Let me be cruel, not unnatural.	428
I will speak ⟨daggers⟩ to her, but use none.	429
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites:	430
<u>How in my words somever</u> she be <u>shent</u> ,	431
To <u>give them seals</u> never, my soul, consent.	432

*He exits.*

「Scene 3」

*Enter King, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.*

KING

I like him not, nor stands it safe with us 1  
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you. 2  
I your commission will forthwith dispatch, 3  
And he to England shall along with you. 4  
The terms of our estate may not endure 5  
Hazard so near 's as doth hourly grow 6  
Out of his brows. 7

GUILDENSTERN      We will ourselves provide. 8  
Most holy and religious fear it is 9  
To keep those many many bodies safe 10  
That live and feed upon your Majesty. 11

ROSENCRANTZ

The single and peculiar life is bound 12  
With all the strength and armor of the mind 13  
To keep itself from noyance, but much more 14  
That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests 15  
The lives of many. The cess of majesty 16  
Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw 17  
What's near it with it; or it is a massy wheel 18  
Fixed on the summit of the highest mount, 19  
To whose <huge> spokes ten thousand lesser things 20  
Are mortised and adjoined, which, when it falls, 21  
Each small annexment, petty consequence, 22  
Attends the boist'rous <ruin.> Never alone 23  
Did the king sigh, but <with> a general groan. 24

KING

Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage, 25  
For we will fetters put about this fear, 26  
Which now goes too free-footed. 27

ROSENCRANTZ      We will haste us. 28

*「Rosencrantz and Guildenstern」 exit.*

*Enter Polonius.*

POLONIUS

My lord, he's going to his mother's closet. 29  
Behind the arras I'll convey myself 30  
To hear the process. I'll warrant she'll tax him  
home; 32  
And, as you said (and wisely was it said), 33  
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother, 34  
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear 35  
The speech of vantage. Fare you well, my liege. 36  
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed 37  
And tell you what I know. 38

KING

Thanks, dear my lord. 39

*「Polonius」 exits.*

O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven; 40  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon 't, 41  
A brother's murder. Pray can I not, 42  
Though inclination be as sharp as will. 43  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent, 44  
And, like a man to double business bound, 45  
I stand in pause where I shall first begin 46  
And both neglect. What if this cursèd hand 47  
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood? 48  
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens 49  
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy 50  
But to confront the visage of offense? 51  
And what's in prayer but this twofold force, 52  
To be forestallèd ere we come to fall, 53  
Or <pardoned> being down? Then I'll look up. 54  
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer 55  
Can serve my turn? "Forgive me my foul murder"? 56  
That cannot be, since I am still possessed 57  
Of those effects for which I did the murder: 58  
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen. 59

May one be pardoned and retain th' offense? 60  
 In the corrupted currents of this world, 61  
Offense's gilded hand may ⟨shove⟩ by justice, 62  
 And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself 63  
 Buys out the law. But 'tis not so above: 64  
There is no shuffling; there the action lies 65  
In his true nature, and we ourselves compelled, 66  
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults, 67  
To give in evidence. What then? What rests? 68  
 Try what repentance can. What can it not? 69  
 Yet what can it, when one cannot repent? 70  
 O wretched state! O bosom black as death! 71  
 O limèd soul, that, struggling to be free, 72  
 Art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay. 73  
 Bow, stubborn knees, and heart with strings of steel 74  
 Be soft as sinews of the newborn babe. 75  
 All may be well. 76

「He kneels.」

*Enter Hamlet.*

HAMLET

Now might I do it ⟨pat,⟩ now he is a-praying, 77  
 And now I'll do 't. 78

「He draws his sword.」

And so he goes to heaven, 79  
 And so am I ⟨revenged.⟩ That would be scanned: 80  
 A villain kills my father, and for that, 81  
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send 82  
 To heaven. 83  
 Why, this is ⟨hire⟩ and ⟨salary,⟩ not revenge. 84  
 He took my father grossly, full of bread, 85  
 With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May; 86  
 And how his audit stands who knows save heaven. 87  
 But in our circumstance and course of thought 88  
'Tis heavy with him. And am I then revenged 89

To take him in the purging of his soul, 90  
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage? 91  
No. 92  
Up sword, and know thou a more horrid hent. 93

*「He sheathes his sword.」*

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage, 94  
Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed, 95  
At game, a-swearing, or about some act 96  
That has no relish of salvation in 't— 97  
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven, 98  
And that his soul may be as damned and black 99  
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays. 100  
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. 101

*「Hamlet」 exits.*

KING, *「rising」*

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below; 102  
Words without thoughts never to heaven go. 103

*He exits.*

#### 「Scene 4」

*Enter 〈Queen〉 and Polonius.*

POLONIUS

He will come straight. Look you lay home to him. 1  
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear 2  
with 3  
And that your Grace hath screened and stood 4  
between 5  
Much heat and him. I'll silence me even here. 6  
Pray you, be round 〈with him. 7

HAMLET, *within* Mother, mother, mother!〉 8

QUEEN I'll 〈warrant〉 you. Fear me not. Withdraw, 9  
I hear him coming. 10

「Polonius hides behind the arras.」

*Enter Hamlet.*

HAMLET Now, mother, what's the matter? 11

QUEEN

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended. 12

HAMLET

Mother, you have my father much offended. 13

QUEEN

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue. 14

HAMLET

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue. 15

QUEEN

Why, how now, Hamlet? 16

HAMLET What's the matter now? 17

QUEEN

Have you forgot me? 18

HAMLET No, by the rood, not so. 19

You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife, 20

And (would it were not so) you are my mother. 21

QUEEN

Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak. 22

HAMLET

Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge. 23

You go not till I set you up a glass 24

Where you may see the <inmost> part of you. 25

QUEEN

What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me? 26

Help, ho! 27

POLONIUS, 「behind the arras」 What ho! Help! 28

HAMLET

How now, a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead. 29

「He <kills Polonius> by thrusting a rapier through the  
arras.」

POLONIUS, 「behind the arras」

O, I am slain! 30

QUEEN	O, me, what hast thou done?	31
HAMLET	Nay, I know not. Is it the King?	32
QUEEN	O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!	33
HAMLET	A bloody deed—almost as bad, good mother, As kill a king and marry with his brother.	34 35
QUEEN	As kill a king?	36
HAMLET	Ay, lady, it was my word. <i>「He pulls Polonius' body from behind the arras.」</i>	37
	Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell.	38
	I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune.	39
	Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.	40
	<i>「To Queen.」</i> <u>Leave</u> wringing of your hands. Peace, sit you down,	41 42
	And let me wring your heart; for so I shall	43
	If it be made of penetrable stuff,	44
	If <u>damnèd custom</u> have not brazed it so	45
	That it be <u>proof</u> and bulwark against <u>sense</u> .	46
QUEEN	What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue In noise so rude against me?	47 48
HAMLET	Such an act	49
	That <u>blurs</u> the grace and blush of modesty,	50
	Calls virtue hypocrite, <u>takes off the rose</u> <u>From the fair forehead of an innocent love</u> <u>And sets a blister there</u> , makes marriage vows	51 52 53
	As false as dicers' oaths—O, such a deed	54
	As from the body of <u>contraction</u> plucks	55
	The very soul, and sweet religion makes	56
	A <u>rhapsody</u> of words! <u>Heaven's face does glow</u> O'er <u>this solidity and compound mass</u> With heated visage, as <u>against the doom</u> , <u>Is thought-sick</u> at the act.	57 58 59 60

QUEEN	Ay me, what act	61
	<u>That roars so loud and thunders in the index?</u>	62
HAMLET		
	Look here upon this picture and on this,	63
	The <u>counterfeit presentment</u> of two brothers.	64
	See what a grace was seated on this brow,	65
	<u>Hyperion's</u> curls, the <u>front</u> of Jove himself,	66
	An eye like <u>Mars'</u> to threaten and command,	67
	<u>A station like the herald Mercury</u>	68
	New-lighted on a <heaven>-kissing hill,	69
	A <u>combination</u> and a form indeed	70
	Where every god did seem to set his seal	71
	To give the world assurance of a man.	72
	This was your husband. Look you now what follows.	73
	Here is your husband, like a mildewed <u>ear</u>	74
	<u>Blasting his</u> wholesome brother. Have you eyes?	75
	Could you on this fair mountain <u>leave to feed</u>	76
	And <u>batten</u> on this <u>moor?</u> Ha! Have you eyes?	77
	You cannot call it love, for at your age	78
	The <u>heyday</u> in the <u>blood</u> is tame, it's humble	79
	And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment	80
	Would step from this to this? [ <u>Sense</u> sure you have,	81
	Else could you not have motion; but sure that sense	82
	Is <u>apoplexed</u> ; for madness would not err,	83
	Nor <u>sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd</u> ,	84
	But it reserved some quantity of choice	85
	To serve in such a difference.] What devil was 't	86
	That thus hath <u>cozened</u> you at <u>hoodman-blind?</u>	87
	[Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,	88
	Ears without hands or eyes, smelling <u>sans all</u> ,	89
	Or but a sickly part of one true sense	90
	Could not <u>so mope</u> .] O shame, where is thy blush?	91
	Rebellious hell,	92
	If thou canst <u>mutine</u> in a matron's bones,	93

	To flaming youth let virtue <u>be as wax</u>	94
	<u>And melt in her own fire. Proclaim no shame</u>	95
	<u>When the compulsive ardor gives the charge,</u>	96
	<u>Since frost itself as actively doth burn,</u>	97
	<u>And reason &lt;panders&gt; will.</u>	98
QUEEN	O Hamlet, speak no more!	99
	Thou turn'st my eyes into my <very> soul,	100
	And there I see such black and <grainèd> spots	101
	As will <not> <u>leave their tinct.</u>	102
HAMLET	Nay, but to live	103
	In the rank sweat of an <u>enseamèd</u> bed,	104
	Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love	105
	Over the nasty sty!	106
QUEEN	O, speak to me no more!	107
	These words like daggers enter in my ears.	108
	No more, sweet Hamlet!	109
HAMLET	A murderer and a villain,	110
	A slave that is not twentieth part the <tithe>	111
	Of your precedent lord; <u>a vice of kings,</u>	112
	A <u>cutpurse</u> of the empire and the rule,	113
	That from a shelf the precious diadem stole	114
	And put it in his pocket—	115
QUEEN	No more!	116
HAMLET	A king of shreds and patches—	117
	<i>Enter Ghost.</i>	
	Save me and hover o'er me with your wings,	118
	You heavenly guards!—What would your gracious	119
	figure?	120
QUEEN	Alas, he's mad.	121
HAMLET	Do you not come your tardy son to chide,	122
	That, <u>lapsed in time and passion,</u> lets go by	123
	Th' <u>important</u> acting of your dread command?	124
	O, say!	125

GHOST Do not forget. This visitation 126  
 Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose. 127  
 But look, amazement on thy mother sits. 128  
 O, step between her and her fighting soul. 129  
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works. 130  
 Speak to her, Hamlet. 131  
 HAMLET How is it with you, lady? 132  
 QUEEN Alas, how is 't with you, 133  
 That you do bend your eye on vacancy 134  
 And with th' incorporal air do hold discourse? 135  
 Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep, 136  
 And, as the sleeping soldiers in th' alarm, 137  
 Your bedded hair, like life in excrements, 138  
 Start up and stand an end. O gentle son, 139  
 Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper 140  
 Sprinkle cool patience! Whereon do you look? 141  
 HAMLET  
 On him, on him! Look you how pale he glares. 142  
 His form and cause conjoined, preaching to stones, 143  
 Would make them capable. 'To the Ghost.' Do not 144  
 look upon me, 145  
 Lest with this piteous action you convert 146  
 My stern effects. Then what I have to do 147  
 Will want true color—tears perchance for blood. 148  
 QUEEN To whom do you speak this? 149  
 HAMLET Do you see nothing there? 150  
 QUEEN  
 Nothing at all; yet all that is I see. 151  
 HAMLET Nor did you nothing hear? 152  
 QUEEN No, nothing but ourselves. 153  
 HAMLET  
 Why, look you there, look how it steals away! 154  
 My father, in his habit as he lived! 155  
 Look where he goes even now out at the portal! 156

*Ghost exits.*

QUEEN

This is the very coinage of your brain. 157

This bodiless creation ecstasy 158

Is very cunning in. 159

HAMLET                    〈Ecstasy?〉 160

My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time 161

And makes as healthful music. It is not madness 162

That I have uttered. Bring me to the test, 163

And 〈I〉 the matter will reword, which madness 164

Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace, 165

Lay not that flattering unction to your soul 166

That not your trespass but my madness speaks. 167

It will but skin and film the ulcerous place, 168

Whiles rank corruption, mining all within, 169

Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven, 170

Repent what's past, avoid what is to come, 171

And do not spread the compost on the weeds 172

To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue, 173

For, in the fatness of these pursy times, 174

Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg, 175

Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good. 176

QUEEN

O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain! 177

HAMLET

O, throw away the worser part of it, 178

And 〈live〉 the purer with the other half! 179

Good night. But go not to my uncle's bed. 180

Assume a virtue if you have it not. 181

[That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat, 182

Of habits devil, is angel yet in this, 183

That to the use of actions fair and good 184

He likewise gives a frock or livery 185

That aptly is put on.] Refrain 〈tonight,〉 186

And that shall lend a kind of easiness 187

To the next abstinence, [the next more easy; 188

For use almost can change the stamp of nature	189
And <u>either</u> 「...」 <u>the devil</u> or throw him out	190
With wondrous <u>potency</u> .] Once more, good night,	191
And, when you are desirous to be blest,	192
I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord	193
<i>「Pointing to Polonius.」</i>	
I do repent; but heaven hath pleased it so	194
To punish me with this and this with me,	195
That I must be <u>their scourge</u> and <u>minister</u> .	196
I will bestow him and will <u>answer well</u>	197
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.	198
I must be cruel only to be kind.	199
This bad begins, and worse <u>remains behind</u> .	200
[One word more, good lady.]	201
QUEEN What shall I do?	202
HAMLET	
<u>Not this by no means</u> that I bid you do:	203
Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed,	204
Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse,	205
And let him, for a pair of <u>reechy</u> kisses	206
Or paddling in your neck with his damned fingers,	207
Make you to ravel all this matter out	208
That I essentially am not in madness,	209
But <u>mad in craft</u> . <u>'Twere good you let him know</u> ,	210
For who that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,	211
Would from a <u>paddock</u> , from a bat, a <u>gib</u> ,	212
<u>Such dear concernings</u> hide? Who would do so?	213
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,	214
<u>Unpeg the basket on the house's top,</u>	215
<u>Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape,</u>	216
<u>To try conclusions, in the basket creep</u>	217
<u>And break your own neck down.</u>	218
QUEEN	
Be thou assured, if words be made of breath	219

And breath of life, I have no life to breathe	220
What thou hast said to me.	221
HAMLET	
I must to England, you know that.	222
QUEEN	Alack,
I had forgot! 'Tis so concluded on.	224
HAMLET	
[There's letters sealed; and my two schoolfellows,	225
Whom I will trust as I will adders fanged,	226
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way	227
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work,	228
For 'tis the sport <u>to have the engineer</u>	229
<u>Hoist with his own petard; and 't shall go hard</u>	230
<u>But I will</u> delve one yard below their <u>mines</u>	231
And blow them at the moon. O, 'tis most sweet	232
When in one line two crafts directly meet.]	233
This man shall set me <u>packing</u> .	234
I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room.	235
Mother, good night indeed. This counselor	236
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,	237
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.—	238
Come, sir, <u>to draw toward an end with you</u> .—	239
Good night, mother.	240

「They」 exit, (Hamlet tugging in Polonius.)



*The Tragedy of*  
**HAMLET,**  
*Prince of Denmark*

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ACT 4



## 「ACT 4」

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### 「Scene 1」

*Enter King and Queen, with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

KING

There's matter in these sighs; these profound heaves 1  
You must translate; 'tis fit we understand them. 2  
Where is your son? 3

QUEEN

[Bestow this place on us a little while.] 4

*「Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit.」*

Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen tonight! 5

KING What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet? 6

QUEEN

Mad as the sea and wind when both contend 7  
Which is the mightier. In his lawless fit, 8  
Behind the arras hearing something stir, 9  
Whips out his rapier, cries "A rat, a rat," 10  
And in this brainish apprehension kills 11  
The unseen good old man. 12

KING O heavy deed! 13

It had been so with us, had we been there. 14  
His liberty is full of threats to all— 15  
To you yourself, to us, to everyone. 16  
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answered? 17  
It will be laid to us, whose providence 18  
Should have kept short, restrained, and out of haunt 19  
This mad young man. But so much was our love, 20  
We would not understand what was most fit, 21

But, like the owner of a foul disease,	22
To keep it from <u>divulging</u> , let it feed	23
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?	24
QUEEN	
To draw apart the body he hath killed,	25
O'er whom his very madness, <u>like some ore</u>	26
<u>Among a mineral of metals base,</u>	27
Shows itself pure: he weeps for what is done.	28
KING O Gertrude, come away!	29
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch	30
But we will ship him hence; and this vile deed	31
We must <u>with all our majesty and skill</u>	32
<u>Both countenance and excuse</u> .—Ho, Guildenstern!	33
<i>Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.</i>	
Friends both, go <u>join you with some further aid</u> .	34
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,	35
And from his mother's closet hath he ⟨dragged⟩ him.	36
Go seek him out, speak fair, and bring the body	37
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.	38
<i>⟨Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit.⟩</i>	
Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends	39
And let them know both what we mean to do	40
<u>And what's untimely done</u> . 「 . . . 」	41
[Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,	42
<u>As level as the cannon to his blank</u>	43
Transports his poisoned shot, may miss our name	44
And hit the woundless air.] O, come away!	45
My soul is full of discord and dismay.	46
<i>They exit.</i>	

「Scene 2」

*⟨Enter Hamlet.⟩*

HAMLET	Safely stowed.	1
⟨GENTLEMEN, <i>within</i>	Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!⟩	2
HAMLET	But <u>soft</u> , what noise? Who calls on Hamlet?	3
	O, here they come.	4
<i>Enter Rosencrantz, ⟨Guildestern,⟩ and others.</i>		
ROSENCRANTZ		
	What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?	5
HAMLET		
	⟨Compounded⟩ it with <u>dust, whereto 'tis kin</u> .	6
ROSENCRANTZ		
	Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence	7
	And bear it to the chapel.	8
HAMLET	Do not believe it.	9
ROSENCRANTZ	Believe what?	10
HAMLET	That I can keep your counsel and not mine	11
	own. Besides, <u>to be demanded of a sponge, what</u>	12
	<u>replication</u> should be made by the son of a king?	13
ROSENCRANTZ	Take you me for a sponge, my lord?	14
HAMLET	Ay, sir, that soaks up the King's <u>countenance</u> ,	15
	his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the	16
	King best service in the end. He keeps them <u>like ⟨an</u>	17
	<u>ape⟩ an apple</u> in the corner of his jaw, first mouthed,	18
	to be last swallowed. When he needs what you have	19
	gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you	20
	shall be dry again.	21
ROSENCRANTZ	I understand you not, my lord.	22
HAMLET	I am glad of it. A <u>knaveish</u> speech <u>sleeps in</u> a	23
	foolish ear.	24
ROSENCRANTZ	My lord, you must tell us where the	25
	body is and go with us to the King.	26
HAMLET	The body is with the King, but the King is not	27
	with the body. The King is a thing—	28
GUILDENSTERN	A “thing,” my lord?	29
HAMLET	Of nothing. Bring me to him. ⟨ <u>Hide fox, and</u>	30

all after!>

31

*They exit.*

「Scene 3」

*Enter King and two or three.*

KING

I have sent to seek him and to find the body. 1  
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose! 2  
Yet must not we put the strong law on him. 3  
He's loved of the distracted multitude, 4  
Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes; 5  
And where 'tis so, th' offender's scourge is weighed, 6  
But never the offense. To bear all smooth and even, 7  
This sudden sending him away must seem 8  
Deliberate pause. Diseases desperate grown 9  
By desperate appliance are relieved 10  
Or not at all. 11

*Enter Rosencrantz.*

How now, what hath befallen? 12

ROSENCRANTZ

Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord, 13  
We cannot get from him. 14

KING But where is he? 15

ROSENCRANTZ

Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure. 16

KING

Bring him before us. 17

ROSENCRANTZ Ho! Bring in the lord. 18

*They enter 「with Hamlet.」*

KING Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius? 19

HAMLET At supper. 20

KING	At supper where?	21
HAMLET	Not where he eats, but where he is eaten. A	22
	certain <u>convocation of politic worms</u> are e'en at	23
	him. <u>Your worm</u> is your only emperor for diet. We	24
	fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves	25
	for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar <u>is</u>	26
	<u>but variable service</u> —two dishes but to one table.	27
	That's the end.	28
[KING	Alas, alas!	29
HAMLET	A man may fish with the worm that hath eat	30
	of a king and eat of the fish that hath fed of that	31
	worm.]	32
KING	What dost thou mean by this?	33
HAMLET	Nothing but to show you how a king may go a	34
	<u>progress</u> through the guts of a beggar.	35
KING	Where is Polonius?	36
HAMLET	In heaven. Send thither to see. If your mes-	37
	senger find him not there, seek him i' th' other	38
	place yourself. But if, indeed, you find him not	39
	within this month, you shall nose him as you go up	40
	the stairs into the lobby.	41
KING,	<sup>1</sup> <i>to Attendants.</i> Go, seek him there.	42
HAMLET	He will stay till you come.	43
	<i>Attendants exit.</i> <sup>1</sup>	
KING		
	Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety	44
	( <u>Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve</u>	45
	For that which thou hast done) must send thee	46
	hence	47
	⟨With fiery quickness.⟩ Therefore prepare thyself.	48
	The <u>bark</u> is ready, and the wind <u>at help</u> ,	49
	Th' associates <u>tend</u> , and everything is <u>bent</u>	50
	For England.	51
HAMLET	For England?	52

KING	Ay, Hamlet.	53
HAMLET	Good.	54
KING		
	So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.	55
HAMLET		
	<u>I see a cherub that sees them.</u> But come, for	56
	England.	57
	Farewell, dear mother.	58
KING	Thy loving father, Hamlet.	59
HAMLET		
	My mother. Father and mother is man and wife,	60
	Man and wife is one flesh, <and> so, my mother.—	61
	Come, for England.	62
	<i>He exits.</i>	
KING		
	Follow him <u>at foot</u> ; <u>tempt</u> him with speed aboard.	63
	Delay it not. I'll have him hence tonight.	64
	Away, for <u>everything is sealed and done</u>	65
	<u>That else leans on th' affair.</u> Pray you, make haste.	66
	<i>「All but the King exit.」</i>	
	And <u>England</u> , if my love thou hold'st at aught	67
	( <u>As my great power thereof may give thee sense</u> ,	68
	Since yet thy <u>cicatrice</u> looks raw and red	69
	After the Danish sword, and <u>thy free awe</u>	70
	<u>Pays homage to us</u> ), thou mayst not <u>coldly set</u>	71
	<u>Our sovereign process</u> , which <u>imports</u> at full,	72
	By letters <u>congruing</u> to that effect,	73
	The <u>present</u> death of Hamlet. Do it, England,	74
	For like <u>the hectic</u> in my blood he rages,	75
	And thou must cure me. Till I know 'tis done,	76
	<u>Howe'er my haps</u> , my joys will ne'er begin.	77
	<i>He exits.</i>	

「Scene 4」

*Enter Fortinbras with his army over the stage.*

FORTINBRAS

Go, Captain, from me greet the Danish king. 1  
Tell him that by his license Fortinbras 2  
Craves the conveyance of a promised march 3  
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous. 4  
If that his Majesty would aught with us, 5  
We shall express our duty in his eye; 6  
And let him know so. 7

CAPTAIN I will do 't, my lord. 8

FORTINBRAS Go softly on. 9

*「All but the Captain exit.」*

*[Enter Hamlet, Rosencrantz, 「Guildenstern,」 and others.]*

HAMLET Good sir, whose powers are these? 10

CAPTAIN They are of Norway, sir. 11

HAMLET How purposed, sir, I pray you? 12

CAPTAIN Against some part of Poland. 13

HAMLET Who commands them, sir? 14

CAPTAIN  
The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras. 15

HAMLET  
Goes it against the main of Poland, sir, 16  
Or for some frontier? 17

CAPTAIN  
Truly to speak, and with no addition, 18  
We go to gain a little patch of ground 19  
That hath in it no profit but the name. 20  
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it; 21  
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole 22  
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee. 23

HAMLET  
Why, then, the Polack never will defend it. 24

CAPTAIN  
Yes, it is already garrisoned. 25

HAMLET

Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats 26

Will not debate the question of this straw. 27

This is th' impostume of much wealth and peace, 28

That inward breaks and shows no cause without 29

Why the man dies.—I humbly thank you, sir. 30

CAPTAIN God be wi' you, sir. 31

*「He exits.」*

ROSENCRANTZ Will 't please you go, my lord? 32

HAMLET

I'll be with you straight. Go a little before. 33

*「All but Hamlet exit.」*

How all occasions do inform against me 34

And spur my dull revenge. What is a man 35

If his chief good and market of his time 36

Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more. 37

Sure He that made us with such large discourse, 38

Looking before and after, gave us not 39

That capability and godlike reason 40

To fust in us unused. Now whether it be 41

Bestial oblivion or some craven scruple 42

Of thinking too precisely on th' event 43

(A thought which, quartered, hath but one part 44

wisdom 45

And ever three parts coward), I do not know 46

Why yet I live to say "This thing's to do," 47

Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means 48

To do 't. Examples gross as Earth exhort me: 49

Witness this army of such mass and charge, 50

Led by a delicate and tender prince, 51

Whose spirit with divine ambition puffed 52

Makes mouths at the invisible event, 53

Exposing what is mortal and unsure 54

To all that fortune, death, and danger dare, 55

Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great 56

Is not to stir without great argument, 57  
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw 58  
When honor's at the stake. How stand I, then, 59  
 That have a father killed, a mother stained, 60  
Excitements of my reason and my blood, 61  
 And let all sleep, while to my shame I see 62  
 The imminent death of twenty thousand men 63  
 That for a fantasy and trick of fame 64  
 Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot 65  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause, 66  
Which is not tomb enough and continent 67  
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth 68  
 My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth! 69

*He exits.]*

「Scene 5」

*Enter Horatio, 〈Queen,〉 and a Gentleman.*

QUEEN I will not speak with her. 1  
 GENTLEMAN She is importunate, 2  
 Indeed distract; her mood will needs be pitied. 3  
 QUEEN What would she have? 4  
 GENTLEMAN  
 She speaks much of her father, says she hears 5  
 There's tricks i' th' world, and hems, and beats her 6  
 heart, 7  
Spurns enviously at straws, speaks things in doubt 8  
 That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing, 9  
Yet the unshapèd use of it doth move 10  
The hearers to collection. They 〈aim〉 at it 11  
 And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts; 12  
 Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield 13  
 them, 14

Indeed would make one think there might be	15
thought,	16
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.	17
HORATIO	
'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may	18
strew	19
Dangerous conjectures in <u>ill-breeding</u> minds.	20
「QUEEN」 Let her come in.	21
	「Gentleman exits.」
「Aside.」 To my sick soul ( <u>as sin's true nature is</u> ),	22
Each <u>toy</u> seems prologue to some great <u>amiss</u> .	23
So full of <u>artless jealousy</u> is guilt,	24
It <u>spills</u> itself in fearing to be <u>spilt</u> .	25
	〈Enter Ophelia <u>distracted</u> .〉
OPHELIA	
Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark?	26
QUEEN How now, Ophelia?	27
OPHELIA 「sings」	
<u>How should I your true love know</u>	28
<u>From another one?</u>	29
<u>By his cockle hat and staff</u>	30
<u>And his sandal shoon.</u>	31
QUEEN	
Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?	32
OPHELIA Say you? Nay, pray you, mark.	33
「Sings.」 <i>He is dead and gone, lady,</i>	34
<i>He is dead and gone;</i>	35
<i>At his head a grass-green turf,</i>	36
<i>At his heels a stone.</i>	37
Oh, ho!	38
QUEEN Nay, but Ophelia—	39
OPHELIA Pray you, mark.	40
「Sings.」 <i>White his shroud as the mountain snow—</i>	41

*Enter King.*

QUEEN Alas, look here, my lord. 42

OPHELIA 「sings」

*Larded all with sweet flowers;* 43

*Which bewept to the ground did not go* 44

*With true-love showers.* 45

KING How do you, pretty lady? 46

OPHELIA Well, God dild you. They say the owl was a 47

baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are but 48

know not what we may be. God be at your table. 49

KING Conceit upon her father. 50

OPHELIA Pray let's have no words of this, but when 51

they ask you what it means, say you this: 52

「Sings.」 Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day, 53

All in the morning betime, 54

And I a maid at your window, 55

To be your Valentine. 56

Then up he rose and donned his clothes 57

And dupp'd the chamber door, 58

Let in the maid, that out a maid 59

Never departed more. 60

KING Pretty Ophelia— 61

OPHELIA

Indeed, without an oath, I'll make an end on 't: 62

「Sings.」 By Gis and by Saint Charity, 63

*Alack and fie for shame,* 64

*Young men will do 't, if they come to 't;* 65

*By Cock, they are to blame.* 66

*Quoth she "Before you tumbled me,* 67

*You promised me to wed."* 68

He answers: 69

*"So would I 'a done, by yonder sun,* 70

*An thou hadst not come to my bed."* 71

KING How long hath she been thus? 72

OPHELIA I hope all will be well. We must be patient, 73  
but I cannot choose but weep to think they would 74  
lay him i' th' cold ground. My brother shall know of 75  
it. And so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, 76  
my coach! Good night, ladies, good night, sweet 77  
ladies, good night, good night. 78

⟨*She exits.*⟩

KING

Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you. 79

「*Horatio exits.*」

O, this is the poison of deep grief. It springs 80  
All from her father's death, and now behold! 81  
O Gertrude, Gertrude, 82  
When sorrows come, they come not single spies, 83  
But in battalions: first, her father slain; 84  
Next, your son gone, and he most violent author 85  
Of his own just remove; the people muddled, 86  
Thick, and unwholesome in ⟨their⟩ thoughts and 87  
whispers 88  
For good Polonius' death, and we have done but 89  
greenly 90  
In hugger-mugger to inter him; poor Ophelia 91  
Divided from herself and her fair judgment, 92  
Without the which we are pictures or mere beasts; 93  
Last, and as much containing as all these, 94  
Her brother is in secret come from France, 95  
Feeds on ⟨his⟩ wonder, keeps himself in clouds, 96  
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear 97  
With pestilent speeches of his father's death, 98  
Wherein necessity, of matter beggared, 99  
Will nothing stick our person to arraign 100  
In ear and ear. O, my dear Gertrude, this, 101  
Like to a murd'ring piece, in many places 102  
Gives me superfluous death. 103

*A noise within.*

⟨QUEEN Alack, what noise is this?⟩ 104

KING Attend! 105

Where is my Switzers? Let them guard the door. 106

*Enter a Messenger.*

What is the matter? 107

MESSENGER Save yourself, my lord. 108

The ocean, overpeering of his list, 109

Eats not the flats with more impiteous haste 110

Than young Laertes, in a riotous head, 111

O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him "lord," 112

And, as the world were now but to begin, 113

Antiquity forgot, custom not known, 114

The ratifiers and props of every word, 115

⟨They⟩ cry "Choose we, Laertes shall be king!" 116

Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds, 117

"Laertes shall be king! Laertes king!" 118

*A noise within.*

QUEEN

How cheerfully on the false trail they cry. 119

O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs! 120

KING The doors are broke. 121

*Enter Laertes with others.*

LAERTES

Where is this king?—Sirs, stand you all without. 122

ALL No, let's come in! 123

LAERTES I pray you, give me leave. 124

ALL We will, we will. 125

LAERTES

I thank you. Keep the door. 「*Followers exit.*」 O, thou 126

vile king, 127

Give me my father! 128

QUEEN Calmly, good Laertes. 129

LAERTES

That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me	130
bastard,	131
Cries " <u>cuckold</u> " to my father, brands the harlot	132
Even here between the chaste unsmirchèd brow	133
Of my <u>true</u> mother.	134
KING                      What is the cause, Laertes,	135
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?—	136
Let him go, Gertrude. Do not <u>fear our</u> person.	137
There's such divinity doth <u>hedge</u> a king	138
That treason can but peep to what it <u>would</u> ,	139
Acts little of <u>his</u> will.—Tell me, Laertes,	140
Why thou art thus incensed.—Let him go,	141
Gertrude.—	142
Speak, man.	143
LAERTES    Where is my father?	144
KING    Dead.	145
QUEEN	
But not by him.	146
KING                      Let him demand his fill.	147
LAERTES	
How came he dead? I'll not be <u>juggled with</u> .	148
To hell, allegiance! Vows, to the blackest devil!	149
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!	150
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,	151
That <u>both the worlds I give to negligence</u> ,	152
Let come what comes, only I'll be revenged	153
Most <u>thoroughly</u> for my father.	154
KING    Who shall stay you?	155
LAERTES    My will, not all the ⟨world.⟩	156
<u>And for</u> my means, I'll husband them so well	157
They shall go far with little.	158
KING                      Good Laertes,	159
If you desire to know the <u>certainty</u>	160
<u>Of</u> your dear father, is 't writ in your revenge	161

That, <u>swoopstake</u> , you will draw both friend and	162
foe,	163
Winner and loser?	164
LAERTES None but his enemies.	165
KING Will you know them, then?	166
LAERTES	
To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms	167
And, like the kind <u>life-rend'ring pelican</u> ,	168
Repast them with my blood.	169
KING Why, now you speak	170
Like a good child and a true gentleman.	171
That I am guiltless of your father's death	172
And am most <u>sensibly</u> in grief for it,	173
It shall as <u>level</u> to your judgment 'pear	174
As day does to your eye.	175
A noise within: <" <u>Let her come in!</u> "	176
LAERTES> How now, what noise is that?	177
<i>Enter Ophelia.</i>	
O heat, dry up my brains! Tears seven times salt	178
Burn out the sense and <u>virtue</u> of mine eye!	179
By heaven, thy madness shall be <u>paid with weight</u>	180
<u>Till our scale turn the beam!</u> O rose of May,	181
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!	182
O heavens, is 't possible a young maid's wits	183
Should be as mortal as <an old> man's life?	184
<Nature is <u>fine in</u> love, and, where 'tis fine,	185
It sends some precious <u>instance of itself</u>	186
After the thing it loves.>	187
OPHELIA 「sings」	
<u>They bore him barefaced on the bier,</u>	188
<u>&lt;Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny,&gt;</u>	189
<u>And in his grave rained many a tear.</u>	190
Fare you well, my dove.	191
LAERTES	

	Hadst thou thy wits and didst persuade revenge,	192
	It could not <u>move thus</u> .	193
OPHELIA	<u>You must sing “A-down a-down”—and you</u>	194
	<u>“Call him a-down-a.”</u> —O, how <u>the wheel</u> becomes	195
	it! It is the <u>false steward</u> that stole his master’s	196
	daughter.	197
LAERTES	<u>This nothing’s more than matter</u> .	198
OPHELIA	<u>There’s rosemary</u> , that’s for remembrance.	199
	Pray you, love, remember. And there is pansies,	200
	that’s for thoughts.	201
LAERTES	A <u>document</u> in madness: <u>thoughts and re-</u>	202
	<u>membrance fitted</u> .	203
OPHELIA	There’s <u>fennel</u> for you, and columbines.	204
	There’s <u>rue</u> for you, and here’s some for me; we	205
	may call it herb of grace o’ Sundays. You ⟨must⟩ wear	206
	your rue with <u>a difference</u> . There’s a <u>daisy</u> . I would	207
	give you some <u>violets</u> , but they withered all when	208
	my father died. They say he made a good end.	209
	「Sings.」 <i>For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.</i>	210
LAERTES		
	<u>Thought</u> and afflictions, <u>passion</u> , hell itself	211
	She turns to favor and to prettiness.	212
OPHELIA	「sings」	
	<u>And will he not come again?</u>	213
	<u>And will he not come again?</u>	214
	<u>No, no, he is dead.</u>	215
	<u>Go to thy deathbed.</u>	216
	<u>He never will come again.</u>	217
	 <u>His beard was as white as snow,</u>	218
	<u>⟨All⟩ flaxen was his poll.</u>	219
	<u>He is gone, he is gone,</u>	220
	<u>And we cast away moan.</u>	221
	<u>God ’a mercy on his soul.</u>	222

And of all Christians' souls, <I pray God.> God be	223
wi' you.	224
	<i>&lt;She exits.&gt;</i>
LAERTES Do you <see> this, O God?	225
KING	
Laertes, I must <u>commune with</u> your grief,	226
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,	227
Make choice of <u>whom your</u> wisest friends you will,	228
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.	229
If by direct or <u>by collateral hand</u>	230
They <u>find us touched</u> , we will our kingdom give,	231
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,	232
To you <u>in satisfaction</u> ; but if not,	233
Be you content to lend your patience to us,	234
And we shall jointly labor with your soul	235
To give it due content.	236
LAERTES Let this be so.	237
His means of death, his obscure funeral	238
(No trophy, sword, nor <u>hatchment</u> o'er his bones,	239
No noble rite nor formal <u>ostentation</u> )	240
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,	241
<u>That</u> I must call 't in question.	242
KING So you shall,	243
And where th' offense is, <u>let the great ax fall</u> .	244
I pray you, go with me.	245
	<i>They exit.</i>

「Scene 6」

*Enter Horatio and others.*

HORATIO What are they that would speak with me?	1
GENTLEMAN Seafaring men, sir. They say they have	2
letters for you.	3

HORATIO Let them come in. *「Gentleman exits.」* I do not  
know from what part of the world I should be  
greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

*Enter Sailors.*

SAILOR God bless you, sir.

HORATIO Let Him bless thee too.

SAILOR He shall, sir, *⟨an't⟩* please Him. There's a letter  
for you, sir. It came from *th' ambassador* that was  
bound for England—if your name be Horatio, as I  
am let to know it is.

*「He hands Horatio a letter.」*

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

*⟨He⟩ that thou knowest thine,  
Hamlet.*

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

*They exit.*

「Scene 7」

*Enter King and Laertes.*

KING

Now must your conscience my acquittance seal, 1  
And you must put me in your heart for friend, 2  
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear, 3  
That he which hath your noble father slain 4  
Pursued my life. 5

LAERTES

It well appears. But tell me 6  
Why you 〈proceeded〉 not against these feats, 7  
So criminal and so capital in nature, 8  
As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things else, 9  
You mainly were stirred up. 10

KING O, for two special reasons, 11

Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinewed, 12  
But yet to me they're strong. The Queen his mother 13  
Lives almost by his looks, and for myself 14  
(My virtue or my plague, be it either which), 15  
She is so 〈conjunctive〉 to my life and soul 16  
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere, 17  
I could not but by her. The other motive 18  
Why to a public count I might not go 19  
Is the great love the general gender bear him, 20  
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection, 21  
Work like the spring that turneth wood to stone, 22  
Convert his gyves to graces, so that my arrows, 23  
Too slightly timbered for so 〈loud a wind,〉 24  
Would have reverted to my bow again, 25  
But not where I have aimed them. 26

LAERTES

And so have I a noble father lost, 27

A sister driven into desp'rate <u>terms</u> ,	28
Whose worth, <u>if praises may go back again</u> ,	29
<u>Stood challenger on mount of all the age</u>	30
<u>For her perfections</u> . But my revenge will come.	31
KING	
Break not your sleeps for that. You must not think	32
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull	33
That we can let our beard be shook with danger	34
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more.	35
I loved your father, and we love ourself,	36
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine—	37
<i>Enter a Messenger with letters.</i>	
⟨How now? What news?⟩	38
MESSENGER Letters, my lord, from	39
Hamlet.⟩	40
These to your Majesty, this to the Queen.	41
KING From Hamlet? Who brought them?	42
MESSENGER	
Sailors, my lord, they say. I saw them not.	43
They were given me by Claudio. He received them	44
[Of him that brought them.]	45
KING Laertes, you shall hear	46
them.—	47
Leave us.	48
<i>⟨Messenger exits.⟩</i>	
「Reads.」 <i>High and mighty, you shall know I am set</i>	49
<u>naked</u> on your kingdom. Tomorrow shall I beg leave to	50
see your kingly eyes, when I shall (first asking ⟨your⟩	51
<u>pardon</u> ) thereunto recount the occasion of my sudden	52
⟨and more strange⟩ return. ⟨Hamlet.⟩	53
What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?	54
Or is it some <u>abuse</u> and no such thing?	55
LAERTES Know you the hand?	56
KING 'Tis Hamlet's <u>character</u> . "Naked"—	57

And in a postscript here, he says “alone.” 58

Can you  $\langle$ advise $\rangle$  me? 59

LAERTES

I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come. 60

It warms the very sickness in my heart 61

That I ⟨shall⟩ live and tell him to his teeth 62

“Thus didst thou.” 63

KING                    If it be so, Laertes

64

(As how should it be so? how otherwise?), 65

Will you be ruled by me? 66

LAERTES                      Ay, my lord,                      67

So you will not o'errule me to a peace. 68

KING

To thine own peace. If he be now returned,

As checking at his voyage, and that he means 70

No more to undertake it, I will work him 71

To an exploit, now ripe in my device, 72

Under the which he shall not choose but fall; 73

And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,

But even his mother shall uncharge the practice 75

And call it accident. 76

[LAERTES    My lord, I will be ruled, 77

The rather if you could devise it so

That I might be the organ. 79

KING                                It falls right.                                80

You have been talked of since your travel much, 81

And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality 82

Wherein they say you shine. Your sum of parts 83

Did not together pluck such envy from him 84

As did that one, and that, in my regard, 85

Of the unworthiest siege. 86

LAERTES    What part is that, my lord? 87

KING

A very ribbon in the cap of youth— 88

Yet needful too, for youth no less becomes 89

The light and careless livery that it wears	90
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,	91
Importing health and graveness.] Two months since	92
Here was a gentleman of Normandy.	93
I have seen myself, and served against, the French,	94
And they can well on horseback, but this gallant	95
Had witchcraft in 't. He grew unto his seat,	96
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse	97
As had he been encorpsed and demi-natured	98
With the brave beast. So far he topped <my> thought	99
That I in forgery of shapes and tricks	100
Come short of what he did.	101
LAERTES    A Norman was 't?	102
KING    A Norman.	103
LAERTES	
Upon my life, Lamord.	104
KING    The very same.	105
LAERTES	
I know him well. He is the brooch indeed	106
And gem of all the nation.	107
KING    He made confession of you	108
And gave you such a masterly report	109
For art and exercise in your defense,	110
And for your rapier most especial,	111
That he cried out 'twould be a sight indeed	112
If one could match you. [The 'scrimers of their	113
nation	114
He swore had neither motion, guard, nor eye,	115
If you opposed them.] Sir, this report of his	116
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy	117
That he could nothing do but wish and beg	118
Your sudden coming-o'er, to play with you.	119
Now out of this—	120
LAERTES    What out of this, my lord?	121
KING	

Laertes, was your father dear to you?	122
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,	123
A face without a heart?	124
LAERTES	125
Why ask you this?	
KING	
Not that I think you did not love your father,	126
But that I know love is begun by time	127
And that I see, in <u>passages of proof</u> ,	128
Time <u>qualifies</u> the spark and fire of it.	129
[There lives within the very flame of love	130
A kind of wick or <u>snuff</u> that will abate it,	131
And nothing <u>is at a like goodness still</u> ;	132
For goodness, growing to <u>a pleurisy</u> ,	133
Dies in <u>his own too-much</u> . <u>That</u> we would do	134
We should do when we would; for this “would”	135
changes	136
And hath abatements and delays as many	137
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;	138
And then this “should” is like a <u>‘spendthrift’ sigh</u> ,	139
<u>That hurts by easing</u> . But <u>to the quick of th’ ulcer</u> .]	140
Hamlet comes back; what would you undertake	141
To show yourself <u>indeed</u> your father’s son	142
More than in words?	143
LAERTES	144
To cut his throat i’ th’ church.	
KING	
No place indeed <u>should murder sanctuarize</u> ;	145
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,	146
Will you do this? <u>Keep close</u> within your chamber.	147
Hamlet, returned, shall know you are come home.	148
We’ll <u>put on those shall</u> praise your excellence	149
And set a double varnish on the fame	150
The Frenchman gave you; bring you, <u>in fine</u> ,	151
together	152
And wager ⟨on⟩ your heads. He, being <u>remiss</u> ,	153

Most generous, and free from all contriving, 154  
Will not peruse the foils, so that with ease, 155  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose 156  
A sword unbated, and in a ⟨pass⟩ of practice 157  
Requite him for your father. 158

LAERTES	I will do 't,	159
	And for <that> purpose I'll anoint my sword.	160
	I bought an unction <u>of a mountebank</u>	161
	So <u>mortal</u> that, but dip a knife in it,	162
	Where it draws blood no <u>cataplasme</u> so rare,	163
	<u>Collected from</u> all <u>simples</u> that have <u>virtue</u>	164
	Under the moon, can save the thing from death	165
	That is but scratched <u>withal</u> . I'll touch my point	166
	With this <u>contagion</u> , that, <u>if I gall him slightly,</u>	167
	<u>It may be death.</u>	168

KING	Let's further think of this,	169
	Weigh what convenience both of time and means	170
	<u>May fit us to our shape</u> . If this should fail,	171
	<u>And that our drift look through our bad</u>	172
	<u>performance</u> ,	173
	'Twere better not assayed. Therefore this project	174
	Should have a <u>back or second</u> that might hold	175
	If this did <u>blast in proof</u> . Soft, let me see.	176
	We'll make a solemn wager on <u>your cunnings</u> —	177
	I ha't!	178
	When in your <u>motion</u> you are hot and dry	179
	(As make your bouts more violent to that end)	180
	And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared	181
	him	182
	A chalice <u>for the nonce</u> , whereon but sipping,	183
	If he by chance escape your <u>venomed stuck</u> ,	184
	Our purpose may hold there.—But stay, what	185
	noise?	186

*Enter Queen.*

QUEEN

One woe doth tread upon another's heel, 187  
So fast they follow. Your sister's drowned, Laertes. 188

LAERTES Drowned? O, where? 189

QUEEN

There is a willow grows askant the brook 190  
That shows his <hoar> leaves in the glassy stream. 191  
Therewith fantastic garlands did she make 192  
Of crowflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples, 193  
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name, 194  
But our cold maids do "dead men's fingers" call 195  
them. 196

There on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds 197  
Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliver broke, 198  
When down her weedy trophies and herself 199  
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide, 200  
And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up, 201  
Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds, 202  
As one incapable of her own distress 203  
Or like a creature native and endued 204  
Unto that element. But long it could not be 205  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink, 206  
Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay 207  
To muddy death. 208

LAERTES Alas, then she is drowned. 209

QUEEN Drowned, drowned. 210

LAERTES

Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia, 211  
And therefore I forbid my tears. But yet 212  
It is our trick; nature her custom holds, 213  
Let shame say what it will. When these are gone, 214  
The woman will be out.—Adieu, my lord. 215  
I have a speech o' fire that fain would blaze, 216  
But that this folly drowns it. 217

*He exits.*

KING	Let's follow, Gertrude.	218
	How much I had to do to calm his rage!	219
	Now fear I this will give it start again.	220
	Therefore, let's follow.	221

*They exit.*



*The Tragedy of*  
**HAMLET,**  
*Prince of Denmark*

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ACT 5



## 「ACT 5」

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### 「Scene 1」

*Enter 「Gravedigger and Another.」*

「GRAVEDIGGER」	Is she to be buried <u>in Christian burial</u> ,	1
	when she willfully seeks her own salvation?	2
OTHER	I tell thee she is. Therefore make her grave	3
	<u>straight</u> . The <u>crowner</u> hath <u>sat on her</u> and <u>finds</u> it	4
	Christian burial.	5
「GRAVEDIGGER」	How can that be, unless she drowned	6
	herself in her own defense?	7
OTHER	Why, 'tis found so.	8
「GRAVEDIGGER」	It must be <i>〈se offendendo〉</i> ; it cannot be	9
	else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself	10
	<u>wittingly</u> , it argues an act, and an act hath three	11
	branches—it is to act, to do, to perform. <i>〈Argal,〉</i> she	12
	drowned herself wittingly.	13
OTHER	Nay, but hear you, <u>goodman</u> delver—	14
「GRAVEDIGGER」	<u>Give me leave</u> . Here lies the water;	15
	good. Here stands the man; good. If the man go to	16
	this water and drown himself, it is ( <u>will he, nill he</u> )	17
	he goes; mark you that. But if the water come to him	18
	and drown him, he drowns not himself. Argal, he	19
	that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his	20
	own life.	21
OTHER	But is this law?	22
「GRAVEDIGGER」	Ay, marry, is 't—crowner's ' <u>quest</u> law.	23
OTHER	Will you ha' the truth on 't? If this had not been	24

a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' 25  
Christian burial. 26

「GRAVEDIGGER」 Why, there thou sayst. And the more 27  
pity that great folk should have count'nance in this 28  
world to drown or hang themselves more than 29  
their even-Christian. Come, my spade. There is no 30  
ancient gentlemen but gard'ners, ditchers, and 31  
grave-makers. They hold up Adam's profession. 32

OTHER Was he a gentleman? 33

「GRAVEDIGGER」 He was the first that ever bore arms. 34

〈OTHER Why, he had none. 35

「GRAVEDIGGER」 What, art a heathen? How dost thou 36  
understand the scripture? The scripture says Adam 37  
dugged. Could he dig without arms?〉 I'll put another 38  
question to thee. If thou answerest me not to the 39  
purpose, confess thyself— 40

OTHER Go to! 41

「GRAVEDIGGER」 What is he that builds stronger than 42  
either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter? 43

OTHER The gallows-maker; for that 〈frame〉 outlives a 44  
thousand tenants. 45

「GRAVEDIGGER」 I like thy wit well, in good faith. The 46  
gallows does well. But how does it well? It does 47  
well to those that do ill. Now, thou dost ill to say the 48  
gallows is built stronger than the church. Argal, the 49  
gallows may do well to thee. To 't again, come. 50

OTHER “Who builds stronger than a mason, a ship- 51  
wright, or a carpenter?” 52

「GRAVEDIGGER」 Ay, tell me that, and unyoke. 53

OTHER Marry, now I can tell. 54

「GRAVEDIGGER」 To 't. 55

OTHER Mass, I cannot tell. 56

〈Enter Hamlet and Horatio afar off.〉

「GRAVEDIGGER」 Cudgel thy brains no more about it, 57  
for your dull ass will not mend his pace with 58  
beating. And, when you are asked this question 59  
next, say “a grave-maker.” The houses he makes 60  
lasts till doomsday. Go, get thee in, and fetch me a 61  
stoup of liquor. 62

*「The Other Man exits and the Gravedigger  
digs and sings.」*

*In youth when I did love, did love,* 63  
*Methought it was very sweet* 64  
*To contract—O—the time for—a—my behove,* 65  
*O, methought there—a—was nothing—a—meet.* 66

HAMLET Has this fellow no feeling of his business? He 67  
sings in grave-making. 68

HORATIO Custom hath made it in him a property of 69  
easiness. 70

HAMLET 'Tis e'en so. The hand of little employment 71  
hath the daintier sense. 72

「GRAVEDIGGER」 *〈sings〉*  
*But age with his stealing steps* 73  
*Hath clawed me in his clutch,* 74  
*And hath shipped me into the land,* 75  
*As if I had never been such.* 76

*「He digs up a skull.」*

HAMLET That skull had a tongue in it and could sing 77  
once. How the knave jowls it to the ground as if 78  
'twere Cain's jawbone, that did the first murder! 79  
This might be the pate of a politician which this ass 80  
now o'erreaches, one that would circumvent God, 81  
might it not? 82

HORATIO It might, my lord. 83

HAMLET Or of a courtier, which could say “Good 84  
morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, sweet lord?” 85  
This might be my Lord Such-a-one that praised my 86

Lord Such-a-one's horse when he went to beg it,	87
might it not?	88
HORATIO Ay, my lord.	89
HAMLET Why, e'en so. And now my Lady Worm's,	90
<u>chapless</u> and knocked about the ⟨mazard⟩ with a	91
sexton's spade. Here's fine revolution, an we had	92
the trick to see 't. Did these bones cost no more the	93
breeding but to play at <u>loggets</u> with them? Mine	94
ache to think on 't.	95
「GRAVEDIGGER」 ⟨sings⟩	
<i>A pickax and a spade, a spade,</i>	96
<i>For and a <u>shrouding</u> sheet,</i>	97
<i>O, a pit of clay for to be made</i>	98
<i>For such a guest is meet.</i>	99
<i>「He digs up more skulls.」</i>	
HAMLET There's another. Why may not that be the	100
skull of a lawyer? Where be his <u>quiddities</u> now, his	101
<u>quillities</u> , his cases, his <u>tenures</u> , and his tricks? Why	102
does he <u>suffer</u> this mad knave now to knock him	103
about the <u>sconce</u> with a dirty shovel and will not tell	104
him of his action of battery? Hum, this fellow might	105
be in 's time a great buyer of land, with <u>his statutes</u> ,	106
<u>his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers</u> ,	107
his recoveries. ⟨Is this <u>the fine</u> of his fines and the	108
recovery of his recoveries,⟩ to have his fine pate full	109
of fine dirt? Will ⟨his⟩ vouchers vouch him no more	110
of his purchases, and ⟨double ones too,⟩ than the	111
length and breadth of a <u>pair of indentures</u> ? The very	112
<u>conveyances</u> of his lands will scarcely lie in <u>this box</u> ,	113
and must th' <u>inheritor</u> himself have no more, ha?	114
HORATIO Not a jot more, my lord.	115
HAMLET Is not parchment made of sheepskins?	116
HORATIO Ay, my lord, and of calves' skins too.	117
HAMLET They are sheep and calves which seek out	118

assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow.—	119
Whose grave's this, <u>sirrah</u> ?	120
「GRAVEDIGGER」 Mine, sir.	121
「Sings.」 <i>〈O,〉 a pit of clay for to be made</i>	122
<i>〈For such a guest is meet.〉</i>	123
HAMLET I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in 't.	124
「GRAVEDIGGER」 You lie <u>out on 't</u> , sir, and therefore 'tis	125
not yours. For my part, I do not lie in 't, yet it is	126
mine.	127
HAMLET Thou dost lie in 't, to be in 't and say it is thine.	128
'Tis for the dead, not for the <u>quick</u> ; therefore thou	129
liest.	130
「GRAVEDIGGER」 'Tis a <u>quick</u> lie, sir; 'twill away again	131
from me to you.	132
HAMLET What man dost thou dig it for?	133
「GRAVEDIGGER」 For no man, sir.	134
HAMLET What woman then?	135
「GRAVEDIGGER」 For none, neither.	136
HAMLET Who is to be buried in 't?	137
「GRAVEDIGGER」 One that was a woman, sir, but, rest	138
her soul, she's dead.	139
HAMLET How <u>absolute</u> the knave is! We must speak <u>by</u>	140
<u>the card</u> , or equivocation will undo us. By the	141
Lord, Horatio, this three years I have took note of	142
it: <u>the age is grown so picked that the toe of the</u>	143
<u>peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he</u>	144
<u>galls his kibe</u> .—How long hast thou been grave-	145
maker?	146
「GRAVEDIGGER」 Of <i>〈all〉</i> the days i' th' year, I came to 't	147
that day that our last King Hamlet overcame	148
Fortinbras.	149
HAMLET How long is that since?	150
「GRAVEDIGGER」 Cannot you tell that? Every fool can	151
tell that. It was that very day that young Hamlet	152

was born—he that is mad, and sent into England.	153
HAMLET Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?	154
「GRAVEDIGGER」 Why, because he was mad. He shall	155
recover his wits there. Or if he do not, 'tis no great	156
matter there.	157
HAMLET Why?	158
「GRAVEDIGGER」 'Twill not be seen in him there. There	159
the men are as mad as he.	160
HAMLET How came he mad?	161
「GRAVEDIGGER」 Very strangely, they say.	162
HAMLET How “strangely”?	163
「GRAVEDIGGER」 Faith, e'en with losing his wits.	164
HAMLET <u>Upon what ground?</u>	165
「GRAVEDIGGER」 Why, here in Denmark. I have been	166
sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.	167
HAMLET How long will a man lie i' th' earth ere he rot?	168
「GRAVEDIGGER」 Faith, if he be not rotten before he die	169
(as we have many <u>pocky</u> corses ⟨nowadays⟩ that will	170
<u>scarce hold the laying in</u> ), he will last you some	171
eight year or nine year. A tanner will last you nine	172
year.	173
HAMLET Why he more than another?	174
「GRAVEDIGGER」 Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his	175
trade that he will keep out water a great while; and	176
<u>your water</u> is a sore decayer of <u>your whoreson dead</u>	177
<u>body</u> . Here's a skull now hath <u>lien you</u> i' th' earth	178
three-and-twenty years.	179
HAMLET Whose was it?	180
「GRAVEDIGGER」 A whoreson mad fellow's it was.	181
Whose do you think it was?	182
HAMLET Nay, I know not.	183
「GRAVEDIGGER」 A pestilence on him for a mad rogue!	184
He poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once.	185
This same skull, sir, was, sir, Yorick's skull, the	186

King's <u>jester</u> .	187
HAMLET This?	188
「GRAVEDIGGER」 E'en that.	189
HAMLET, 「 <i>taking the skull</i> 」 ‹Let me see.› Alas, poor	190
Yorick! I knew him, Horatio—a fellow of infinite	191
jest, of most excellent <u>fancy</u> . He hath bore me on his	192
back a thousand times, and now how abhorred in	193
my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung	194
those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft.	195
Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your	196
songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to	197
set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your	198
own grinning? Quite <u>chapfallen</u> ? Now get you to <u>my</u>	199
<u>lady's</u> ‹ <u>chamber</u> ,› and tell her, let her paint an inch	200
thick, to this <u>favor</u> she must come. Make her laugh	201
at that.—Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.	202
HORATIO What's that, my lord?	203
HAMLET Dost thou think <u>Alexander</u> looked o' this	204
fashion i' th' earth?	205
HORATIO E'en so.	206
HAMLET And smelt so? Pah!	207
「 <i>He puts the skull down.</i> 」	
HORATIO E'en so, my lord.	208
HAMLET TO what base uses we may return, Horatio!	209
Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of	210
<u>Alexander</u> till he find it stopping a bunghole?	211
HORATIO 'Twere to consider too <u>curiously</u> to consider	212
so.	213
HAMLET No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither,	214
with <u>modesty</u> enough and likelihood to lead it, ‹as	215
thus:› <u>Alexander</u> died, Alexander was buried, Alex-	216
ander <u>returneth to dust</u> ; the dust is earth; of earth	217
we make loam; and why of that loam whereto he	218

was converted might they not stop a beer barrel?	219
<u>Imperious</u> Caesar, dead and turned to clay,	220
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.	221
O, that <u>that earth</u> which kept the world in awe	222
Should patch a wall t' <u>expel</u> the <winter's> <u>flaw</u> !	223
<i>Enter King, Queen, Laertes, &lt;Lords attendant,&gt; and the corpse 「of Ophelia, with a Doctor of Divinity.」</i>	
But soft, but soft awhile! Here comes the King,	224
The Queen, the courtiers. Who is this they follow?	225
And with such <u>maimèd</u> rites? This doth betoken	226
The corse they follow did with desp'rate hand	227
<u>Fordo</u> its own life. 'Twas of <u>some estate</u> .	228
<u>Couch we</u> awhile and <u>mark</u> .	229
	<i>「They step aside.」</i>
LAERTES What ceremony else?	230
HAMLET That is Laertes, a very noble youth. Mark.	231
LAERTES What ceremony else?	232
DOCTOR	
Her obsequies have been as far enlarged	233
As we have warranty. Her death was <u>doubtful</u> ,	234
And, <u>but that great command o'ersways the order</u> ,	235
She should <u>in ground unsanctified been lodged</u>	236
<u>Till the last trumpet</u> . <u>For</u> charitable prayers	237
< <u>Shards</u> ,> flints, and pebbles should be thrown on	238
her.	239
Yet here she is allowed her virgin <u>crants</u> ,	240
Her maiden <u>strewments</u> , and the <u>bringing home</u>	241
<u>Of bell and burial</u> .	242
LAERTES	
Must there no more be done?	243
DOCTOR No more be done.	244
We should profane the service of the dead	245
To sing a requiem and <u>such rest</u> to her	246
As to <u>peace-parted souls</u> .	247

LAERTES Lay her i' th' earth, 248  
 And from her fair and unpolluted flesh 249  
 May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest, 250  
 A minist'ring angel shall my sister be 251  
 When thou liest howling. 252  
 HAMLET, 「to Horatio」 What, the fair Ophelia? 253  
 QUEEN Sweets to the sweet, farewell! 254  
 「*She scatters flowers.*」  
 I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife; 255  
 I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid, 256  
 And not have strewed thy grave. 257  
 LAERTES O, treble woe 258  
 Fall ten times 〈treble〉 on that cursèd head 259  
 Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense 260  
Deprived thee of!—Hold off the earth awhile, 261  
 Till I have caught her once more in mine arms. 262  
 〈*Leaps in the grave.*〉  
 Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead, 263  
 Till of this flat a mountain you have made 264  
 T' o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head 265  
 Of blue Olympus. 266  
 HAMLET, 「advancing」  
 What is he whose grief 267  
 Bears such an emphasis, whose phrase of sorrow 268  
 Conjures the wand'ring stars and makes them stand 269  
 Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I, 270  
 Hamlet the Dane. 271  
 LAERTES, 「coming out of the grave」  
 The devil take thy soul! 272  
 HAMLET Thou pray'st not well. 273  
 「*They grapple.*」  
 I prithee take thy fingers from my throat, 274  
 For though I am not splenitive 〈and〉 rash, 275  
 Yet have I in me something dangerous, 276

Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand.	277
KING Pluck them asunder.	278
QUEEN Hamlet! Hamlet!	279
ALL Gentlemen!	280
HORATIO Good my lord, be quiet.	281
<i>「Hamlet and Laertes are separated.」</i>	
HAMLET	
Why, I will fight with him upon this theme	282
Until my eyelids will no longer wag!	283
QUEEN O my son, what theme?	284
HAMLET	
I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers	285
Could not with all their quantity of love	286
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?	287
KING O, he is mad, Laertes!	288
QUEEN For love of God, <u>forbear him</u> .	289
HAMLET <u>'Swounds</u> , show me what <u>thou't</u> do.	290
<u>Woo't</u> weep, woo't fight, woo't fast, woo't tear	291
thyself,	292
Woo't drink up <u>eisel</u> , eat a crocodile?	293
I'll do 't. Dost <thou> come here to whine?	294
To <u>outface me</u> with leaping in her grave?	295
Be buried <u>quick</u> with her, and so will I.	296
And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw	297
Millions of acres on us, till <u>our ground</u> ,	298
Singeing <u>his pate</u> against <u>the burning zone</u> ,	299
Make <u>Ossa</u> like a wart. Nay, an thou 'lt <u>mouth</u> ,	300
I'll rant as well as thou.	301
QUEEN This is mere madness;	302
And <thus> awhile the fit will work on him.	303
Anon, as patient as the female dove	304
When that her <u>golden couplets</u> are <u>disclosed</u> ,	305
His silence will sit drooping.	306
HAMLET Hear you, sir,	307

What is the reason that you use me thus? 308  
I loved you ever. But it is no matter. 309  
Let Hercules himself do what he may, 310  
The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. 311

*Hamlet exits.*

KING

I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him. 312

*Horatio exits.*

「*To Laertes.*」 Strengthen your patience in our last 313  
night's speech. 314

We'll put the matter to the present push.— 315

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.— 316

This grave shall have a living monument. 317

An hour of quiet thereby shall we see. 318

Till then in patience our proceeding be. 319

*They exit.*

## 「Scene 2」

*Enter Hamlet and Horatio.*

HAMLET

So much for this, sir. Now shall you see the other. 1

You do remember all the circumstance? 2

HORATIO Remember it, my lord! 3

HAMLET

Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting 4

That would not let me sleep. 〈Methought〉 I lay 5

Worse than the mutines in the 〈bilboes.〉 Rashly— 6

And praised be rashness for it; let us know, 7

Our indiscretion sometime serves us well 8

When our deep plots do pall; and that should learn 9

us 10

There's a divinity that shapes our ends, 11

Rough-hew them how we will— 12

HORATIO	That is most	13
	certain.	14
HAMLET	Up from my cabin,	15
	My sea-gown scarfed about me, in the dark	16
	Groped I to find out them; had my desire,	17
	<u>Fingered</u> their packet, and <u>in fine</u> withdrew	18
	To mine own room again, making so bold	19
	(My fears forgetting manners) to unfold	20
	Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,	21
	A royal knavery—an exact command,	22
	<u>Larded</u> with many several sorts of reasons	23
	Importing Denmark's health and England's too,	24
	With—ho!—such <u>bugs and goblins in my life</u> ,	25
	That <u>on the supervise, no leisure bated</u> ,	26
	<u>No, not to stay the grinding of the ax</u> ,	27
	<u>My head should be struck off</u> .	28
HORATIO	Is 't possible?	29
HAMLET		
	Here's the commission. Read it at more leisure.	30
	<i>「Handing him a paper.」</i>	
	But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?	31
HORATIO	I beseech you.	32
HAMLET		
	Being thus benetted round with 「villainies,」	33
	<u>Or</u> I could make a prologue to my brains,	34
	They had begun the play. I sat me down,	35
	Devised a new commission, wrote it <u>fair</u> —	36
	I once did <u>hold it, as our statists do</u> ,	37
	<u>A baseness</u> to write fair, and labored much	38
	How to forget that learning; but, sir, now	39
	It did me <u>yeoman's</u> service. Wilt thou know	40
	Th' <u>effect</u> of what I wrote?	41
HORATIO	Ay, good my lord.	42
HAMLET		
	An earnest conjuration from the King,	43

As England was his faithful tributary, 44  
As love between them like the palm might flourish, 45  
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear 46  
And stand a comma 'tween their amities, 47  
And many suchlike 'ases' of great charge, 48  
That, on the view and knowing of these contents, 49  
Without debatement further, more or less, 50  
He should those bearers put to sudden death, 51  
Not shriving time allowed. 52

HORATIO                                How was this sealed?                                53

HAMLET

Why, even in that was heaven ordinant. 54  
I had my father's signet in my purse, 55  
Which was the model of that Danish seal; 56  
Folded the writ up in the form of th' other, 57  
〈Subscribed〉 it, gave 't th' impression, placed it 58  
safely, 59  
The changeling never known. Now, the next day 60  
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent 61  
Thou knowest already. 62

HORATIO

So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to 't. 63

HAMLET

<Why, man, they did make love to this employment.> 64  
 They are not near my conscience. Their defeat 65  
 Does by their own insinuation grow. 66  
 'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes 67  
 Between the pass and fell incensèd points 68  
 Of mighty opposites. 69

HORATIO    Why, what a king is this! 70

# HAMLET

Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon— 71  
He that hath killed my king and whored my mother, 72  
Popped in between th' election and my hopes, 73  
Thrown out his angle for my proper life, 74

And with such cozenage—is 't not perfect	75
conscience	76
⟨To <u>quit</u> him with this arm? And is 't not to be	77
damned	78
To let this <u>canker</u> of our nature come	79
<u>In</u> further evil?	80
HORATIO	
It must be shortly known to him from England	81
What is the issue of the business there.	82
HAMLET	
It will be short. The interim's mine,	83
And a man's life's no more than to say "one."	84
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,	85
That to Laertes I forgot myself,	86
For <u>by the image of my cause I see</u>	87
<u>The portraiture of his</u> . I'll 「court」 his favors.	88
But, sure, the <u>bravery</u> of his grief did put me	89
Into a tow'ring passion.	90
HORATIO	
Peace, who comes here?⟩	91
<i>Enter ⟨Osric,⟩ a courtier.</i>	
OSRIC Your Lordship is right welcome back to Den-	92
mark.	93
HAMLET I ⟨humbly⟩ thank you, sir.	94
	「Aside to Horatio.」
Dost know this <u>waterfly</u> ?	95
HORATIO, 「aside to Hamlet」 No, my good lord.	96
HAMLET, 「aside to Horatio」 Thy state is the more gra-	97
cious, for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much	98
land, and fertile. <u>Let a beast be lord of beasts and his</u>	99
<u>crib shall stand at the king's mess</u> . 'Tis a <u>chough</u> ,	100
but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.	101
OSRIC Sweet lord, if your Lordship were at leisure, I	102
should impart a thing to you from his Majesty.	103
HAMLET I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of	104

spirit. <u>⟨Put⟩ your bonnet to his right use: 'tis for the</u>	105
<u>head.</u>	106
OSRIC I thank your Lordship; it is very hot.	107
HAMLET No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is	108
northerly.	109
OSRIC It is <u>indifferent</u> cold, my lord, indeed.	110
HAMLET But yet methinks it is very ⟨sultry⟩ and hot ⟨for⟩	111
my <u>complexion.</u>	112
OSRIC Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry, as	113
'twere—I cannot tell how. My lord, his Majesty	114
bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager	115
on your head. Sir, this is the matter—	116
HAMLET I beseech you, remember.	117
<i>「He motions to Osric to put on his hat.」</i>	
OSRIC Nay, good my lord, for my ease, in good faith.	118
[Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes—believe	119
me, <u>an absolute 「gentleman,」</u> full of most excellent	120
<u>differences</u> , of very soft society and great showing.	121
Indeed, to speak 「feelingly」 of him, he is <u>the card</u>	122
<u>or calendar of gentry</u> , for you shall find in him the	123
<u>continent</u> of what part a gentleman would see.	124
HAMLET Sir, his <u>definement</u> suffers no <u>perdition</u> in	125
you, though I know <u>to divide him inventorially</u>	126
<u>would dozy th' arithmetic of memory, and yet but</u>	127
<u>yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail.</u> But, in the	128
verity of extolment, I take him to be <u>a soul of great</u>	129
<u>article, and his infusion of such dearth and rareness</u>	130
<u>as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his</u>	131
<u>mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage,</u>	132
<u>nothing more.</u>	133
OSRIC Your Lordship speaks most infallibly of him.	134
HAMLET The concernancy, sir? <u>Why do we wrap the</u>	135
<u>gentleman in our more rawer breath?</u>	136
OSRIC Sir?	137

HORATIO Is 't not possible to understand in another 138  
tongue? You will to 't, sir, really. 139

HAMLET, 「to Osric」 What imports the nomination of 140  
this gentleman? 141

OSRIC Of Laertes? 142

HORATIO His purse is empty already; all 's golden words 143  
are spent. 144

HAMLET Of him, sir. 145

OSRIC I know you are not ignorant— 146

HAMLET I would you did, sir. Yet, in faith, if you did, it 147  
would not much approve me. Well, sir?] 148

OSRIC You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes 149  
is— 150

[HAMLET I dare not confess that, lest I should compare 151  
with him in excellence. But to know a man well 152  
were to know himself. 153

OSRIC I mean, sir, for 「his」 weapon. But in the imputa- 154  
tion laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfel- 155  
lowed.] 156

HAMLET What's his weapon? 157

OSRIC Rapier and dagger. 158

HAMLET That's two of his weapons. But, well— 159

OSRIC The King, sir, hath wagered with him six Barba- 160  
ry horses, against the which he has impawned, as I 161  
take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their 162  
assigns, as girdle, <hangers,> and so. Three of the 163  
carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very 164  
responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and 165  
of very liberal conceit. 166

HAMLET What call you the "carriages"? 167

[HORATIO I knew you must be edified by the margent 168  
ere you had done.] 169

OSRIC THE <carriages,> sir, are the hangers. 170

HAMLET The phrase would be more germane to the 171

matter if we could carry a cannon by our sides. I	172
<u>would it &lt;might&gt; be</u> “hangers” till then. But on. Six	173
Barbary horses against six French swords, their	174
assigns, and three <u>liberal-conceited</u> carriages—	175
that’s the French bet against the Danish. Why is this	176
all “impawned,” <sup>1</sup> <as> you call it?	177
OSRIC The King, sir, hath <u>laid</u> , sir, that in <u>a dozen</u>	178
<u>passes between yourself and him</u> , he shall not	179
exceed you three hits. He hath laid on <u>twelve for</u>	180
<u>nine</u> , and it would come to immediate trial if your	181
Lordship would <u>vouchsafe the answer</u> .	182
HAMLET How if I answer no?	183
OSRIC I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person	184
in trial.	185
HAMLET Sir, I will walk here in the hall. If it please his	186
Majesty, it is the <u>breathing time of day</u> with me. Let	187
the <u>foils</u> be brought, the gentleman willing, and the	188
King hold his purpose, I will win for him, <u>an</u> I can.	189
If not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd	190
hits.	191
OSRIC Shall I <u>deliver you &lt;e’en&gt; so?</u>	192
HAMLET To this effect, sir, after what flourish your	193
nature will.	194
OSRIC I <u>commend</u> my duty to your Lordship.	195
HAMLET Yours. <i>Osric exits.</i> <sup>1</sup> <He> does well to com-	196
mend it himself. There are no tongues else <u>for ’s</u>	197
<u>turn</u> .	198
HORATIO <u>This lapwing runs away with the shell on his</u>	199
<u>head</u> .	200
HAMLET He did <u>&lt;comply,&gt; sir, with his dug</u> before he	201
sucked it. Thus has he (and many more of the same	202
breed that I know the <u>drossy</u> age dotes on) only got	203
the <u>tune</u> of the time, and, <u>out of an habit of</u>	204
<u>encounter, a kind of &lt;yeasty&gt; collection, which car-</u>	205

	<u>ries them through and through the most 「fanned」</u>	206
	<u>and &lt;winnowed&gt; opinions; and do but <u>blow them to</u></u>	207
	<u>their trial, the bubbles are out.</u>	208
	<i>[Enter a Lord.]</i>	
LORD	My lord, his Majesty <u>commended him</u> to you by	209
	young Osric, who brings back to him that you	210
	attend him in the hall. He sends to know if your	211
	pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will	212
	take longer time.	213
HAMLET	I am constant to my purposes. They follow	214
	the King's pleasure. <u>If his fitness speaks, mine is</u>	215
	<u>ready now</u> or whensoever, provided I be so able as	216
	now.	217
LORD	The King and Queen and all are coming down.	218
HAMLET	<u>In happy time.</u>	219
LORD	The Queen desires you to <u>use some gentle</u>	220
	<u>entertainment to Laertes</u> before you fall to play.	221
HAMLET	She well instructs me.	222
	<i>「Lord exits.」</i>	
HORATIO	You will lose, my lord.	223
HAMLET	I do not think so. Since he went into France, I	224
	have been in continual practice. I shall win <u>at the</u>	225
	<u>odds</u> ; <but> thou wouldst not think how ill all's here	226
	about my heart. But it is no matter.	227
HORATIO	Nay, good my lord—	228
HAMLET	It is but foolery, but it is such a kind of	229
	< <u>gaingiving</u> > as would perhaps trouble a woman.	230
HORATIO	If your mind dislike anything, obey it. I will	231
	forestall their <u>repair</u> hither and say you are not fit.	232
HAMLET	Not a whit. We defy augury. There is < <u>a</u> >	233
	<u>special providence in the fall of a sparrow</u> . If it be	234
	<now,> 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be	235
	now; if it be not now, yet it <will> come. The	236

readiness is all. Since no man of aught he leaves 237  
knows, what is 't to leave betimes? Let be. 238

*A table prepared. <Enter> Trumpets, Drums, and Officers with cushions,  
King, Queen, 'Osric,' and all the state, foils, daggers, <flagons of wine,>  
and Laertes.*

KING

Come, Hamlet, come and take this hand from me. 239  
*'He puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's.'*

HAMLET, *'to Laertes'*

Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong; 240  
But pardon 't as you are a gentleman. This presence 241  
knows, 242  
And you must needs have heard, how I am punished 243  
With a sore distraction. What I have done 244  
That might your nature, honor, and exception 245  
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness. 246  
Was 't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet. 247  
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away, 248  
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes, 249  
Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it. 250  
Who does it, then? His madness. If 't be so, 251  
Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged; 252  
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy. 253  
<Sir, in this audience> 254  
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil 255  
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts 256  
That I have shot my arrow o'er the house 257  
And hurt my brother. 258

LAERTES I am satisfied in nature, 259  
Whose motive in this case should stir me most 260  
To my revenge; but in my terms of honor 261  
I stand aloof and will no reconciliation 262  
Till by some elder masters of known honor 263  
I have a voice and precedent of peace 264

	<u>To &lt;keep&gt; my name ungored.</u> But <till> that time	265
	I do receive your offered love like love	266
	And will not wrong it.	267
HAMLET	I embrace it freely	268
	And will this brothers' wager <u>frankly</u> play.—	269
	Give us the foils. <Come on.>	270
LAERTES	Come, one for me.	271
HAMLET		
	I'll be <u>your foil</u> , Laertes; in mine ignorance	272
	Your skill shall, like a star i' th' darkest night,	273
	<u>Stick fiery off</u> indeed.	274
LAERTES	You mock me, sir.	275
HAMLET	No, by this hand.	276
KING		
	Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,	277
	You know the wager?	278
HAMLET	Very well, my lord.	279
	Your Grace has <u>laid the odds o' th' weaker side</u> .	280
KING		
	I do not fear it; I have seen you both.	281
	But, since he is better, <u>we have therefore odds</u> .	282
LAERTES		
	This is too heavy. <u>Let me see another</u> .	283
HAMLET		
	<u>This likes me</u> well. These foils <u>have all a length</u> ?	284
OSRIC	Ay, my good lord.	285
	<i>&lt;Prepare to <u>play</u>.&gt;</i>	
KING		
	Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.—	286
	If Hamlet give the first or second hit	287
	Or <u>quit in answer of the third exchange</u> ,	288
	Let all the battlements their ordnance fire.	289
	The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath,	290
	And in the cup an < <u>union</u> > shall he throw,	291
	Richer than that which four successive kings	292

In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups,	293
And let the <u>kettle</u> to the trumpet speak,	294
The trumpet to the cannoneer <u>without</u> ,	295
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,	296
"Now the King drinks to Hamlet." Come, begin.	297
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.	298
<i>Trumpets the while.</i>	
HAMLET Come on, sir.	299
LAERTES Come, my lord.	300
<i>⟨They play.⟩</i>	
HAMLET One.	301
LAERTES No.	302
HAMLET Judgment!	303
OSRIC A hit, a very palpable hit.	304
LAERTES Well, again.	305
KING	
Stay, give me drink.—Hamlet, this pearl is thine.	306
Here's to thy health.	307
<i>「He drinks and then drops the pearl in the cup.」</i>	
<i>Drum, trumpets, and shot.</i>	
Give him the cup.	308
HAMLET	
I'll play this bout first. Set it by awhile.	309
Come. <i>「They play.」</i> Another hit. What say you?	310
LAERTES	
⟨A touch, a touch.⟩ I do confess 't.	311
KING	
Our son shall win.	312
QUEEN He's fat and scant of breath.—	313
Here, Hamlet, take my <u>napkin</u> ; rub thy brows.	314
The Queen <u>carouses</u> to thy fortune, Hamlet.	315
<i>「She lifts the cup.」</i>	
HAMLET Good madam.	316
KING Gertrude, do not drink.	317
QUEEN	

I will, my lord; I pray you pardon me.	318
	「 <i>She drinks.</i> 」
KING, 「 <i>aside</i> 」	
It is the poisoned cup. It is too late.	319
HAMLET	
I dare not drink yet, madam—by and by.	320
QUEEN Come, let me wipe thy face.	321
LAERTES, 「 <i>to Claudius</i> 」	
My lord, I'll hit him now.	322
KING I do not think 't.	323
LAERTES, 「 <i>aside</i> 」	
And yet it is almost against my conscience.	324
HAMLET	
Come, for the third, Laertes. You do but dally.	325
I pray you <u>pass</u> with your best violence.	326
I am ⟨afeard⟩ you <u>make a wanton of me</u> .	327
LAERTES Say you so? Come on.	328
	⟨ <i>Play.</i> ⟩
OSRIC Nothing neither way.	329
LAERTES Have at you now!	330
「 <i>Laertes wounds Hamlet. Then ⟨in scuffling they change rapiers,⟩</i>	
<i>and Hamlet wounds Laertes.</i> 」	
KING Part them. They are incensed.	331
HAMLET Nay, come again.	332
	「 <i>The Queen falls.</i> 」
OSRIC Look to the Queen there, ho!	333
HORATIO	
They bleed on both sides.—How is it, my lord?	334
OSRIC How is 't, Laertes?	335
LAERTES	
Why as a <u>woodcock to mine own springe</u> , Osric.	336
	「 <i>He falls.</i> 」
I am justly killed with mine own treachery.	337
HAMLET	
How does the Queen?	338

KING	She swoons to see them bleed.	339
QUEEN	No, no, the drink, the drink! O, my dear Hamlet!	340
	The drink, the drink! I am poisoned.	341
	<i>「She dies.」</i>	
HAMLET	O villainy! Ho! Let the door be locked.	342
	<i>「Osric exits.」</i>	
	Treachery! Seek it out.	343
LAERTES	It is here, Hamlet. 〈Hamlet,〉 thou art slain.	344
	No med'cine in the world can do thee good.	345
	In thee there is not half an hour's life.	346
	The treacherous instrument is in 〈thy〉 hand,	347
	<u>Unbated and envenomed</u> . The <u>foul practice</u>	348
	Hath turned itself on me. Lo, here I lie,	349
	Never to rise again. Thy mother's poisoned.	350
	I <u>can no more</u> . The King, the King's to blame.	351
HAMLET	The point envenomed too! Then, venom, to thy	352
	work.	353
	<i>〈Hurts the King.〉</i>	
ALL	Treason, treason!	354
KING	O, yet defend me, friends! I am but hurt.	355
HAMLET	Here, thou incestuous, 〈murd'rous,〉 damnèd Dane,	356
	Drink off this potion. Is 〈thy <u>union</u> 〉 here?	357
	<i>「Forces him to drink the poison.」</i>	
	Follow my mother.	358
	<i>〈King dies.〉</i>	
LAERTES	He is justly served.	359
	It is a poison <u>tempered</u> by himself.	360
	Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.	361
	Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,	362

Nor thine on me.

363

⟨*Dies.*⟩

HAMLET

Heaven make thee free of it. I follow thee.—

364

I am dead, Horatio.—Wretched queen, adieu.—

365

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

366

That are but mutes or audience to this act,

367

Had I but time (as this fell sergeant, Death,

368

Is strict in his arrest), O, I could tell you—

369

But let it be.—Horatio, I am dead.

370

Thou livest; report me and my cause aright

371

To the unsatisfied.

372

HORATIO

Never believe it.

373

I am more an antique Roman than a Dane.

374

Here's yet some liquor left.

375

「*He picks up the cup.*」

HAMLET

As thou'rt a man,

376

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

377

O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,

378

Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind

379

me!

380

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,

381

Absent thee from felicity awhile

382

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain

383

To tell my story.

384

*A march afar off (and 「shot」 within.)*

What warlike noise is this?

385

*Enter Osric.*

OSRIC

Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,

386

To th' ambassadors of England gives

387

This warlike volley.

388

HAMLET

O, I die, Horatio!

389

The potent poison quite o'ercrows my spirit.

390

I cannot live to hear the news from England. 391  
But I do prophecy th' election lights 392  
On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice. 393  
So tell him, with th' occurents, more and less, 394  
Which have solicited—the rest is silence. 395  
〈O, O, O, O!〉 396

HORATIO

「*March within.*」

*Enter Fortinbras with the 'English' Ambassadors (with Drum, Colors,  
and Attendants.)*

HORATIO    What is it you would see? 401

FORTINBRAS

AMBASSADOR	The sight is dismal,	407
	And our affairs from England come too late.	408
	The ears are <u>senseless</u> that should give us hearing	409
	To tell <u>him</u> his commandment is fulfilled,	410
	That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.	411
	Where should we have our thanks?	412

Are here arrived, give order that these bodies 419  
 High on a stage be placed to the view, 420  
 And let me speak to ⟨th'⟩ yet unknowing world 421  
 How these things came about. So shall you hear 422  
 Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts, 423  
 Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters, 424  
 Of deaths put on by cunning and ⟨forced⟩ cause, 425  
 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook 426  
 Fall'n on th' inventors' heads. All this can I 427  
 Truly deliver. 428

FORTINBRAS Let us haste to hear it 429  
 And call the noblest to the audience. 430  
 For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune. 431  
 I have some rights of memory in this kingdom, 432  
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me. 433

HORATIO  
 Of that I shall have also cause to speak, 434  
And from his mouth whose voice will draw ⟨on⟩ 435  
more. 436  
 But let this same be presently performed 437  
 Even while men's minds are wild, lest more 438  
 mischance 439  
On plots and errors happen. 440

FORTINBRAS Let four captains 441  
 Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage, 442  
 For he was likely, had he been put on, 443  
 To have proved most royal; and for his passage, 444  
 The soldier's music and the rite of war 445  
 Speak loudly for him. 446  
 Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this 447  
 Becomes the field but here shows much amiss. 448  
 Go, bid the soldiers shoot. 449  
*They exit, ⟨marching, after the which, a peal of ordnance are shot*  
*off.⟩*

## Longer Notes

**1.3.136–40. brokers . . . beguile:** Polonius here characterizes Hamlet’s “holy vows of heaven” (**line 123**) as, instead, mere sexual solicitations masquerading as sacred oaths. He anthropomorphizes the vows as brokers dressed in holy vestments but acting as panders to entice Ophelia into a sinful relationship. This reading of the lines depends upon an editorial decision to accept the word **bawds** at **line 139**, Lewis Theobald’s emendation of Q2’s *bonds*. Since bonds cannot breathe (or “speak,” one meaning of *breathe*), and since **bawds** aligns with **brokers** and **implorators**, Theobald’s change has been generally accepted. Editors who retain *bonds* define **breathing** as “acting” and note the alignment of *bonds* with **vows** and **suits**. With either editorial choice, the contrast of “holy vows” with “implorators of unholy suits” is clear.

**1.5.105. table:** This undoubtedly refers to the kind of tablet described by Peter Stallybrass and Roger Chartier as one or more pieces of coated vellum or paper, folded and stitched and sometimes elegantly bound, the coating allowing the vellum or paper to be written on with a stylus (which was attached to the tablet) and then erased with a moistened cloth or by scraping. Such writing tablets were common in Shakespeare’s day.

**2.2.121. In her . . . these, etc.:** In letter-writing conventions of Shakespeare’s day, this phrase, part of the

letter's superscription, presents two unusual features. According to Alan Stewart and Heather Wolfe, the superscription is "the address or direction on the outer leaf of a letter" (*Letter Writing in Renaissance England*, Folger, 2004). The superscription on Hamlet's letter is unusual because, after the name of the letter's recipient ("To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia") instead of Ophelia's "address"—i.e., where the letter should be delivered—we find instead "in her excellent white bosom, these, etc." Stewart, in his book *Shakespeare's Letters* (Oxford, 2009), suggests that this phrase has an inappropriate sexual tone in keeping with Hamlet's mad behavior; we would suggest alternatively that Shakespeare is perhaps playing with the letter-writing conventions of the day, substituting "in her excellent white bosom" for the expected standard address (such as "in his travels" or "at the North Gate Street in Chester"). Heather Wolfe, curator of manuscripts at the Folger, notes (personal correspondence) that the lack of an address generally indicates that the letter was to be delivered by a trusted agent or by the letter writer. The second unusual feature is the placement of "etc." While Wolfe was able to locate a letter in the State Papers that places "etc." after "these"—"To his excellent cousin, the Justice Aylmer, give these. With speed. From London, etc."—an "etc." at the end of a superscription was more likely to be found in a superscription that included a list of compliments to the recipient—e.g., "To her who is Day without Night, a Sun full of Shade, A Shade full of Light, Mistress, etc." (See *Letter Writing*, p. 109.)

**2.2.604–5. I am . . . bitter:** Continuing his attack on himself for inaction, Hamlet plays on the double meanings (physical and metaphorical) of the words **pigeon-livered**,

**gall**, and **bitter**. On the physical level, pigeons were known to have no gallbladder (a small organ attached to the liver), which suggested to medieval physiologists that pigeons lacked gall (a bitter substance excreted by the liver), and that this explained their mild manner. Metaphorically, the term **pigeon-livered** meant “meek, mild”; **gall** meant “spirit to resent insult or injury”; **bitter** meant “feeling intense grief, misery, or affliction of spirit,” and “causing pain, cruel, severe.” The phrase “to make oppression bitter” perhaps means “to fill my distress with adequate affliction of spirit or intense grief.”

**3.1.64. the question:** While it is generally assumed that Hamlet’s **question** is whether or not to commit suicide, it can be argued that this soliloquy is instead (or is primarily) a posing of a philosophical question appropriate for a student from Wittenberg, followed by a scholarly analysis of that question. In this reading, Hamlet proposes as the question up for debate: “Which is the nobler action, suicide or acceptance of a painful life?” He first cites the attractions of suicide, then cites the most pressing argument against it, and, after describing the burdens of human life that make suicide so appealing, he concludes that fear and cowardice are the reasons humans do not take their own lives. Paradoxically, then, the answer to “the question” is that it is nobler, more courageous, to end one’s life at one’s own hands. (This reading of “To be or not to be” as a dispassionate mental exercise is in accord with current readings of John Donne’s “suicide tract,” *Biathanatos*.) Note that Hamlet’s discourse is in effect set within a classical worldview (a view that Horatio will title “antique Roman”), a view in which God and heaven and hell and sin do not have a place, and in which the afterlife is simply “a bourn from

which no traveler returns.” This is a very different worldview from the one Hamlet revealed when he cried out his wish that God “had not fixed / His canon ’gainst self-slaughter” (1.2.135–36).

**3.2.64. the candied . . . pomp:** This dense complex of metaphors has at its core the image of a fawning dog. The line begins with the metaphorically **candied** (honeyed, or sugared) **tongue** (i.e., the speech of the sweet-talking or dulcet-toned flatterer), which transforms into the physical tongue that licks (in Shakespeare, usually the tongue of a fawning dog, an animal licking sores, or a mother bear licking her cub into shape, but here probably echoing as well familiar phrases that indicate abject servility—to lick someone’s shoe, as does Caliban in *The Tempest*, or to lick the ground before someone). The physical tongue becomes figurative again as the object of the licking is presented as the abstract **absurd pomp**, or ridiculous ostentatious display. The dog image is made a bit more concrete in **line 66**, where the word **fawning**—a word most commonly used in reference to dogs—is used to describe the flatterer. (See Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, *Shakespeare’s Imagery and What It Tells Us* [1935; rpt., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958], pp. 195–99.)

**3.2.116–31. Here’s metal . . . my lord:** This passage of dialogue has been described as Hamlet’s “teasing” or his “insulting” of Ophelia. Lewis Theobald, writing in 1726, called it “low and indecent Ribaldry . . . unbefitting the Dignity of [Shakespeare’s] Characters as well as of his Audience” (*Shakespeare Restored*, p. 87). The words Hamlet uses seem innocent on the surface, but at the time the phrase **lie in your lap** could have a sexual meaning, there

was frequent wordplay on the first syllable of **country**, and the word **nothing** could apply to both the male and female sexual parts.

**3.2.176. Phoebus' cart:** The apparent journey of the sun around the Earth, as described here, is often taken to be an annual circling, with lines 176–77 describing how the sun has circled the Earth 30 times in 30 years. After all, the journeys of the moon (described in lines 178–79) clearly take place over a 30-year period, and **line 182** seems to equate the time spans symbolized by the sun's and the moon's journeys. Since in the astronomy dominant in Shakespeare's time the sun circles the Earth daily (and from an Earth-centered perspective continues to do so today), lines 176–77 must necessarily describe a 30-day period. In writing these lines, Shakespeare may have erred or been careless, or he may be deliberately mocking the pompous and sometimes empty or meaningless language of earlier dramatists, as he seems to be doing throughout "The Mousetrap," with its arcane words and twisted syntax.

**3.4.215–18. Unpeg the basket . . . and break your own neck down:** Hamlet seems to be saying to Gertrude "If you spread my secrets, you will be like the ape that freed the birds from a basket on a housetop, climbed into the basket, and, instead of being able to fly as the freed birds did, broke his neck when the basket fell from the roof." If Hamlet was alluding to a familiar story, that story is now lost.

**4.5.91. In hugger-mugger:** The eighteenth-century editor George Steevens noted that this description of hasty, secret burial occurs in Thomas North's 1579 translation of Plutarch's "Life of Julius Caesar," where Antony wants

Caesar properly buried and “not in hugger-mugger.” (See Arden<sup>3</sup> *Hamlet*, p. 380.)

**4.5.188–90. They . . . tear:** These lines are thought to be from the song “Bonny Sweet Robin,” almost all the lyrics of which have disappeared. Ophelia sings one of its extant lines (perhaps its refrain) at **line 210**, below. (Ross Duffin, *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, Norton, 2000, p. 73.)

**5.1.112. pair of indentures:** Deeds were often written out twice on the same large piece of paper or parchment, which was then divided between the two copies by cutting on an irregular line. The two pieces (called a “pair of indentures”) could later be matched to prove they came from the same document.

**5.1.310–11. Let Hercules . . . have his day:** Many editors have tried to explain these lines as if Hamlet is, for example, referring to Laertes as a Hercules and, in the second of the lines, uttering a veiled threat. In answer to such editorial attempts, George Lyman Kittredge, in his 1939 edition of *Hamlet*, writes that Hamlet suddenly remembers that he is supposed to be mad, and he here “reverts to his habitual style when counterfeiting insanity.” Lines 310–11, “therefore, are not to be brought into logical connection with what precedes or with the situation at all. Certainly Hamlet does not mean ‘Laertes must have his whine and his bark. If Hercules cannot silence dogs, much less I, who am little like that hero’ (Dowden), or ‘Bluster away, my young Hercules: but poor Hamlet’s time will come’ (Verity).”

**5.2.73. election:** Some earlier editors struggled with how to make sense of Hamlet’s referring to the choice of a monarch as an “election.” Willard Farnham, for instance, in

his edition of the play for the Complete Pelican edition of 1969, glossed the word as follows: “**election:** i.e., to the kingship (the Danish kingship being elective).” Hamlet’s use of this word is less problematic when we realize that in the twenty-two times Shakespeare uses the word *election* in his plays, in almost every case the word means simply “choice,” “selection,” or “preference.” Even in plays where the word is used in dialogue about the selection of a ruler, the meaning is essentially “choice, selection” (as in *Titus Andronicus* 1.1.13 and *Coriolanus* 2.3.244). Earlier in *Hamlet*, the prince accuses Claudius of having stolen the crown (3.4.113–15); here, he accuses him of having suddenly and unexpectedly come between Hamlet’s “hopes” (i.e., expectations) and “th’ election.” Given Shakespeare’s usage in his other plays, the word here is probably shorthand for “choice or selection by the inner circle of the nobility,” those whom Claudius thanks for having “freely gone . . . along” with his marriage to Gertrude—and presumably his related appointment as ruler of the kingdom (1.2.15–16). Hamlet’s accusation here suggests that had not Claudius made this sudden and unexpected move, the crown would have naturally come to the prince of the realm.

## Textual Notes

The reading of the present text appears to the left of the square bracket. The earliest sources of readings not in Q2, the Second Quarto text (upon which this edition is based), are indicated as follows: **Q1** is the First Quarto of 1603; **Q3** is the Third Quarto of 1611; **Q4** is the Fourth Quarto of ? 1622; **Q5** is the Fifth Quarto of 1637; **F** is the First Folio of 1623; **F2** is the Second Folio of 1632; **F3** is the Third Folio of 1663–64; **F4** is the Fourth Folio of 1685; **Ed.** is an earlier editor of Shakespeare, beginning with Rowe in 1709. No sources are given for emendations of punctuation or for corrections of obvious typographical errors, like turned letters that produce no known word. **SD** means stage direction; **SP** means speech prefix; **uncorr.** means first or uncorrected state; **corr.** means second or corrected state; ~ stands in place of a word already quoted before the square bracket; ^ indicates the omission of a punctuation mark.

**1.1.** **15.** ho!] Q2; *omit* F **19.** soldier] F; souldiers Q2 **39.** we have two nights seen] Q2; we two Nights haue seene F **46.** SD *a half-line later in* F **47.** off] Q2, F (of) **50.** he] Q2; it F **51.** harrows] F; horrowes Q2 **53.** Speak to] Q2; Question F **72.** he] Q2; *omit* F **74.** Polacks] Ed.; pollax Q2; Pollax F **76.** jump] Q2; iust F **84.** why . . . cast] F; with . . . cost Q2 **100.** those] F; these Q2 **101.** of] Q2; on F **103.** returned] F; returne Q2 **105.** comart] Q2; Cou'nant F **106.** designed] F2; desseigne Q2; designe F **110.** lawless] Q2; Landlesse F **115.** compulsory] Q2; Compulsatiue

F [120](#)–37. Q2 *only* [133](#). feared] Ed.; feare Q2 [137](#). SD Ghost] Q2; Ghost againe. F [139](#). SD omit F [150](#). you] F; your Q2 [151](#). SD omit F [153](#). strike it] Q2; strike at it F [156](#). SD omit Q2; 1 line later in F [165](#). morn] Q2; day F [173](#). say] Q2; sayes F [175](#). This] Q2; The F [176](#). dare stir] Q2; can walke F [178](#). takes] Q2; talkes F [179](#). that] Q2; the F [182](#). eastward] Q2; Easterne F [190](#). convenient] Q2; conueniently F

**1.2. 0.** SD *the Council . . . Cornelius] Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes, and his Sister Ophelia, Lords Attendant* F [1](#). SP KING] F; Claud. Q2 [9](#). to] Q2; of F [11](#). an . . . a] Q2; one . . . one F [21](#). this] Q2; the F [35](#). bearers] Q2; bearing F [40](#). SP CORNELIUS/VOLTEMAND] Q2; Volt. F [41](#). SD F; omit Q2 [52](#). My dread lord] Q2; Dread my Lord F [60](#). Hath] Q2; He hath F [60](#)–62. wrung . . . consent] Q2 *only* [69](#). so, my] F (~^ ~); so much my Q2 [70](#). nighted] Q2; nightly F [80](#). good] F; coold Q2 [85](#). shapes] Q3; chapes Q2; shewes F [86](#). denote] F; deuote Q2 [100](#). a] F (~^ ~); or Q2 [116](#). you.] F; ~^ Q2 [123](#). pray thee] Q2; prythee F [131](#). heaven] Q2; Heauens F [132](#). SD *Flourish . . . exit.*] Q2; *Exeunt | Manet Hamlet.* F [133](#). sullied] Q2 (sallied); solid F [136](#). self-slaughter] F; seale slaughter Q2 [136](#). God, God] Q2; God, O God F [137](#). weary] F; wary Q2 [138](#). Seem] Q2; Seemes F [139](#). on 't, ah fie! 'Tis] Q2; on't? Oh fie, fie, 'tis F [141](#). merely.] F; ~^ Q2 [141](#). to this] F; thus Q2 [145](#). beteem] Q2; beteene F [147](#). would] F; should Q2 [153](#). even she^] Ed.; euen she. F; omit Q2 [154](#). God] Q2; Heauen F [160](#). in] Q2; of F [164](#). SD *Barnardo*] Q2; *Barnard* F [177](#). hear] Q2; haue F [182](#). you to drink deep ere] F; you for to drinke ere Q2 [185](#). see] F; omit Q2 [190](#). Or ever I had seen] Q2; Ere I had euer seene F [192](#). Where] Q2; Oh where F [205](#). God's] Q2; Heauens F [210](#). at point exactly] Q2; at all points exactly F [212](#). stately^ . . . them.] Q2 (them;); ~: . . .

~^ F [214](#). distilled] Q2; bestil'd F [219](#). Where, as] Q1 (Where as); Whereas Q2, F [224](#). watch] Q2; watcht F [237](#). Indeed, sirs] Q2; Indeed, indeed Sirs F [239](#), [241](#), [243](#). SP ALL] Q2; *Both*. F [254](#). Very like. Stayed] Q2; Very like, very like: staid F [257](#). SP BARNARDO/MARCELLUS] Ed.; *Both*. Q2; *All*. F [259](#). grizzled] Q2; grisly F [262](#). tonight] Q4; to nigh Q2; to Night F [263](#). walk] Q2; wake F [264](#). warrant it] Q2; warrant you it F [269](#). tenable] Q2; treble F [270](#). whatsomever] Q2; whatsoever F [276](#). loves] Q2; loue F [276](#). SD *All . . . exit.*] Ed.; *Exeunt*. Q2, F *printing it 1 line earlier* [279](#). Foul] F; fonde Q2

**1.3.** **0.** SD *his sister*] Q2; *omit* F [3](#). convey] Q2; Conuoy F [3](#). is] F; in Q2 [6](#). favor] Q2; fauours F [9](#). Forward] Q2; Froward F [10](#). perfume and] Q2; *omit* F [15](#). bulk] F; bulkes Q2 [19](#). will] Q2; feare F [21](#). F; *omit* Q2 [24](#). safety] Q2; sanctity F [24](#). the health] Ed.; health Q2, F [24](#). this whole] Q2; the weole F [30](#). particular act and place] Q2; peculiar Sect and force F [38](#). you in] Q2; within F [44](#). their] Q2; the F [50](#). watchman] Q2; watchmen F [53](#). like] F; *omit* Q2 [56](#). SD *1 line earlier in* Q2 [62](#). for. There,] Q2 (~, ~^); ~^ ~: F [63](#). thee] Q2; you F [65](#). Look] Q2; See F [68](#). Those] Q2; The F [69](#). unto] Q2; to F [71](#). new-hatched] Q2; vnatch't F [71](#). courage] Q2; Comrade F [80](#). Are] F; Or Q2 [81](#). be] F; boy Q2 [82](#). loan] F; loue Q2 [83](#). dulls the] F; dulleth Q2 [89](#). invests] Q2; inuites F [89](#). you.]~^ Q2 [96](#). Lord] Q2; L. F [107](#). you?] ~^ Q2 [115](#). these] Q2; his F [118](#). Running] Ed.; Wrong Q2; Roaming F [123](#). With almost all the holy vows] Q2; with all the vowes F [124](#). springes] F; springs Q2 [126](#). Lends] Q2; Giues F [129](#). From] Q2; For F [129](#). time] Q2; time Daughter F [130](#). something] Q2; somewhat F [132](#). parle] Q2; parley F [134](#). tether] F; tider Q2 [137](#). that dye] Q2; the

eye F [138](#). implorators] F; imploratotors Q2 [139](#). bawds] Ed.; bonds Q2, F [140](#). beguile] F; beguide Q2

**1.4.** [0](#). SD *and*] Q2; *omit* F [1](#). it is] Q2; is it F [2](#). a] F; *omit* Q2 [6](#). It then] Q2; then it F [7](#). SD Q2; *omit* F [10](#). wassail] Q2; wassels F [16](#). But] Q2; And F [19](#)–41. Q2 *only* [19](#). revel] Q5; reueale Q2 [30](#). the] Ed.; their Q2 [39](#). evil] Ed.; eale Q2 [47](#). intents] Q2; euent F [50](#). O, answer] Q2; Oh, oh, answer F [54](#). interred] Q2; enurn'd F [61](#). the reaches] Q2; thee; reaches F [62](#). SD *Ghost beckons.*] Ed.; *Beckins.* Q2; *Ghost beckens Hamlet.* F [67](#). waves] Q2; wafts F [70](#). I will] Q2; will I F [78](#). summit] Ed.; somnet Q2; Sonnet F [80](#). assume] Q2; assumes F [82](#). madness?] ~, Q2; ~^ F [83](#)–86. Q2 *only* [87](#). waves] Q2; wafts F [89](#). hands] Q2; hand F [92](#). arture] Q2; Artire F [97](#). imagination] F; imaign Q2

**1.5.** [1](#). Whither] Q2; Where F [24](#). knotted] Q2; knotty F [26](#). fearful] Q2; fretfull F [28](#). List, list, O] Q2; list *Hamlet*, oh F [30](#). God] Q2; Heauen F [35](#). Haste me] Q2; Hast, hast me F [35](#). that I, with] Q2; That with F [40](#). roots] Q2; rots F [50](#). with] Q2; hath F [52](#). to his] Q2; to to this F [54](#). a] F; *omit* Q2 [62](#). lust] F; but Q2 [63](#). sate] F; sort Q2 [65](#). morning] Q2; Mornings F [67](#). of] Q2; in F [69](#). hebona] Q2; Hebenon F [71](#). leprous] Q2; leaperous F [75](#). posset] F; possesse Q2 [76](#). eager] Q2; Aygre F [78](#). barked] Q2; bak'd F [82](#). of queen] Q2; and Queene F [84](#). unaneled] F; vnnaneld Q2 [86](#). With all] F; Withall Q2 [91](#). howsomever] Q2; howsoeuer F [91](#). pursues] Q2; pursuest F [98](#). adieu, adieu. Remember] Q2; adue, *Hamlet*: remember F [98](#). SD F; *omit* Q2 [100](#). Hold, hold, my] Q2; hold my F [102](#). stiffly] F; swiftly Q2 [111](#). Yes, by] Q2; yes, yes, by F [114](#). My tables—meet] Q2; My Tables, my Tables; meet F [119](#). SD *1 line later in F, which prefixes line 120 "Hor & Mar. within."* [122](#). Heavens] Q2; Heauen F [123](#). SP

HAMLET] Q2; *Mar.* F [124](#). SP MARCELLUS] Q2; *Hor.* F [125](#). bird] F; and Q2 [136](#). SP HORATIO/MARCELLUS] Ed.; *Booth.* Q2; *Both.* F [136](#). my lord] F; *omit* Q2 144. desire] Q2; desires F [147](#). I will] Q2; Looke you, Ile F [148](#). whirling] Q2; hurling F [152](#). Horatio] Q2; my Lord F [161](#). SP HORATIO/MARCELLUS] Ed.; *Booth.* Q2; *Both.* F [168](#). SP GHOST. Q2, F [177](#). our] Q2; for F [180](#)–81. *lines transposed in* F [182](#). by his sword] Q2; *omit* F [183](#). earth] Q2; ground F [188](#). your] Q2; our F [190](#). some'er] Q2; so ere F [193](#). times] Q2; time F [194](#). this] Q2; thus F [196](#). Well, well, we] Q2; well, we F [198](#). they] Q2; there F [201](#). this do swear] Q2; this not to doe F [202](#). you] Q2; you: | Swear F [205](#). With all] F; Withall Q2

**2.1. 0.** SD *old . . . Reynaldo*] Ed.; *old Polonius, with his man or two* Q2; *Polonius, and Reynoldo* F [1](#). this] Q2; his F [3](#). marvelous] Q2; maruels F [4](#). to make inquire] Q2; you make inquiry F [16](#). As] Q2; And F [31](#). no] F; *omit* Q2 [38](#). unreclaimèd] Q2; vnreclaim'd F [44](#). wit] Q2; warrant F [46](#). i' th'] F; with Q2 [49](#). seen^] Q2; ~. F [53](#). or] Q2; and F [59](#)–60. at “friend . . . gentleman.”] F; *omit* Q2 [62](#). closes thus] Q2; closes with you thus F [64](#). such or such] Q2; such and such F [66](#). o'ertook] F; or tooke Q2 [70](#). take . . . carp] Q2; takes . . . Cape F [83](#). SD *Reynaldo exits.*] Q2; *Exit.* F. *Both* Q2 and F set SD 1 line earlier. [85](#). O, my lord] Q2; Alas F [86](#). i' th' . . . God] Q2; in the . . . Heauen F [87](#). closet] Q2; Chamber F [107](#). As] Q2; That F [109](#). shoulder] Q2; shoulders F [111](#). helps] Q2; helpe F [113](#). Come] Q2; *omit* F [117](#). passions] Q2; passion F [124](#). heed] Q2; speed F [125](#). feared] Q2; feare F [127](#). By heaven] Q2; It seemes F [134](#). Come] Q2; *omit* F

**2.2. 0.** SD *Flourish.*] Q2; *omit* F [0](#). SD *and Attendants*] *omit* Q2; *Cum alijs* F [5](#). so call] Q2; so I call F [6](#). Sith nor] Q2; Since not F [10](#). dream] Q2; deeme F [12](#). sith . . .

havior] Q2; since . . . humour F [16](#). occasion] Q2;  
 Occasions F [17](#). Q2; *omit* F [20](#). is] Q2; are F [31](#). But] Q2;  
*omit* F [33](#). service] Q2; Seruices F [39](#). these] Q2; the  
 F [42](#). Ay] Q2; *omit* F [42](#). SD Q2; *Exit*. F, *set 1 line  
 earlier* [46](#). I assure my] Q2; Assure you, my F [48](#). and] Q2;  
 one F [51](#). it hath] Q2; I haue F [53](#). do I] Q2; I do F [55](#).  
 fruit] Q2; Newes F [57](#). dear Gertrude] Q2; sweet Queene  
 F [60](#). o'erhasty] F; hastie Q2 [61](#). SD *Enter . . . Polonius.*  
*Enter Polonius, Voltumand, and Cornelius.* F, *set 1 line earlier  
 in both* Q2 and F [62](#). my] Q2; *omit* F [77](#). three-score] Q2;  
 three F [81](#). shown] Q2 (shone); F [83](#). this] Q2; his F [91](#).  
 SD *Voltemand and Cornelius exit.*] Ed.; *Exeunt Embassadors.*  
 Q2; *Exit Ambass.* F [92](#). is well] Q2; is very well F [97](#).  
 since] F; *omit* Q2 [106](#). 'tis 'tis] Q2; it is F [116](#). SD *He  
 reads.*] Ed.; *The Letter.* F; *omit* Q2 [120](#). Thus] Q2; these  
 F [121](#). *etc.*] Q2; *omit* F [123](#). SD *He reads the letter.*] *Letter.*  
 Q2; *omit* F [133](#). shown] Q2; shew'd F [134](#). above] F; about  
 Q2 [134](#). solicitings] Q2; soliciting F [146](#). winking] F;  
 working Q2 [149](#). bespeak:] Q2 (~,); ~^ F [151](#). prescripts]  
 Q2; Precepts F [152](#). his] F; her Q2 [155](#). repelled] Q2;  
 repulsed F [157](#). watch] F; wath Q2 [158](#). a] F; *omit*  
 Q2 [159](#). wherein] Q2; whereon F [160](#). mourn] Q2; waile  
 F [161](#). 'tis] F; *omit* Q2 [162](#). like] Q2; likely F [175](#). does]  
 Q2; ha's F [181](#). But] Q2; And F [186](#). SD Q2 *1 line earlier*; F  
*one-half line earlier* [190](#). Excellent well] Q2; Excellent,  
 excellent well F [195](#). ten] Q2; two F [202](#). but, as] Q2; but  
 not as F [206](#). far gone] Q2; farre gone, farre gone F [213](#).  
 that you read] Q2; you meane F [214](#). rogue] Q2; slaue  
 F [216](#). and] Q2; or F [217](#). lack] Q2; locke F [218](#). most]  
 Q2; *omit* F [220](#)–21. for yourself] Q2; for you your selfe  
 F [221](#). shall grow] Q2; should be F [229](#). sanity] F; sanctity  
 Q2 [230](#)–31. and . . . him] F; *omit* Q2 [231](#). My lord] Q2; My  
 Honourable Lord F [232](#). will take] Q2; I will most humbly |

Take F [233](#). sir] F; *omit* Q2 [234](#). will more] F; will not  
 more Q2 [234](#)–35. except my life, except my life, except my  
 life] Q2; except my life, my life F [237](#). SD 2 lines earlier in  
 Q2; 1 line later in F [238](#). the] Q2; my F [242](#). excellent] F;  
 extent Q2 [246](#). overhappy.] F; euer happy^ Q2 [247](#). cap]  
 F; lap Q2 [254](#). What news] Q2; What's the newes F [255](#).  
 that] F; *omit* Q2 [258](#)–89. Let . . . attended.] F; *omit*  
 Q2 [286](#). SP ROSENCRANTZ/GUILDENSTERN] Ed.; *Both* F [293](#).  
 even] F; euer Q2 [300](#). Anything] Q2; Why any thing F [301](#).  
 of] Q2; *omit* F [310](#). can] Q2; could F [317](#). discovery, and  
 your] Q2; discovery of your F [318](#). Queen^] Q2; ~: F [320](#).  
 exercises] Q2; exercise F [320](#). heavily] Q2; heavenly  
 F [324](#). firmament] Q2; *omit* F [325](#). appeareth nothing]  
 Q2; appears no other thing F [326](#). but] Q2; then F [327](#). a]  
 F; *omit* Q2 [328](#). faculties] Q2; faculty F [328](#)–30.  
 moving^ . . . admirable; . . . action^ . . . angel, . . .  
 apprehension^] F (~^ . . . ~? . . . ~, . . . ~? . . . ~,); ~, . . .  
 ~^ . . . ~, . . . ~^ . . . ~, Q2 [333](#). no] F; *omit* Q2 [333](#).  
 women] Q2; Woman F [337](#). then] Q2; *omit* F [344](#). on] Q2;  
 of F [347](#)–48. the clown . . . sear] F; *omit* Q2 [348](#). tickle]  
 Ed.; tickled F [349](#). blank] F; black Q2 [351](#). such] Q2; *omit*  
 F [359](#). are they] Q2; they are F [360](#)–85. F; *omit* Q2 [365](#).  
 berattle] F2; be-ratled F [372](#). most like] Ed.; like most  
 F [375](#). to-do] ~^ ~ F [386](#). very] Q2; *omit* F [387](#). mouths]  
 Q2; mowes F [388](#). fifty] Q2; *omit* F [390](#). 'Sblood] Q2; *omit*  
 F [394](#). then] Q2; *omit* F [396](#). this] Q2; the F [396](#). lest my]  
 F; let me Q2 [407](#). swaddling] Q2; swathing F [408](#). Haply]  
 Q2, F (Happily) [410](#). prophesy^] Q2 (~,); ~. F [411](#). sir, a]  
 Q2; Sir: for a F [412](#). then] Q2; so F [415](#). was] Q2; *omit*  
 F [419](#). came] Q2; can F [421](#)–22. pastoral-comical,  
 historical-pastoral] Q2; ~~~~~~ F [422](#)–23. tragical- . . . -  
 pastoral] F; *omit* Q2 [443](#). pious] Q2; *Pons* F [444](#).  
 abridgment comes] Q2; Abridgements come F [444](#). SD

*Enter the Players.*] Q2; *Enter foure or fiue Players.* F 446.  
 my] F; omit Q2 447. Why] Q2; omit F 447. valanced] Q2;  
 valiant F 449. By'r] F; by Q2 450. to] Q2; omit F 454.  
 French falconers] F; friendly Fankners Q2 457, 493, 527,  
 530. SP FIRST] F; omit Q2 457. good] Q2; omit F 462.  
 judgments] Q2; Iudgement F 466. were] Q2; was F 468.  
 affection] Q2; affectation F 469–70. as wholesome . . . fine]  
 Q2; omit F 470. One speech] Q2; One cheefe Speech  
 F 471. tale] F; talke Q2 472. when] Q2; where F 481.  
*dismal.*] F (~:); ~^ Q2 482. *total*] Q2; to take F 485. *a*  
*damnèd*] Q2; damned F 486. *lord's murder*] Q2; vilde  
 Murthers F 490. Q2; omit F 496. *matched*] Q2; match  
 F 499. *Then . . . Ilium*] F; omit Q2 500. *this*] Q2; his  
 F 506. *And*] F; omit Q2 520. *fellies*] Ed.; follies Q2; Fallies  
 F 527. *ah woe . . . moblèd*] Q2; O who . . . inobled F 528.  
*moblèd*] Q2; inobled F 529. “*Moblèd queen*” is good] Ed.;  
 omit Q2; Inobled Queene is good F 530. *flames*] Q2; flame  
 F 531. *bisson rheum*] F; *Bison rehume* Q2 531. *upon*] Q2;  
 about F 540. *husband's*] F; husband Q2 546. *Prithee*] Q2;  
 Pray you F 547–48. of this] Q2; omit F 550. *abstract*] Q2;  
 Abstracts F 552. *live*] Q2; liued F 555. *bodykins*] F;  
 bodkin Q2 555. *much*] Q2; omit F 556. *shall*] Q2; should  
 F 562. SD *As . . . Player.*] This ed.; *Exeunt Pol. and Players.*  
 Q2 after line 573; *Exit Polon.* F after line 560 566. *ha 't*] Q2  
 (hate), F 566. *a*] F; omit Q2 567. *dozen or*] F; dosen lines,  
 or Q2 573. *till*] Q2 (tell); til F 575. *good-bye to you*] Q2  
 (God buy to you); God buy'ye F 575. SD *Rosencrantz . . .*  
*exit.*] *Exeunt.* Q2; *Exeunt. Manet Hamlet.* F, both after line  
 574 580. *own*] Q2; whole F 581. *his*] F; the Q2 581.  
*wanned*] Q2; warm'd F 583. *and*] Q2 (an); and F 586. to  
 Hecuba] F; to her Q2 588. *the cue*] F; that Q2 593.  
*faculties*] Q2; faculty F 603. *'Swounds*] Q2; Why F 606.  
*have*] F; a Q2 607. *offal.* Bloody, bawdy] Q2 (~, ~, ~); Offall,

bloudy: a Bawdy F [610](#). F; *omit* Q2 [611](#). Why] Q2; Who F [611](#). I! This] Q2; I? I sure, this F [612](#). a] Q2; the F [612](#). father] Q3; *omit* Q2, F [616](#). stallion] Q2; Scullion F [617](#). brains!—Hum, I] Q2; Braine. | I F [626](#). do] Q2; but F [628](#). a] Q2; the F [628](#). devil . . . devil] F; deale . . . deale Q2

**3.1.** **0.** SD *and*] F; *omit* Q2 **1**. And] Q2 (An); And F **1**. conference] Q2; circumstance F [18](#). o'erraught] Q2; ore-wrought F [20](#). here] Q2; *omit* F [29](#). into] Q2; on | To F [30](#). SD Q2; *Exeunt*. F [31](#). too] F; two Q2 [33](#). here] Q2; there F [35](#). lawful espials] F; *omit* Q2 [36](#). Will] F; Wee'le Q2 [39](#). no<sup>^</sup>] Q2; ~. F [52](#). loneliness] F; lowlines Q2 [54](#). sugar] Q2; surge F [56](#). too] Q2; *omit* F [63](#). Let's] F; *omit* Q2 [63](#). SD *Enter Hamlet.*] Q2 *1 line earlier*; F *Exeunt. Enter Hamlet* [68](#). die,] F; ~<sup>^</sup> Q2 [68](#). sleep—] ~<sup>^</sup> Q2, F [72](#). wished.] F; ~<sup>^</sup> Q2 [72](#). die,] ~<sup>^</sup> Q2, F [79](#). proud] Q2; poore F [80](#). despised] Q2; dispriz'd F [84](#). would fardels] Q2; would these Fardles F [91](#). of us all] F; *omit* Q2 [93](#). sicklied] F; sickled Q2 [94](#). pitch] Q2; pith F [95](#). awry] Q2; away F [101](#). well] Q2; well, well, well F [105](#). not I] Q2; no F [106](#). you know] Q2; I know F [108](#). the] F; these Q2 [108](#)–9. Their . . . lost] Q2; then . . . left F [117](#). your honesty] F; you Q2 [120](#). with] Q2; your F [128](#). inoculate] F; euocutat Q2 [131](#). to] F; *omit* Q2 [137](#). in, imagination<sup>^</sup>] Q2; ~<sup>^</sup> ~, F [139](#). earth and heaven] Q2; Heauen and Earth F [140](#). all] F; *omit* Q2 [144](#). nowhere] Q2; no way F [149](#). nunnery, farewell] Q2; Nunnery. Go, Farewell F [153](#). Heavenly] Q2; O heauenly F [154](#). paintings] Q2; pratlings F [154](#). too] F; *omit* Q2 [155](#)–56. hath . . . face . . . yourselves] Q2; has . . . pace . . . your selfe F [156](#). jig and] Q2; gidge, you F [157](#). lisp] F; list Q2 [157](#). you nickname] Q2; and nickname F [158](#). wantonness your] F; wantonness Q2 [160](#). marriage] Q2; Marriages F [166](#). expectancy] F; expectation Q2 [169](#). And] Q2; Haue F [170](#). musicked] Q2;

Musicke F [171](#). that] F; what Q2 [172](#). time] Q2; tune F [173](#). stature] Q2; Feature F [175](#). Q2 *uncorr. prints* "Exit." [176](#). SP KING, *advancing with Polonius*] Ed.; *Enter King and Polonius*. Q2, F [178](#). soul^] Q2; ~? F [181](#). for] Q2; *omit* F [191](#). his] Q2; this F [197](#). grief] Q2; Greefes F [203](#). unwatched] F; vnmatcht Q2

**3.2.** 0. *three*] Q2; *two or three* F [1](#). pronounced] F; pronoun'd Q2 [3](#). our] Q2; your F [4](#). town-crier spoke] Q2; Town-Cryer had spoke F [5](#). with] Q2; *omit* F [6–7](#). say, whirlwind of your passion] Q2; say) the Whirle-winde of | Passion F [9](#). hear] Q2; see F [13](#). would] Q2; could F [20](#). o'erstep] Q2; ore-stop F [24](#). own] F; *omit* Q2 [27](#). makes] Q2; make F [29](#). the] F; *omit* Q2 [31](#). praise] F; prayisd Q2 [34](#). nor man] Q2; or Norman F [39](#). sir] F; *omit* Q2 [47](#). SD *Players exit.*] F; *omit* Q2 [47](#). SD *Enter . . . Rosencrantz.*] *placed as in* F; *2 lines later in* Q2 [51](#). SD *Polonius exits.*] F; *omit* Q2 [53](#). ROSENCRANTZ Ay] Q2; *Both*. We will F [53](#). SD *They exit.*] F; *Exeunt they two*. Q2 [54](#). SD *1 line earlier in* F [59](#). SP HAMLET] F; *omit* Q2 [64](#). lick] Q2; like F [66](#). fawning] Q2; faining F [67](#). her] Q2; my F [68](#). distinguish, her election] F; ~^ ~ ~, Q2 [69](#). Hath] F; S'hath Q2 [72](#). Hast] Q2; Hath F [74](#). commeddled] Q2; commingled F [84](#). thy] Q2; my F [89](#). heedful] Q2; needfull F [92](#). In] Q2; To F [95](#). detecting] F; detected Q2 [95](#). SD *omit* Q2; *following 97 SD in* F [97](#). SD *2 lines earlier in* Q2, F [97](#). SD *the King's*] Ed.; *his* F *torches*] *Torches*. *Danish March* F [104](#). mine now. My] ~ ~^ ~ Q2; ~. ~ ~ F [106](#). did I] Q2; I did F [108](#). What] Q2; And what F [115](#). SP QUEEN] F; Ger. Q2 [115](#). dear] Q2; good F [121–22](#). F; *omit* Q2 [144](#). SD *The . . . follows.*] Q2; *Hoboyes play*. *The dumbe shew enters*. F [145](#). *a Queen*] Q2; *Queene* F [145](#). *very lovingly*] F; *omit* Q2 [146](#). *and he her*] Q2; *omit* F [146–47](#). *She . . . him.*] F; *omit* Q2 [148](#). *He lies*] Q2; *Layes* F [150](#).

*comes*] F; *come* Q2 [150](#). *another man*] Q2; *a Fellow* F [150](#).  
*it, pours*] Q2; *it, and powres* F [151](#). *sleeper's*] Q2; *Kings*  
*F* [151](#). *leaves him*] Q2; *Exits* F [152](#). *dead, makes*] Q2; *dead,*  
*and makes* F [153](#). *three or four*] Q2; *two or three Mutes*  
*F* [153](#)–54. *come . . . seem to condole*] Q2; *comes . . . seeming*  
*to lament* F [155](#). *harsh*] Q2; *loath and vnwilling* F [156](#). *his*]  
*F; omit* Q2 [156](#). SD *Players exit.*] Ed.; *Exeunt* F; *omit*  
*Q2* [158](#). *is miching*] F; *munching* Q2 [158](#). *It*] Q2; *that*  
*F* [161](#). SD *one-half line later in* Q2; *after line 169 in* F [162](#).  
*this fellow*] Q2; *these Fellowes* F [163](#). *counsel*] F; *omit*  
*Q2* [164](#). *he*] Q2; *they* F [175](#). SD *and Queen*] Q2; *and his*  
*Queene* F [176](#) *and hereafter to line 248*. SP *PLAYER KING*] Ed.;  
*King* Q2, F [177](#). *orbèd*] F; *orb'd the* Q2 [182](#) *and hereafter*  
*until line 251*. SP *PLAYER QUEEN*] *Quee.* Q2; *Bap.* F [185](#). *your*]  
*F; our* Q2 [185](#). *former*] Q2; *forme* F [188](#). Q2; *omit* F [189](#).  
*And*] Q2; *For* F [189](#). *hold*] Q2; *holds* F [190](#). *In*] F; *Eyther*  
*none, in* Q2 [191](#). *love*] F; *Lord* Q2 [193](#)–94. Q2; *omit*  
*F* [196](#). *their*] Q2; *my* F [204](#). *That's*] Q2; *Wormwood*  
*F* [205](#). SP *omit* Q2; *Bapt.* F [209](#). *you^*] Q2; *~.* F [213](#). *the*  
*fruit*] Q2; *like Fruite* F [219](#). *either*] Q2; *other* F [220](#).  
*enactures*] Q2; *ennactors* F [222](#). *joys*] F; *ioy* Q2 [227](#).  
*favorite*] Q2; *fauourites* F [239](#). *me give*] Q2; *giue me*  
*F* [241](#)–42. Q2; *omit* F [242](#). *An*] Ed.; *And* Q2 [246](#). *once*  
*a . . . be wife*] F; *once I be a . . . be a wife* Q2 [247](#). *printed*  
*after line 245 in* Q2 [250](#). SD *F only, 1 line later* [252](#). SD  
*Ed.; Exeunt.* Q2; *Exit* F [254](#). *doth protest*] Q2; *protests*  
*F* [261](#). *how?*] F; *~^* Q2 [267](#). SD *1 line later in* Q2 [269](#). *as*  
*good as a*] Q2; *a good* F [276](#). *your*] Q2; *omit* F [277](#). *Pox*]  
*F; omit* Q2 [282](#). *Confederate*] F; *Considerat* Q2 [284](#).  
*infected*] F; *inuected* Q2 [286](#). *usurp*] F; *vsurps* Q2 [286](#). SD  
*F; omit* Q2 [288](#). *written*] Q2; *writ* F [289](#). *very*] Q2; *omit*  
*F* [292](#). F; *omit* Q2 [296](#). SP *POLONIUS*] Q2; *All.* F [300](#). *Thus*]  
*Q2; So* F [302](#). *two*] F; *omit* Q2 [304](#). *players*] Q2; *Players,*

sir F [321](#). SD *placed as in* Q2; *after line 316 in* F [330](#). lord, with] Q2; Lord, rather with F [332](#). the] Q2; his F [333](#). into more] Q2; into farre more F [336](#). start] F; stare Q2 [346](#). my] F; *omit* Q2 [348](#). SP ROSENCRANTZ] Q2; *Guild.* F [350](#). answer] Q2; answers F [351](#). as] Q2; *omit* F [358](#). Impart] Q2; *omit* F [364](#). And do] Q2; And I do F [366](#). surely . . . upon] Q2; freely . . . of F [372](#). sir] Q2; *omit* F [373](#). SD *after line 371 in* Q2; *Enter one with a Recorder.* F [374](#). recorders] Q2; Recorder F [374](#). one] Q2; *omit* F [387](#). It is . . . ventages] Q2; 'Tis . . . Ventiges F [388](#). fingers] Q2; finger F [388](#). thumb] F; the vmber Q2 [389](#). eloquent] Q2; excellent F [397](#). the top of] F; *omit* Q2 [399](#). speak. 'Sblood] Q2; Why F [400](#). think I] Q2; thinke, that I F [401](#)–2. you can fret] F; you fret Q2 [402](#). me, you] F; me not, you Q2 [402](#). SD *1 line later in* Q2, F [406](#)–7. yonder . . . of] Q2; that . . . like F [408](#). Mass, and 'tis] Q2; Misse, and it's F [413](#). SP HAMLET] F; *omit* Q2 [413](#). I will] Q2; will I F [416](#). SP POLONIUS] F; *omit* Q2 [417](#). SP HAMLET] F; *omit* Q2 [417](#)–18. Leave me, friends] *placed here in* F; *after line 415 in* Q2 [418](#). SD *omit* Q2; *Exit.* F *after line 416* [420](#). breathes] F; breakes Q2 [424](#). bitter business as the day] F; busines as the bitter day Q2 [429](#). daggers] F; dagger Q2 [432](#). SD Q2; *omit* F

**3.3.** [6](#). near 's] Q2; dangerous F [7](#). brows] Q2; Lunacies F [15](#). weal] Q2; spirit F [16](#). cess] Q2; cease F [18](#). or] Q2; *omit* F [19](#). summit] Ed.; somnet Q2, F [20](#). huge] F; hough Q2 [23](#). ruin] F; raine Q2 [24](#). with] F; *omit* Q2 [26](#). about] Q2; vpon F [28](#). SP ROSENCRANTZ] Q2; *Both.* F [28](#). SD *Rosencrantz . . . exit.]* Ed.; *Exeunt Gent.* Q2, F [39](#). SD *Polonius exits.]* Ed.; *Exit.* Q2 *after line 38; omit* F [54](#). pardoned] F; pardon Q2 [62](#). shove] F; showe Q2 [77](#). pat] F; but Q2 [77](#). a-praying] Q2; praying F [80](#). revenged] F; reuendge Q2 [82](#). sole] Q2; foule F [84](#). Why] Q2; Oh F [84](#).

hire and salary] F; base and silly Q2 [86](#). With all] F; Withall Q2 [86](#). flush] Q2; fresh F [96](#). game, a-swearing] Q2; gaming, swearing F

**3.4.** [0](#). SD *Queen*] F; *Gertrard* Q2 [7](#). with him] F; *omit* Q2 [8](#). F; *omit* Q2 [9](#). SP *and hereafter in 3.4 and 4.1* QUEEN] F; *Ger.* Q2, *except line 61: "Quee."* [9](#). warrant] F; wait Q2 [10](#). SD *Enter Hamlet.*] *placed as in* F; Q2 *after line 7* [15](#). a wicked] Q2; an idle F [21](#). And (would it . . . so)] And^ would it . . . so, Q2; But^ would you . . . so. F [25](#). inmost] F; most Q2 [27](#). Help] Q2; Helpe, helpe F [28](#). Help] Q2; helpe, helpe, helpe F [29](#). SD *kills Polonius.*] F *1 line later; omit* Q2 [39](#). better] Q2; Betters F [46](#). be] Q2; is F [51](#). off] Q2 (of); off F [53](#). sets] Q2; makes F [57](#)–[58](#). glow^ | O'er] Q2; glow, | Yea F [59](#). heated] Q2; tristfull F [62](#). That] F; *Ham.* That Q2 [63](#). SP HAMLET] F; *omit* Q2 [65](#). this] Q2; his F [67](#). and] Q2; or F [69](#). heaven] F; heaue, a Q2 [75](#). brother] Q2; breath F [81](#)–[86](#). Sense . . . difference.] Q2; *omit* F [88](#)–[91](#). Eyes . . . mope.] Q2; *omit* F [98](#). And] Q2; As F [98](#). panders] F; pardons Q2 [100](#). eyes into my very soul] F; very eyes into my soule Q2 [101](#). grainèd] F; greeued Q2 [102](#). not leave their] F; leaue there their Q2 [111](#). tithe] F; kyth Q2 [117](#). SD *1 line earlier in* Q2, F [119](#). your] Q2; you F [134](#). do] Q2; *omit* F [135](#). th' incorporal] Q2; their corporall F [149](#). whom] Q2; who F [156](#). SD *Ghost exits.*] Q2; *Exit.* F [160](#). F; *omit* Q2 [164](#). I] F; *omit* Q2 [166](#). that] Q2; a F [172](#). on] Q2; or F [173](#). ranker] Q2; ranke F [174](#). these] Q2; this F [179](#). live] F; leaue Q2 [181](#). Assume] F; Assune Q2 [182](#)–[86](#). That . . . on] Q2; *omit* F [186](#). on.] ~^ Q2 [186](#). Refrain tonight] F; to refraine night Q2 [188](#)–[91](#). the . . . potency] Q2; *omit* F [200](#). This] Q2; Thus F [201](#). Q2; *omit* F [204](#). bloat] Q2; blunt F [208](#). ravel] F; rouell Q2 [210](#). mad] Q2; made F [225](#)–[33](#). Q2; *omit* F [236](#). night^ indeed] Q2; ~. ~ F [238](#). a foolish] F; a most foolish

Q2 240. SD *They . . . Polonius.*] Ed.; *Exit*. Q2; *Exit Hamlet . . . Polonius.* F

**4.1.** 0. SD *Enter . . . Guildenstern.*] Q2; *Enter King*. F 1. matter] Q2; matters F 4. Q2; omit F 5. mine own] Q2; my good F 7. sea] Q2; Seas F 10. Whips out his rapier, cries] Q2; He whips his Rapier out, and cries F 11. this] Q2; his F 23. let] Q2; let's F 33. SD *Enter . . . Guildenstern.*] Q2 *1 line earlier*; F *one-half line earlier* 36. mother's closet] Q2; Mother Clossets F 36. dragged] F; dreg'd Q2 38. SD *Rosencrantz . . . exit.*] F (*Exit Gent.*); omit Q2 42–45. Whose . . . air.] Q2; omit F

**4.2.** 0. SD *Enter Hamlet.*] F; *Enter Hamlet, Rosencraus, and others.* Q2 2. F; omit Q2 3. SP HAMLET] F; omit Q2 3. But soft] Q2; omit F 4. SD *Enter . . . others.*] F (*Enter Ros. and Guildensterne.*) 6. Compounded] F; Compound Q2 17–18. an ape] F; omit Q2 18. an apple] Q2; omit F 30–31. Hide . . . after!] F; omit Q2

**4.3.** 0. SD *Enter . . . three.*] Q2; *Enter King*. F 7. never] Q2; neerer F 11. SD *Enter Rosencrantz.*] F; *Enter Rosencraus and all the rest.* Q2 18. Ho . . . lord] Q2; Hoa, Guildensterne? Bring in my Lord. F 18. SD *They . . . Hamlet.*] Ed.; *They enter.* Q2; *Enter Hamlet and Guildensterne.* F 23. politic] Q2; omit F 25. ourselves] Q2; our selfe F 27. service—two] Q2 (~, ~); seruice to F 29–32. Q2; omit F 33. SP KING] F; *King. King.* Q2 38. there] F; thre Q2 39. if, indeed] Q2; indeed, if F 40. within] Q2; omit F 44. deed, for] Q2; deed of thine. for F 48. With fiery quickness] F; omit Q2 50. is] Q2; at F 56. them] Q2; him F 61. and so] F; so Q2 73. congruing] Q2; coniuring F 77. will ne'er begin] Q2; were ne'er begun F

**4.4.** 0. SD *Enter . . . stage.*] Q2; *Enter Fortinbras with an Armie.* F 3. Craves] Q2; Claimes F 9. softly] Q2; safely

F 9. SD *All . . . others.*] Ed.; *Enter Hamlet, Rosencraus, &c.* Q2; *Exit.* F 10–69. Q2; *omit* F 20. name.] ~^ Q2

**4.5.** 0. SD *Queen*] F; *Gertrard* Q2; *Enter Queene and Horatio.* F 2, 5. SP GENTLEMAN] Q2; *Hor.* F 11. aim] F; yawne Q2 15. might] Q2; would F 18. SP HORATIO] Q2; *Qu.* F 21. SP QUEEN] Ed.; *omit* Q2, F 22. SP *To*] F; *Quee.* Q2 25. SD *Enter . . . distracted.*] F; *Enter Ophelia.* Q2 *after line 21* 28. SD *sings*] Ed.; *shee sings.* Q2 *after line 27*; *omit* F 34. SD *Sings*] Ed.; *Song.* Q2 *after line 35*; *omit* F 38. Q2; *omit* F 41. SD *Enter King.*] Q2; *after line 37 in* F 43. SD *sings*] Ed.; *Song.* Q2 *after line 44*; *omit* F 43. *all*] Q2; *omit* F 44. *ground*] Q2; *graue* F 47. *God*] F; *good* Q2 51. *Pray let's*] Q2; *Pray you let's* F 53. SD *Sings*] Ed.; *Song.* Q2 *after line 53*; *omit* F 62. *Indeed, without*] Q2; *Indeed la? without* F 69. Q2; *omit* F 70. 'a] Q2; *ha* F 72. *thus*] Q2; *this* F 74. *would*] Q2; *should* F 77–78. *Good . . . good . . . good . . . good*] F; *God . . . god . . . god . . . god* Q2 78. SD F; *omit* Q2 81. *and now behold*] Q2; *omit* F 83. *sorrows come*] Q2; *sorrowes comes* F 84. *battalions*] Q2; *Battaliaes* F 87. *their*] F; *omit* Q2 96. *Feeds*] Q2; *Keepes* F 96. *his*] F; *this* Q2 100. *person*] Q2; *persons* F 104. F; *omit* Q2 105. Q2; *omit* F 106. *is*] Q2; *are* F 106. SD *after line 103* Q2, F 116. *They*] F; *The* Q2 118. SD *A noise within.*] Q2 *1 line later*; *Noise within.* F *2 lines later* 121. SD *Enter . . . others.*] Q2 *1 line earlier*; *Enter Laertes.* F *1 line earlier* 122. *this king?—Sirs*] Q2 (~ ~? ~); *the King, sirs?* F 130. *that's calm*] Q2; *that calmes* F 156. *world*] F; *worlds* Q2 161. *father, is 't*] Q2; *Fathers death, if* F 162. *swoopstake*] Ed.; *soopstake* Q2, F 168. *pelican*] Q2; *Politician* F 173. *sensibly*] Q2; *sensible* F 174. 'pear] Q2; *pierce* F 176. F; *Laer.* *Let her come in.* Q2, *printed after "Enter Ophelia."* 177. SP LAERTES] F; *omit* Q2 177. SD *Enter Ophelia.* F *1 line earlier*; Q2 *after line 175* 180. *with*] Q2; *by*

F [181](#). turn] Q2; turnes F [184](#). an old] F; a poore Q2 [185](#)–87. F; *omit* Q2 [188](#). SD *sings*] Ed.; Song. Q2 *after line 188; omit* F [189](#). F; *omit* Q2 [190](#). in . . . rained] Q2; on . . . raines F [194](#). A-down a-down] Q2; downe a-downe F [200](#). you] Q2; *omit* F [200](#). pansies] Q2; Paconcies F [204](#). columbines] F; Colembines Q2 [206](#). herb of grace] Q2; Herbe-Grace F [206](#). You] Q2; Oh you F [206](#). must] F; may Q2 [211](#). afflictions] Q2; Affliction F [213](#). SD *sings*] Ed.; Song. Q2 *after line 213; omit* F [218](#). was] Q2; *omit* F [219](#). All] F; *omit* Q2 [222](#). God 'a mercy] Q2; Gramercy F [223](#). Christians'] Q2; Christian F [223](#). I pray God] F; *omit* Q2 [224](#). SD *She exits.*] F (*Exeunt Ophelia*); *omit* Q2 [225](#). see] F; *omit* Q2 [225](#). O God] Q2; you Gods F [226](#). commune] Q2; common F [238](#). funeral] Q2; buriall F [242](#). call 't] Q2; call F

**4.6.** [0](#). SD *Enter . . . others.*] Q2; *Enter Horatio, with an Attendant.* F [2](#). SP GENTLEMAN] Q2; Ser. F [2](#). Seafaring men] Q2; Saylor F [6](#). greeted,] ~. Q2 [6](#). SD *Enter Sailors.*] Q2; *Enter Saylor.* F [9](#). an 't] F; and Q2 [10](#). came from th' ambassador] Q2; comes from th'Ambassadors F [13](#). SP HORATIO] Q2; *omit* F [16](#). warlike] Q2; Warlicke F [18](#). and] Q2; *omit* F [22](#). good] F; *omit* Q2 [23](#). speed] Q2; hast F [25](#). thine] Q2; your F [26](#). bore] F; bord Q2 [30](#). He] F; So Q2 [32](#). SP Come] F; Hor. Come Q2 [32](#). give] F; *omit* Q2 [34](#). SD *They exit.*] Ed.; *Exeunt.* Q2; *Exit.* F

**4.7.** [7](#). proceeded] F; proceede Q2 [8](#). criminal] Q2; crimefull F [9](#). greatness] Q2; *omit* F [13](#). But] Q2; And F [16](#). conjunctive] F; concliue Q2 [22](#). Work] Q2; Would F [24](#). loud a wind] F; loued Arm'd Q2 [26](#). But . . . have aimed] Q2; And . . . had arm'd F [29](#). Whose worth] Q2; Who was F [37](#). SD *with letters*] Q2; *omit* F [38](#)–40. F; *omit* Q2 [41](#). SP These] Ed.; *Messen.* These Q2; This F [45](#). Q2; *omit* F [48](#). SD F; *omit* Q2 [51](#). your] F; you Q2 [52](#). the

occasion] Q2; *th'Occasions* F [53](#). *and more strange*] F; omit Q2 [53](#). *Hamlet*] F; omit Q2 [54](#). SP What] F; *King*. What Q2 [55](#). and] Q2; Or F [59](#). advise] F; devise Q2 [62](#). shall] F; omit Q2 [67](#)–68. Ay . . . will] Q2; If so you'l F [70](#). checking] F; the King Q2 [77](#)–92. LAERTES . . . graveness.] Q2; omit F [92](#). Two months since] Q2; Some two Monthes hence F [95](#). can] Q2; ran F [96](#). unto] Q2; into F [99](#). topped] Q2; past F [99](#). my] F; me Q2 [104](#). Lamord] Q2; *Lamound* F [107](#). the] Q2; our F [111](#). especial] Q2; especially F [113](#)–16. The . . . them.] Q2; omit F [119](#). you] Q2; him F [121](#). What] Q2; Why F [130](#)–40. Q2; omit F [139](#). spendthrift] Q5; spend thirfts Q2 [142](#). yourself indeed your . . . son] Q2; your selfe your . . . sonne indeed F [153](#). on] F; ore Q2 [157](#). pass] F; pace Q2 [160](#). that] F; omit Q2 [162](#). that, but dip] Q2; I but dipt F [171](#). shape.] Ed.; ~^ Q2; ~, F [176](#). did] Q2; should F [177](#). cunnings] Q2; commings F [180](#). that] Q2; the F [181](#). prepared] F; prefard Q2 [185](#)–86. But . . . noise] Q2; how sweet Queene F [188](#). they] Q2; they'l F [190](#). askant the] Q2; aslant a F [191](#). hoar] F; horry Q2 [192](#). make] Q2; come F [195](#). our cold] F; our cull-cold Q2 [199](#). her] Q2; the F [202](#). lauds] Q2; tunes F [206](#). their] Q2; her F [207](#). lay] Q2; buy F [209](#). she is] Q2; is she F [217](#). drowns] Q2; doubts F

**5.1. 0.** SD *Enter . . . Another.*] Ed.; *Enter two Clownes*. Q2, F [1](#) *and throughout scene*. SP GRAVEDIGGER] Ed.; *Clowne* Q2, F [2](#). when she] Q2; that F [3](#). is. Therefore] Q2; is, and therefore F [9](#). *se offendendo*] F; so offended Q2 [12](#). to act] Q2; an Act F [12](#). do, to] Q2; doe, and to F [12](#). Argal] F; or all Q2 [35](#)–38. OTHER . . . arms?] F; omit Q2 [44](#). frame] F; omit Q2 [56](#). SD F; omit Q2 [60](#). houses he] Q2; Houses that he F [61](#). in, and] Q2; to *Yaughan* F [62](#). stoup] F; soope Q2 [62](#). SD This ed.; *Sings*. F; *Song*. Q2 *after line 63* [66](#). *a . . . a*] Q2; omit F [67](#). SP HAMLET] F; *Enter Hamlet*

*and Horatio. Ham.* Q2 [67](#). business? He] Q2 (busines? a);  
 businesse, that he F [68](#). in] Q2; at F [72](#). daintier] F;  
 dintier Q2 [73](#). SD *sings*] F; Song. Q2 *after line 73* [74](#).  
*clawed*] Q2; *caught* F [75](#). *into*] Q2; *intill* F [80](#). This] Q2; It  
 F [81](#). now] Q2; *omit* F [81](#). o'erreaches] Q2; o're Offices  
 F [81](#). would] Q2; could F [85](#). thou, sweet] Q2; thou, good  
 F [87](#). went] Q2; meant F [91](#). mazard] F; massene Q2 [92](#).  
 an] Q2 (and); if F [96](#). SD *sings*] F; Song. Q2 [100](#). may] Q2;  
 might F [101](#). of . . . quiddities] Q2; of of . . . Quiddits  
 F [102](#). quillities] Q2 (quillites); Quillets F [103](#). mad] Q2;  
 rude F [108](#)–9. Is . . . recoveries] F; *omit* Q2 [110](#). his] F;  
*omit* Q2 [111](#). double ones too] F; doubles Q2 [113](#).  
 scarcely] Q2; hardly F [117](#). calves'] Q2; Calue F [118](#).  
 which] Q2; that F [120](#). sirrah] Q2; Sir F [122](#). O] F; or  
 Q2 [123](#). F; *omit* Q2 [126](#). in 't, yet] Q2; in't; and yet F [142](#).  
 this . . . took] Q2; these . . . taken F [144](#). heel of the] Q2;  
 heeles of our F [145](#)–46. been grave-maker] Q2; been a  
 Grauemaker F [147](#). all] F; *omit* Q2 [152](#). that very] Q2; the  
 very F [153](#). is] Q2; was F [159](#). him there] Q2; him F [167](#).  
 sexton] Q2; sixteene F [169](#). Faith] Q2; Ifaith F [170](#).  
 nowadays] F; *omit* Q2 [178](#). now hath lien you] Q2; now:  
 this Scul, has laine F [186](#). sir, was, sir, Yorick's] Q2; Sir,  
 this same Scull sir, was *Yoricks* F [190](#). Let me see.] F; *omit*  
 Q2 [192](#). bore] Q2; borne F [193](#)–94. and now how  
 abhorred in my imagination it is] Q2; And how abhorred my  
 Imagination is F [198](#). Not] Q2; No F [199](#). grinning] Q2;  
 Ieering F [200](#). chamber] F; table Q2 [215](#)–16. as thus] F;  
*omit* Q2 [217](#). to] Q2; into F [220](#). Imperious] Q2; Imperiall  
 F [223](#). winter's] F; waters Q2 [223](#). SD *Enter . . . Divinity.*  
*Ed.; Enter K. Q. Laertes and the corse.* Q2 *after line 224; Enter*  
*King, Queene, Laertes, and a Coffin, with Lords attendant.* F  
*after line 224* [224](#). awhile] Q2; aside F [225](#). this] Q2; that  
 F [227](#). desp'rate] Q2; disperate F [228](#). of] Q2; *omit*

F [233](#), [244](#). SP DOCTOR] Q2; *Priest*. F [234](#). warranty] Q2; warrantis F [236](#). been] Q2; haue F [237](#). prayers] Q2; praier F [238](#). Shards] F; *omit* Q2 [240](#). crants] Q2; Rites F [246](#). a] Q2; sage F [257](#). have] Q2; t'haue F [258](#). treble woe] Q2; terrible woer F [259](#). treble] F; double Q2 [262](#). SD F; *omit* Q2 [267](#). grief] Q2; griefes F [269](#). Conjures] Q2; Coniure F [275](#). For] Q2; Sir F [275](#). and] F; *omit* Q2 [276](#). in me something] Q2; something in me F [277](#). wisdom . . . Hold off] Q2; wisenesse . . . Away F [280](#). Q2; *omit* F [281](#). SP HORATIO] Q2; *Gen*. F [290](#). 'Swounds] Q2; Come F [291](#). woo't fast] Q2; *omit* F [294](#). thou] F; *omit* Q2 [302](#). SP QUEEN] Q2; *King*. F [303](#). thus] F; this Q2 [305](#). couplets] Q2; Cuplet F [311](#). SD *Hamlet exits.*] Q2; *Exit*. F [312](#). thee] Q2; you F [312](#). SD *Horatio exits.*] Q2 *here completes the SD begun in its margin 1 line above as "Exit Hamlet" with "and Horatio."*; *omit* F [313](#). your] Q2; you F [318](#). thereby] Q2 *corr.*; thirtie Q2 *uncorr.*; shortly F

**5.2.** [1](#). shall you] Q2; let me F [5](#). Methought] F; my thought Q2 [6](#). bilboes] F; bilbo Q2 [7](#). praised] Q2; praise F [9](#). deep . . . learn] Q2; deare . . . teach F [9](#). pall] Q2 *uncorr.*; fall Q2 *corr.*; paule F [20](#). unfold] Q2; vnseale F [22](#). A] Q2; Oh F [23](#). reasons] Q2; reason F [31](#). now] Q2; me F [33](#). villainies] Ed.; villaines Q2, F [34](#). Or] Q2; Ere F [41](#). Th' effect] Q2; The effects F [45](#). like . . . might] Q2; as . . . should F [48](#). ases] Ed.; as sir Q2; Assis F [49](#). knowing] Q2; know F [51](#). those] Q2; the F [54](#). ordinant] Q2; ordinate F [57](#). the form] Q2; forme F [58](#). Subscribed] F; Subscribe Q2 [61](#). sequent] Q2; sement F [64](#). F; *omit* Q2 [65](#). defeat] Q2; debate F [71](#). think] Q2; thinkst F [77](#)–[91](#). F; *omit* Q2 [88](#). court] Ed.; count F [91](#). SD *Enter . . . courtier.*] *Enter a Courtier*. Q2; *Enter young Osricke*. F [92](#) *and thereafter*. SP OSRIC] F; *Cour*. Q2 [94](#). humbly] F; humble Q2 [101](#). say] Q2; saw F [102](#). lordship] Q2; friendship

F [104](#). sir] Q2; *omit* F [105](#). Put] F; *omit* Q2 [111](#). But yet]  
 Q2; *omit* F [111](#). sultry . . . for] F; sully . . . or Q2 [114](#). how.  
 My] Q2; how: but my F [118](#). good my lord] Q2; in good  
 faith F [119](#)–48. Q2; *omit* F [120](#). gentleman] Q3;  
 gentlemen Q2 [122](#). feelingly] Q3; sellingly Q2 *uncorr.*;  
 fellingly Q2 *corr.* [127](#). dozy] Q2 *uncorr.*; dazzie Q2  
*corr.* [128](#). yaw] Q2 *uncorr.*; raw Q2 *corr.* [139](#). to 't] Q2  
*uncorr.*; doo't Q2 *corr.* [150](#). is] Q2; is at his weapon F [151](#)–  
 56. Q2; *omit* F [154](#). his] Q5; this Q2 [160](#). King, sir, hath  
 wagered] Q2; sir King ha's wag'd F [161](#). has impawned]  
 Q2; impon'd F [163](#). hangers] F; hanger Q2 [163](#). and] Q2;  
 or F [168](#)–69. Q2; *omit* F [170](#). carriages] F; carriage  
 Q2 [172](#). a] Q2; *omit* F [173](#). might be] F; be Q2 *uncorr.*; be  
 might Q2 *corr.* [173](#). on. Six] Q2 (on, six); on sixe F [176](#).  
 bet] Q2; but F [176](#)–77. this all “impawned,” as you] Ed.;  
 this all you Q2; this impon'd as F [178](#). laid, sir, that] Q2;  
 laid that F [179](#). yourself] Q2; you F [180](#)–81. hath laid  
 on . . . nine . . . it] Q2; hath one . . . mine . . . that F [189](#). an]  
 Q2 (and); if F [192](#). deliver] Q2; redeliuer F [192](#). e'en] F;  
*omit* Q2 [196](#). Yours . . . He does] Ed.; Yours doo's Q2;  
 Yours, yours; hee does F [198](#). turn] Q2; tongue F [201](#). did  
 comply, sir] did sir Q2 *uncorr.*; did so sir Q2 *corr.*; did  
 Complie F [202](#)–3. has . . . many . . . breed] Q2; had . . .  
 mine . . . Beauy F [204](#). out of an] Q2; outward F [205](#).  
 yeasty] F; histy Q2 [206](#)–7. fanned and winnowed] Ed.;  
 prophane and trennowed Q2; fond and winnowed F [208](#).  
 trial] Q2; tryalls F [208](#) SD–222. Q2; *omit* F [223](#). lose, my]  
 Q2; lose this wager, my F [226](#). but] F; *omit* Q2 [226](#). how  
 ill all's here] Q2; how all heere F [230](#). gaingiving] F;  
 gamgiuing Q2 [231](#). it] Q2; *omit* F [233](#). a] F; *omit* Q2 [235](#).  
 now] F; *omit* Q2 [236](#). will] F; well Q2 [237](#)–38. of aught he  
 leaves knows, what] Q2; ha's ought of what he leaues. What  
 F [238](#). SD Q2; *Enter King, Queene, Laertes and Lords, with*

*other Attendants with Foyles, and Gauntlets, a Table and  
 Flagons of Wine on it.* F [244](#). a] Q2; omit F [254](#). F; omit  
 Q2 [258](#). brother] Q2; Mother F [265](#). keep] F; omit  
 Q2 [265](#). ungored] Q2; vngorg'd F [265](#). till] F; all Q2 [268](#).  
 I embrace] Q2; I do embrace F [270](#). Come on] F; omit  
 Q2 [274](#). off] Q2 (of) [282](#). better] Q2; better'd F [285](#). SD F  
*1 line earlier; omit* Q2 [291](#). union] F; Vnice Q2 *uncorr.*;  
 Onixe Q2 *corr.* [294](#). trumpet] Q2; Trumpets F [298](#). SD Q2;  
*omit* F [300](#). my lord] Q2; on sir F [300](#). SD F; omit  
 Q2 [307](#). SD Q2 (*after line 304 and adding "Florish, a peece  
 goes off."*; Trumpets sound, and shot goes off. F *after line*  
 308 [309](#). it] Q2; omit F [311](#). A touch, a touch] F; omit  
 Q2 [311](#). confess 't] Q2; confesse F [314](#). Here . . . napkin]  
 Q2; Heere's a Napkin F [325](#). do] Q2; omit F [327](#). afear'd]  
 F; sure Q2 [328](#). SD F; omit Q2 [330](#). SD F; omit Q2 [336](#).  
 own] Q2; omit F [344](#). Hamlet. Hamlet] F; Hamlet Q2 [346](#).  
 an hour's] Q2; houre of F [347](#). thy] F; my Q2 [353](#). SD F;  
*omit* Q2 [356](#). murd'rous] F; omit Q2 [357](#). off] Q2  
 (of) [357](#). thy union] F; the Onixe Q2 [358](#). SD F; omit  
 Q2 [363](#). SD F; omit Q2 [371](#). cause aright] Q2; causes right  
 F [378](#). God] Q2; good F [379](#). I leave] Q2; liue F [384](#). SD  
*A march a farre off.* Q2; *March afarre off, and shout within.*  
 F [396](#). F; omit Q2 [396](#). SD F; omit Q2 [397](#). cracks] Q2;  
 cracke F [399](#). SD Q2; *Enter Fortinbras and English  
 Ambassador, with Drumme, Colours, and Attendants.* F [403](#).  
 This] Q2; His F [403](#). proud] F; prou'd Q2 [405](#). shot] Q2;  
 shoote F [421](#). th'] F; omit Q2 [425](#). forced] F; for no  
 Q2 [433](#). now] Q2; are F [434](#). also] Q2; alwayes F [435](#).  
 on] F; no Q2 [444](#). royal] Q2; royally F [445](#). rite] Q2; rites  
 F [447](#). bodies] Q2; body F [449](#). SD *Exeunt.* Q2; *Exeunt . . .  
 off.* F

# *Hamlet:* **A Modern Perspective**

Michael Neill

The great Russian director Vsevolod Meyerhold used to maintain that “if all the plays ever written suddenly disappeared and only *Hamlet* miraculously survived, all the theaters in the world would be saved. They could all put on *Hamlet* and be successful.”<sup>1</sup> Perhaps Meyerhold exaggerated because of his frustration—he was prevented from ever staging the tragedy by Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, who apparently thought it too dangerous to be performed—but Meyerhold’s sense of *Hamlet*’s extraordinary breadth of appeal is amply confirmed by its stage history. Praised by Shakespeare’s contemporaries for its power to “please all” as well as “to please the wiser sort,”<sup>2</sup> it provided his company with an immediate and continuing success. It was equally admired by popular audiences at the Globe on the Bankside, by academic playgoers “in the two Universities of Cambridge and Oxford,” and at court—where it was still in request in 1637, nearly forty years after its first performance.

In the four centuries since it was first staged, *Hamlet* has never lost its theatrical appeal, remaining today the most frequently performed of Shakespeare’s tragedies. At the same time, it has developed a reputation as the most intellectually puzzling of his plays, and it has already attracted more commentary than any other work in English except the Bible. Even today, when criticism stresses the importance of the reader’s role in “constructing” the texts of

the past, there is something astonishing about *Hamlet*'s capacity to accommodate the most bafflingly different readings.<sup>3</sup>

In the early nineteenth century, for instance, Romantic critics read it as the psychological study of a prince too delicate and sensitive for his public mission; to later nineteenth-century European intellectuals, the hero's anguish and self-reproach spoke so eloquently of the disillusionment of revolutionary failure that in czarist Russia "Hamletism" became the acknowledged term for political vacillation and disengagement. The twentieth century, not surprisingly, discovered a more violent and disturbing play: to the French poet Paul Valéry, the tragedy seemed to embody the European death wish revealed in the carnage and devastation of the First World War; in the mid-1960s the English director Peter Hall staged it as a work expressing the political despair of the nuclear age; for the Polish critic Jan Kott, as for the Russian filmmaker Gregori Kozintsev, the play became "a drama of a political crime" in a state not unlike Stalin's Soviet empire;<sup>4</sup> while the contemporary Irish poet Seamus Heaney found in it a metaphor for the murderous politics of revenge at that moment devouring his native Ulster:

I am Hamlet the Dane,  
skull handler, parablist,  
smeller of rot

in the state, infused  
with its poisons,  
pinioned by ghosts  
and affections

## murders and pieties<sup>5</sup>

Even the major “facts” of the play—the status of the Ghost, or the real nature of Hamlet’s “madness”—are seen very differently at different times. Samuel Johnson, for example, writing in the 1760s, had no doubt that the hero’s “madness,” a source of “much mirth” to eighteenth-century audiences, was merely “pretended,” but twentieth-century Hamlets onstage, even if they were not the full-fledged neurotics invented by Freud and his disciple Ernest Jones, were likely to show some signs of actual madness. Modern readings, too, while still fascinated by the hero’s intellectual and emotional complexities, are likely to emphasize those characteristics that are least compatible with the idealized “sweet prince” of the Victorians—the diseased suspicion of women, revealed in his obsession with his mother’s sexuality and his needless cruelty to Ophelia, his capacity for murderous violence (he dies with the blood of five people on his hands), and his callous indifference to the killing of such relative innocents as Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.

*Hamlet*’s ability to adapt itself to the preconceptions of almost any audience, allowing the viewers, in the play’s own sardonic phrase, to “botch the words up fit to their own thoughts” (4.5.12), results partly from the boldness of its design. Over the sensationalism and rough energy of a conventional revenge plot is placed a sophisticated psychological drama whose most intense action belongs to the interior world of soliloquy: Hamlet agrees to revenge his father’s death at the urging of the Ghost, and thus steps into an old-fashioned revenge tragedy; but it is Hamlet’s inner world, revealed to us in his soliloquies (speeches addressed not to other characters but to the audience, as if the

character were thinking aloud), that equally excites our attention. It is as if two plays are occurring simultaneously.

Although *Hamlet* is often thought of as the most personal of Shakespeare's tragedies, Shakespeare did not invent the story of revenge that the play tells. The story was an ancient one, belonging originally to Norse saga. The barbaric narrative of murder and revenge—of a king killed by his brother, who then marries the dead king's widow, of the young prince who must pretend to be mad in order to save his own life, who eludes a series of traps laid for him by his wicked uncle, and who finally revenges his father's death by killing the uncle—had been elaborated in the twelfth-century *Historiae Danicae* of Saxo Grammaticus, and then polished up for sixteenth-century French readers in François de Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*. It was first adapted for the English theater in the late 1580s in the form of the so-called *Ur-Hamlet*, a play attributed to Thomas Kyd (unfortunately now lost) that continued to hold the stage until at least 1596; and it may well be that when Shakespeare began work on *Hamlet* about 1599, he had no more lofty intention than to polish up this slightly tarnished popular favorite. But Shakespeare's wholesale rewriting produced a *Hamlet* so utterly unlike Kyd's work that its originality was unmistakable even to playgoers familiar with Kyd's play.

The new tragedy preserved the outline of the old story, and took over Kyd's most celebrated contributions—a ghost crying for revenge, and a play-within-the-play that sinisterly mirrors the main plot; but by focusing upon the perplexed interior life of the hero, Shakespeare gave a striking twist to what had been a brutally straightforward narrative. On the levels of both revenge play and psychological drama, the play develops a preoccupation with the hidden, the secret, and the mysterious that does much to account for its air of

mystery. In Maynard Mack's words, it is "a play in the interrogative mood" whose action deepens and complicates, rather than answers, the apparently casual question with which it begins, "Who's there?"<sup>6</sup>

### "The Cheer and Comfort of Our Eye": *Hamlet* and Surveillance

The great subject of revenge drama, before *Hamlet*, was the moral problem raised by private, personal revenge: i.e., should the individual take revenge into his own hands or leave it to God? Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (and, one assumes, his lost play about Hamlet as well) captured on the stage the violent contradictions of the Elizabethan attitudes toward this form of "wild justice." The surprising thing about Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is that it barely glances at the ethical argument raised by a hero's taking justice into his own hands—an argument central to *The Spanish Tragedy*. Of course, the controversy about the morality of private revenge must have provided an important context for the original performances of the play, giving an ominous force to Hamlet's fear that the spirit he has seen "may be a devil" luring him to damnation (2.2.628). But Shakespeare simply takes this context for granted, and goes on to discover a quite different kind of political interest in his plot—one that may help to explain the paranoiac anxieties it was apparently capable of arousing in a dictator like Stalin.

Turning away from the framework of ethical debate, Shakespeare used Saxo's story of Hamlet's pretended madness and delayed revenge to explore the brutal facts about survival in an authoritarian state. Here too the play could speak to Elizabethan experience, for we should not forget that the glorified monarchy of Queen Elizabeth I was

sustained by a vigorous network of spies and informers. Indeed, one portrait of Elizabeth shows her dressed in a costume allegorically embroidered with eyes and ears, partly to advertise that her watchers and listeners were everywhere. Shakespeare's Elsinore, too—the castle governed by Claudius and home to Hamlet—is full of eyes and ears; and behind the public charade of warmth, magnanimity, and open government that King Claudius so carefully constructs, the lives of the King's subjects are exposed to merciless inquisition.

It is symbolically appropriate that the play should begin with a group of anxious watchers on the battlemented walls of the castle, for nothing and no one in Claudius's Denmark is allowed to go “unwatched”: every appearance must be “sifted” or “sounded,” and every secret “opened.” The King himself does not hesitate to eavesdrop on the heir apparent; and his chief minister, Polonius, will meet his death lurking behind a curtain in the same squalid occupation. But they are not alone in this: the wholesale corruption of social relationships, even the most intimate, is an essential part of Shakespeare's chilling exposure of authoritarian politics. Denmark, Hamlet informs Rosencrantz and Guildenstern accurately enough, is “a prison” ([2.2.262](#)); and the treachery of these former school friends of Hamlet illustrates how much, behind the mask of uncle Claudius's concern, his court is ruled by the prison-house customs of the stool pigeon and the informer. How readily first Ophelia and then Gertrude allow themselves to become passive instruments of Polonius's and Claudius's spying upon the Prince; how easily Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are persuaded to put their friendship with Hamlet at the disposal of the state. Even Laertes's affectionate relationship with his sister is tainted by a desire to install himself as a kind of censor, a

“watchman” to the fortress of her heart ([1.3.50](#)). In this he is all too like his father, Polonius, who makes himself an interiorized Big Brother, engraving his cautious precepts on Laertes’s memory ([1.3.65](#) ff.) and telling Ophelia precisely what she is permitted to think and feel:

OPHELIA

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

POLONIUS

Marry, I will teach you. Think yourself a baby. . . .

([1.3.113](#)–14)

Polonius is the perfect inhabitant of this court: busily policing his children’s sexuality, he has no scruple about prostituting his daughter in the interests of state security, for beneath his air of senile wordiness and fatherly anxiousness lies an ingrained cynicism that allows him both to spy on his son’s imagined “drabbing” in Paris and to “loose” his daughter as a sexual decoy to entrap the Prince.

Hamlet’s role as hero at once sets him apart from this prison-house world and yet leads him to become increasingly entangled in its web of surveillance. To the admiring Ophelia, Hamlet remains “Th’ observed of all observers” ([3.1.168](#)), but his obvious alienation has resulted in his being “observed” in a much more sinister sense. He is introduced in Act 1, scene 2, as a mysteriously taciturn watcher and listener whose glowering silence calls into question the pomp and bustle of the King’s wordy show, just as his mourning blacks cast suspicion on the showy costumes of the court. Yet he himself, we are quickly made to realize, is the object of a dangerously inquisitive stare—what the King smoothly calls “the cheer and comfort of our eye” ([1.2.120](#)).

The full meaning of that silky phrase will be disclosed on Claudius's next appearance, when, after Hamlet has met the Ghost and has begun to appear mad, Claudius engages Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to probe his nephew's threatening transformation ([2.2.1](#)–18). "Madness in great ones," the King insists, "must not unwatched go" ([3.1.203](#)):

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. ([3.1.178](#)–81)

But of course Hamlet's madness is as much disguise as it is revelation; and while the Prince is the most ruthlessly observed character in the play, he is also its most unremitting observer. Forced to master his opponent's craft of smiling villainy, he becomes not merely an actor but also a dramatist, ingeniously using a troupe of traveling players, with their "murder in jest," to unmask the King's own hypocritical "show."

The scene in which the Players present *The Murder of Gonzago*, the play that Hamlet calls "The Mousetrap," brings the drama of surveillance to its climax. We in the audience become participants in the drama's claustrophobic economy of watching and listening, as our attention moves to and fro among the various groups on the stage, gauging the significance of every word, action, and reaction, sharing the obsessional gaze that Hamlet describes to Horatio:

Observe my uncle. . . . 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. ([3.2.85](#)–92)

“The Mousetrap” twice reenacts Claudius’s murder of his brother—first in the dumb show and then in the play proper—drawing out the effect so exquisitely that the King’s enraged interruption produces an extraordinary discharge of tension. An audience caught up in Hamlet’s wild excitement is easily blinded to the fact that this seeming climax is, in terms of the revenge plot, at least, a violent anticlimax. Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy* had developed the play-within-the-play as a perfect vehicle for the ironies of revenge, allowing the hero to take his actual revenge in the very act of staging the villain’s original crime. Hamlet’s play, however, does not even make public Claudius’s forbidden story. Indeed, while it serves to confirm the truth of what the Ghost has said, the only practical effect of the Prince’s theatrical triumph is to hand the initiative decisively to Claudius. In the scenes that follow, Hamlet shows himself capable of both instinctive violence and of cold-blooded calculation, but his behavior is purely reactive. Otherwise he seems oddly paralyzed by his success—a condition displayed in the prayer scene (3.3.77–101) where he stands behind the kneeling Claudius with drawn sword, “neutral to his will and matter,” uncannily resembling the frozen revenger described in the First Player’s speech about Pyrrhus standing over old Priam (2.2.493 ff.). All Hamlet can do is attempt to duplicate the triumph of “The Mousetrap” in his confrontation with Gertrude by holding up to her yet another verbal mirror, in which she is forced to gaze in horror on her “inmost part” (3.4.25).

Hamlet’s sudden loss of direction after the “Mousetrap” scene lasts through the fourth act of the play until he returns from his sea voyage in that mysteriously altered mood on which most commentators remark—a kind of fatalism that makes him the largely passive servant of a plot that he now

does little to advance or impede. It is as if the springing of the “Mousetrap” leaves Hamlet with nowhere to go—primarily because it leaves him with nothing to say. But from the very beginning, his struggle with Claudius has been conceived as a struggle for the control of language—a battle to determine what can and cannot be uttered.

### Speaking the Unspeakable: *Hamlet* and Memory

If surveillance is one prop of the authoritarian state, the other is its militant regulation of speech. As Claudius flatters the court into mute complicity with his theft of both the throne and his dead brother’s wife, he genially insists “You cannot speak of reason to the Dane / And lose your voice” (1.2.44–45); but an iron wall of silence encloses the inhabitants of his courtly prison. While the flow of royal eloquence muffles inconvenient truths, ears here are “fortified” against dangerous stories (1.1.38) and lips sealed against careless confession: “Give thy thoughts no tongue,” Polonius advises Laertes, “. . . Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice . . . reserve thy judgment” (1.3.65–75). Hamlet’s insistent warnings to his fellow watchers on the battlements “Never to speak of this that you have seen” (1.5.174) urge the same caution: “Let it be tenable in your silence still . . . Give it an understanding but no tongue” (1.2.269–71). What for them is merely common prudence, however, is for the hero an absolute prohibition and an intolerable burden: “. . . break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue” (1.2.164).

Hamlet has only two ways of rupturing this enforced silence. The “pregnant” wordplay of his “mad” satire, as Polonius uneasily recognizes (2.2.226–27), is one way, but it amounts to no more than inconclusive verbal fencing. Soliloquy is a more powerful resource because, since it is

heard by no one (except the audience), its impenetrable privacy defines Hamlet's independence from the corrupt public world. From his first big speech in the play, he has made such hiddenness the badge of his resistance to the King and Queen: "I have that within which passes show" (1.2.88), he announces. What is at issue here is not simply a contrast between hypocrisy and true grief over the loss of his king and father: rather, Hamlet grounds his very claim to integrity upon a notion that true feeling can never be expressed: it is only "that . . . which *passes show*" that can escape the taint of hypocrisy, of "acting." It is as if, in this world of remorseless observation, the self can survive only as a ferociously defended secret, something treasured for the very fact of its hiddenness and impenetrability. Unlike Gertrude, unlike Ophelia, unlike those absorbent "sponges" Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet must insist he is not made of "penetrable stuff."

If Hamlet's "antic disposition" is the guardian of his rebellious inwardness, soliloquy is where this inwardness lives, a domain which (if we except Claudius's occasional flickers of conscience) no other character is allowed to inhabit. Hamlet's soliloquies bulk so large in our response to the play because they not only guarantee the existence of the hero's secret inner life; they also, by their relentless self-questioning, imply the presence of still more profoundly secret truths "hid . . . within the center" (2.2.170–71): "I *do not know* / Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do,' / Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means / To do 't" (4.4.46–49). The soliloquies are the focus of the play's preoccupation with speaking and silence. Hamlet is set apart from those around him by his access to this region of private utterance: in it he can, as it were, "be bounded in a nutshell and count [himself] a king of infinite space" (2.2.273–74).

Yet there is a paradox here: the isolation of soliloquy is at once his special strength and the source of peculiar anguish. It saves him from the fate of Ophelia, who becomes “Divided from herself and her fair judgment” (4.5.92) by her grief at Polonius’s death and hasty burial; accustomed to speak only in the voice that others allow her, dutifully resolved to “think nothing, my lord” (3.2.124), she is left with no language other than the disconnected fragments of her madness to express outrage at a murder which authority seems determined to conceal. Hamlet, by contrast, finds in soliloquy an arena where the unspeakable can be uttered. But the very fact that these are words that others do not hear also makes soliloquy a realm of noncommunication, of frustrating silence—a prison as well as a fortress in which the speaker beats his head unavailingly against the walls of his own cell. Thus the soliloquy that ends Act 2 reproaches itself for a kind of speechlessness—the mute ineffectuality of a “John-a-dreams,” who, unlike the Player, “can say nothing”—and at the same time mocks itself as a torrent of empty language, a mere unpacking of the heart with words (2.2.593–616). For all their eloquence, the soliloquies serve in the end only to increase the tension generated by the pressure of forbidden utterance.

It is from this pressure that the first three acts of the play derive most of their extraordinary energy; and the energy is given a concrete dramatic presence in the form of the Ghost. The appearance of a ghost demanding vengeance was a stock device borrowed from the Roman playwright Seneca; and the *Ur-Hamlet* had been notorious for its ghost, shrieking like an oysterwife, “Hamlet, revenge!” But the strikingly unconventional thing about Shakespeare’s Ghost is its melancholy preoccupation with the silenced past and its plangent cry of “Remember me” (1.5.98), which makes

remembrance seem more important than revenge. “The struggle of humanity against power,” the Czech novelist Milan Kundera has written, “is the struggle of memory against forgetfulness”; and this Ghost, which stands for all that has been erased by the bland narratives of King Claudius, is consumed by the longing to speak that which power has rendered unspeakable. The effect of the Ghost’s narrative upon Hamlet is to infuse him with the same desire; indeed, once he has formally inscribed its watchword —“Remember me”—on the tables of his memory, he is as if possessed by the Ghost, seeming to mime its speechless torment when he appears to Ophelia, looking “As if he had been loosèd out of hell / To speak of horrors” (2.1.93–94).

For all its pathos of silenced longing, the Ghost remains profoundly ambivalent, and not just because Elizabethans held such contradictory beliefs about ghosts.<sup>7</sup> The ambivalence is dramatized in a particularly disturbing detail: as the Ghost pours his story into Hamlet’s ear (the gesture highlighted by the Ghost’s incantatory repetition of “hear” and “ear”), we become aware of an uncanny parallel between the Ghost’s act of narration and the murder the Ghost tells about:

’Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,  
A serpent stung me. So the whole ear of Denmark  
Is by a forgèd process of my death  
Rankly abused. . . .  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole  
With juice of cursèd hebona in a vial  
And in the porches of my ears did pour  
The leprous distilment. . . . (1.5.42–71)

If Claudius's propaganda has abused "the whole ear of Denmark" like a second poisoning, the Ghost's own story enters Hamlet's "ears of flesh and blood" (line 28) like yet another corrosive. The fact that it is a story that demands telling, and that its narrator is "an honest ghost," cannot alter the fact that it will work away in Hamlet's being like secret venom until he in turn can vent it in revenge.

The "Mousetrap" play is at once a fulfillment and an escape from that compulsion. It gives, in a sense, a public voice to the Ghost's silenced story. But it is only a metaphoric revenge. Speaking daggers and poison but using none, Hamlet turns out only to have written his own inability to bring matters to an end. It is no coincidence, then, that he should foresee the conclusion of his own tragedy as being the product of someone else's script: "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will" (5.2.11–12).

### "To Tell My Story": Unfinished *Hamlet*

In the last scene of the play, the sense that Hamlet's story has been shaped by Providence—or by a playwright other than Hamlet—is very strong: the swordplay with Laertes is a theatrical imitation of dueling that becomes the real thing, sweetly knitting up the paralyzing disjunction between action and acting; at the same time, revenge is symmetrically perfected in the spectacle of Claudius choking on "a poison tempered by himself," Laertes "justly killed with his own treachery," and the Queen destroyed in the vicious pun that has her poisoned by Claudius's "union." Yet Hamlet's consoling fatalism does not survive the final slaughter. Instead, he faces his end tormented by a sense of incompleteness, of a story still remaining to be told:

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. (5.2.366–70)

Within a few lines Hamlet's distinctive voice, which has dominated his own tragedy like that of no other Shakespearean hero, will be cut off in midsentence by the arrest of death—and “the rest is silence” (5.2.395).

The play is full of such unfinished, untold, or perhaps even untellable tales, from Barnardo's interrupted story of the Ghost's first appearance to the Player's unfinished rendition of “Aeneas' tale to Dido” and the violently curtailed performance of *The Murder of Gonzago*. In the opening scene the Ghost itself is cut off, before it can speak, by the crowing of a cock; and when it returns and speaks to Hamlet, it speaks first about a story it cannot tell:

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 . . . (1.5.18–21)

Even the tale it *is* permitted to unfold is, ironically, one of murderous interruption and terrible incompleteness:

*Cut off*, even in the blossoms of my sin,  
Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled,  
No reck'ning made, but sent to my account  
With all my *imperfections* on my head.  
(1.5.83–86)

Act 5 at last produces the formal reckoning of this imperfect account, yet it leaves Hamlet once again echoing the Ghost's agony of frustrated utterance.

But what, we might ask, can there be left to tell, beyond what we have already seen and heard? It seems to be part of the point, a last reminder of Hamlet's elusive "mystery," that we shall never know. The Prince has, of course, insisted that Horatio remain behind "to tell my story"; but the inadequacy of Horatio's response only intensifies the sense of incompleteness. All that his stolid imagination can offer is that bald plot summary of "accidental judgments [and] casual slaughters," which, as Anne Barton protests, leaves out "everything that seems important" about the play and its protagonist.<sup>8</sup> Nor is Fortinbras's attempt to make "The soldier's music and the rite of war / Speak loudly for [Hamlet]" ([5.2.445](#)–46) any more satisfactory, for the military strongman's cannon are no better tuned to speak for Hamlet than the player's pipe.

It would be a mistake, of course, to underestimate the dramatic significance of Horatio's story or of the "music and the rite of war"—these last gestures of ritual consolation—especially in a play where, beginning with the obscene confusion of Claudius's "mirth in funeral" and including Polonius's "hugger-mugger" interment and Ophelia's "maimed rites," we have seen the dead repeatedly degraded by the slighting of their funeral poms. In this context it matters profoundly that Hamlet alone is accorded the full dignity of obsequies suited to his rank, for it signals his triumph over the oblivion to which Claudius is fittingly consigned, and, in its gesture back toward Hamlet's story as Shakespeare has told it (so much better than Horatio does), it brings Hamlet's story to a heroic end.

## “The Undiscovered Country”: *Hamlet* and the Secrets of Death

How we respond to the ending of *Hamlet*—both as revenge drama and as psychological study—depends in part on how we respond to yet a third level of the play—that is, to *Hamlet* as a prolonged meditation on death. The play is virtually framed by two encounters with the dead: at one end is the Ghost, at the other a pile of freshly excavated skulls. The skulls (all but one) are nameless and silent; the Ghost has an identity (though a “questionable” one) and a voice; yet they are more alike than might at first seem. For this ghost, though invulnerable “as the air,” is described as a “dead corse,” a “ghost . . . come from the grave,” its appearance suggesting a grotesque disinterment of the buried king (1.4.52–57; 1.5.139). The skulls for their part may be silent, but Hamlet plays upon each to draw out its own “excellent voice” (“That skull had a tongue in it and could sing once”; 5.1.77–78), just as he engineered that “miraculous organ” of the Ghost’s utterance, the “Mousetrap.”

There is a difference, however: Hamlet’s dressing up the skulls with shreds of narrative (“as if ’twere Cain’s jawbone . . . This might be the pate of a politician . . . or of a courtier . . . Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer”; 5.1.78–101) only serves to emphasize their mocking anonymity, until the Gravedigger offers to endow one with a precise historical identity: “This same skull . . . was . . . Yorick’s skull, the King’s jester” (5.1.186–87). Hamlet is delighted: now memory can begin its work of loving resurrection. But how does the Gravedigger *know*? The answer is that of course he cannot; and try as Hamlet may to cover this bare bone with the flesh of nostalgic recollection, he cannot escape the wickedly punning reminder of “this

same skull” that all skulls indeed look frightfully the same. Ironically, even Yorick’s distinctive trademark, his grin, has become indistinguishable from the mocking leer of that grand jester of the *Danse Macabre*, Death the Antic: “Where be your gibes now? . . . Not one now to mock your own grinning?”; so that even as he holds it, the skull’s identity appears to drain away into the anonymous *memento mori* sent to adorn “my lady’s” dressing table. It might as well be Alexander the Great’s; or Caesar’s; or anyone’s. It might as well be what it will one day become—a handful of clay, fit to stop a beer barrel.

It is significant that (with the trivial exception of 4.4) the graveyard scene is the only one to take place outside the confines of Claudius’s castle-prison. As the “common” place to which all stories lead, the graveyard both *invites* narrative and *silences* it. Each blank skull at once poses and confounds the question with which the tragedy itself began, “Who’s there?,” subsuming all human differences in awful likeness: “As you are now,” goes the tombstone verse, “so once was I / As I am now, so shall you be.” In the graveyard all stories collapse into one reductive history (“Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust”; [5.1.216](#)–17). In this sense the Gravedigger is the mocking counterpart of the Player: and the houses of oblivion that gravediggers make challenge the players’ memorial art by lasting “till doomsday” ([5.1.61](#)). Hamlet shares with the Gravedigger the same easy good-fellowship he extends to the play’s other great outsider, the First Player; but the Gravedigger asserts a more sinister kind of intimacy with his claim to have begun his work “that very day that young Hamlet was born” ([5.1.152](#)–53). In this moment he identifies himself as the Prince’s mortal double, the Sexton Death from

the *Danse Macabre* who has been preparing him a grave from the moment of birth.

If there is a final secret to be revealed, then, about that “undiscovered country” on which Hamlet’s imagination broods, it is perhaps only the Gravedigger’s spade that can uncover it. For his digging lays bare the one thing we can say for certain lies hidden “within” the mortal show of the flesh—the emblems of Death himself, that *Doppelgänger* who shadows each of us as the mysterious Lamord (*La Mort*) shadows Laertes. If there is a better story, one that would confer on the rough matter of life the consolations of form and significance, it is, the play tells us, one that cannot finally be told; for it exists on the other side of language, to be tantalizingly glimpsed only at the point when Hamlet is about to enter the domain of the inexpressible. The great and frustrating achievement of this play, its most ingenious and tormenting trick, the source of its endlessly belabored mystery, is to persuade us that such a story might exist, while demonstrating its irreducible hiddenness. The only story Hamlet is given is that of a hoary old revenge tragedy, which he persuades himself (and us) can never denote him truly; but it is a narrative frame that nothing (not even inaction) will allow him to escape. The story of our lives, the play wryly acknowledges, is always the wrong story; but the rest, after all, is silence.



1. Dmitri Shostakovich, *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich*, as related to and edited by Solomon Volkow, trans. Antonina W. Bouis (London: Faber, 1981), p. 84.

2. See F. E. Halliday, *A Shakespeare Companion, 1564–1964* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), pp. 435, 209; see also pp. 262 and 403.

3. The most lucid guide to this critical labyrinth, though he deals with no work later than 1960, is probably still Morris Weitz, *Hamlet and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism* (London: Faber, 1964).

4. Jan Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (London: Methuen, 1964).

5. Excerpt from “Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces” from *Poems, 1965–1975* by Seamus Heaney. Copyright © 1975, 1980 by Seamus Heaney. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc. Permission for use of these lines from *North* by Seamus Heaney, published by Faber and Faber Limited, is also acknowledged.

6. See Mack’s classic essay, “The World of *Hamlet*,” *Yale Review* 41 (1952): 502–23; Mack’s approach is significantly extended in Harry Levin’s *The Question of Hamlet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959).

7. The most balanced treatment of this and other contentious historical issues in the play is in Roland M. Frye, *The Renaissance Hamlet* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

8. Introduction to T. J. B. Spencer, ed., *Hamlet* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), p. 52. See also James L. Calderwood’s *To Be and Not To Be: Negation and Meta-drama in “Hamlet”* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

## Further Reading

In addition to the following books and articles, see [www.folger.edu/shakespeare](http://www.folger.edu/shakespeare) and [www.folger.edu/online-resources](http://www.folger.edu/online-resources).

### *Hamlet*

Belsey, Catherine. "Shakespeare's Sad Tale for Winter: *Hamlet* and the Tradition of Fireside Ghost Stories." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 61 (2010): 1–27.

At the heart of Belsey's essay is the question of "textual strategies": "[N]ot what the Elizabethans made of ghosts, so much as the matter out of which they made their ghost stories." Looking closely at the suspenseful manner in which Shakespeare opens *Hamlet*—particularly his depiction of a ghost so different from the specters who were "conventionally bloodcurdling but not eerie"—Belsey asks whether this emphasis on "deepening mystery" and mounting unease, "hovering between disbelief and fear," was Shakespeare's invention or an example of his indebtedness to other influences that "relished the uncanny." Whereas critics interested in exploring the antecedents of *Hamlet's* Ghost have focused on either the influence of Senecan spirits or the ghost lore informing purgatorial narratives, Belsey investigates the popular narrative tradition of fireside ghost stories, old wives' tales, and winter's tales. Her close attention to the medieval legend called "The Three Living and the Three Dead"—the story of an unnerving encounter

between three extravagantly attired, pleasure-seeking kings and the emaciated, terrifying corpses of three dead kings—and to its visual/narrative afterlife in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries reveals several similarities between the Ghost in *Hamlet* and the walking dead of the variously rendered legend: the revenant's corporeality, capacity to provoke fear, desire to be addressed, demands on the living, and questionable identity (possibly demoniacal in nature). Tales of wandering corpses of popular imagination "testify to a tradition of winter's tales that foreground the uncanny, the component that is so conspicuously missing from the early modern stage convention derived from Seneca," but so palpable in Act 1 of *Hamlet*. "With an intensity unique among Shakespeare's tragedies," the play engages mortality in various forms ("bereavement, murder, military heroics, disintegration in the grave, [and] the fear of damnation") and ends with an acknowledgment of the inevitability of death. But it begins by raising such issues "in the most theatrical of modes: a winter's tale of an unquiet spirit walking the earth with a deadly mission for the living hero."

Calderwood, James L. *To Be and Not to Be: Negation and Metadrama in "Hamlet."* New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

Calderwood begins his highly original approach to *Hamlet*, as do many critics, by setting Hamlet between Fortinbras and Laertes. Fortinbras, who, like Hamlet, shares a name with his father, initially defines himself as the son of his father in seeking revenge through a projected attack on Denmark, but then is persuaded to set aside revenge and instead achieve his own identity through a military conquest in Poland, quite unrelated to his father. In contrast, Laertes

never escapes the role of son, accepting, after the loss of his father, the paternal domination of Claudius. Hamlet, were he to adopt his father's cause, as Laertes does, would have to betray himself, like Laertes; to remain true to himself, undefiled by taking action in a corrupt world, he would have to betray his father, as Fortinbras might be said to have done, although Fortinbras does indeed take action. In the middle of the play, when Hamlet seems arrested between these two undesirable alternatives, his "identity grows complex not by multiplying relationships but by multiplying disrelationships," self-determination by negation, as "his roaming and irresolute *self* takes priority over the revenge-minded *son*" (italics added). Shakespeare metadramatically calls such attention to the hiatus between Hamlet's vow of revenge (Act 1) and fulfillment of it (Act 5) as a way of differentiating his play from conventional revenge tragedy "with its built-in hiatus [see *The Spanish Tragedy*, below] . . . usually obscured." It is only with "the return to Elsinore after the sea-voyage . . . [that] Hamlet begins to acquiesce to the dramatic context [of revenge tragedy] rather than trying to dominate and transcend it." Finally, though, "Hamlet kills Claudius . . . not for his father, but for himself, . . . in direct retaliation for the attack on his own life." After proposing this interpretation, Calderwood goes on to "suggest some of the ways in which the play resists positive interpretation, especially by its employment of the negative mode." After also detailing the role of mediation in the play, he returns at the end to champion interpretation in the face of the threat to it posed by deconstruction.

Charnes, Linda. "The Hamlet Formerly Known as Prince." In *Shakespeare and Modernity: Early Modern to Millennium*, edited by Hugh Grady, pp. 189–219. Accents on

Shakespeare. London: Routledge, 2000. (The essay also appears as Chapter 5 in Charnes's *Hamlet's Heirs: Shakespeare and the Politics of a New Millennium* [London: Routledge, 2006].)

Seeking an explanation for the “unmatched boom” in American mass media *Hamlets* of the last decade of the twentieth century, Charnes uses the “prerogatives of patriarchy and monarchy” to shed light on the titular figure’s “startling” link with contemporary America, where the political and ideological touchstones of Shakespeare’s England have become “increasingly subsumed into and even transmogrified by the operations of an ideologically democratic nation.” She contends that Hamlet’s failure to inherit and refusal to seek his royal patrimony, the throne of Denmark, hold the key to his becoming the “unofficial legislator of late-twentieth-century democratic man—the man who would and would not be king.” Central to her argument are the plot’s “invoked and then forgotten” initial paternal crime (the “whisper” recounted by Horatio of Old Hamlet’s and Old Norway’s refusals to will entailed property to their respective sons [[1.1.92](#)–107]) and the command of the Ghost that Hamlet revenge and remember but not replace him as king ([1.5.31](#), [98](#)). Called to enact his father’s will “without succeeding him,” Prince Hamlet is robbed of substance: “An only son and first-born royal heir cannot be a once and future Prince.” While Hamlet speaks cogently to post-modern America’s “general dissatisfaction, nervous boredom,” and penchant for “rationalized delay,” the deeper connection may, surprisingly, lie in something he does not share with us: a strong sense of entitlement. “Even as we [who are not heirs apparent] demand our riches, we refuse to be held responsible for how the political system is actually run. To this extent Hamlet can certainly be regarded as a

postmodern Everyman; or at least as a model of what the new American cyber-dream tells us we can all be—a virtual Prince.”

Dawson, Anthony. *Hamlet: Shakespeare in Performance*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.

After considering the theatrical record spanning the years 1600–1900 (commenting specifically on the *Hamlets* of David Garrick, Edmund Kean, Edwin Booth, and Henry Irving), Dawson provides chapter-length studies of major revivals in the twentieth century. The discussion of “old ways meet[ing] the new stagecraft” in the 1920s focuses on productions starring John Barrymore (New York [1922] and London [1925]) and the “landmark” revival by Barry Jackson and H. K. Ayliff for the Birmingham Repertory Theatre (1925), its modern-dress, “anti-Romantic” presentation becoming a staple of *Hamlet* production. The chapter on *Hamlet* in the 1930s considers John Gielgud’s several portrayals of Hamlet (1930, 1934, 1936, 1939, and 1944) alongside Laurence Olivier’s single stage rendering (1937); for all their differences, the two rival actors are best seen “as complementary rather than opposed.” Subsequent chapters deal with postwar *Hamlets* at Stratford-upon-Avon (Michael Benthall’s 1948 version with Robert Helpmann and Paul Scofield alternating as Hamlet and Peter Hall’s 1965 “anti-establishment” staging with David Warner in the title role); London revivals at the Royal Shakespeare and Royal Court in 1980 (John Barton’s starring Michael Pennington and Richard Eyre’s featuring Jonathan Pryce, respectively); and the afterlife of *Hamlet* on film and television (the versions of Laurence Olivier [1948], Grigori Kozintsev [1964], Franco Zeffirelli [1990, with Mel Gibson], and Rodney Bennett [BBC, 1980, with Derek Jacobi]). Recognizing that

Shakespeare is “one part of an elaborate system of global interchange,” Dawson devotes the final chapter to productions in Germany (Bochum, 1977; Deutsches Theater, Berlin, 1990) and the former Soviet Union (Taganka Theatre, Moscow, 1971). Commentary on Adrian Noble’s 1992 revival at London’s Barbican, starring Kenneth Branagh, frames this study of the reciprocity “between how the theatre gives *Hamlet* meaning and produces Hamlet’s subjectivity and how the culture generally approaches problems of meaning, value, and selfhood.”

Frye, Roland Mushat. *The Renaissance Hamlet: Issues and Responses in 1600*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Frye’s object is to reconstruct “the audience responses upon which Shakespeare played” in *Hamlet* by documenting “Elizabethan frames of reference” for the issues raised in the play. Among the events and documents Frye invokes are the following: “Homily against Disobedience and Willful Rebellion,” ordered read in all Anglican churches; the Wars of Religion in France that began in 1562 between Huguenots and Catholics (including *Hamlet*-like assassinations of rulers); Protestant beliefs that ghosts were demons, beliefs shared by Catholics, who also believed ghosts might be souls from purgatory; scripture, sermons, and conduct books forbidding private revenge; the obligation to revenge his father’s death laid on the infant King James I by his paternal grandparents, which James tried but failed to discharge; debates over the legitimacy of tyrannicide; the unseating of Lady Jane Grey from the throne of England in 1553 by Queen Mary, recognized as the legitimate heir by virtue of being (like Hamlet) the offspring of a former king; the considerable length of the mourning observed by Henry VIII

after the death of his consort Jane Seymour; the marriage in 1567 of Mary Queen of Scots to the Earl of Bothwell, widely reputed to have assassinated her former husband, Lord Darnley, only three months earlier; the depiction of Fortune and Prudence in Renaissance visual art; emblems of Mars-Mercury; the opinion of the theologian William Perkins that “the excellency, goodness, and dignity of conscience, stands not in accusing, but in excusing”; the Babington Plot of 1586 designed to replace Elizabeth I on the throne of England with Mary Queen of Scots; the popularity of skulls, including skull-shaped watches, among the fashionable in sixteenth-century England; the fashion of *transi* as tomb effigies: beginning with “*caro vilis*, the merely lifeless corpse, . . . next came the *vermis*, with the flesh now rotting away and worms crawling in and out; . . . finally, there was the *pulvis*, either a shrunk, mummified cadaver or a skeleton”; the *danse macabre*, or Dance of Death; and biblical texts on the readiness for death.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Hamlet in Purgatory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Greenblatt examines the afterlife of purgatory—specifically, the traces of purgatory in *Hamlet*—in order to better understand how the Ghost achieves its “weird, . . . amazingly disturbing and vivid” effect. His concern is not with the “theology behind the ghost” or its provenance as either “Catholic” or “Protestant,” but rather with the play’s “magical intensity.” In the first three chapters, the author draws on a variety of materials—religious tracts, devotional works, narrative accounts of spectral hauntings, rites of memory (i.e., prayers and masses for the dead, chantries, and indulgences), and artwork (funerary inscriptions and sculptures, paintings, and manuscript illuminations)—to

investigate the rise and fall of purgatory, as both a doctrine and a profitable institution by which Christians sought to ease the passage to heaven for both themselves and their deceased loved ones. In their staging of an “ontological argument about spectrality and remembrance,” early sixteenth-century texts (such as Simon Fish’s *A Supplication for the Beggars* and Thomas More’s *Supplication of Souls*) “unsettled the institutional moorings of a crucial body of imaginative materials and therefore made them available for theatrical appropriation.” Greenblatt follows his study of the “cult” and “poetics” of purgatory with a chapter on the staging of ghosts in the Elizabethan and Jacobean theaters; the focus is on the Shakespeare canon because, of all the major Renaissance English dramatists, only Shakespeare “fully participates in the popular vogue for presenting ghosts onstage.” In the chapter titled “Remember Me” (pp. 205–57), the author brings the historical and theatrical findings of the first four chapters to bear on an analysis of *Hamlet* and “literature’s most famous ghost.” He states that questions relating to Shakespeare’s motivation for shifting the dramatic emphasis of *Hamlet* from vengeance to remembrance and for placing the command “to remember” in the mouth of a ghost are best answered “by recognizing that the psychological in Shakespeare’s tragedy is constructed almost entirely out of the theological, and specifically out of the issue of remembrance that . . . lay at the heart of the crucial early-sixteenth-century debate about Purgatory,” which English Protestants attacked as being not only a fraud but also a “poet’s fable.” This turning of “negotiations with the dead from an institutional process governed by the church to a poetic process governed by guilt, projection, and imagination,” Greenblatt argues, “facilitated Shakespeare’s crucial appropriation of Purgatory

in *Hamlet*”: a tragedy of “uncanny power,” resonant with the complexity of memory and the tangle of emotions felt by the living as they engage their dead.

Kinney, Arthur, ed. *Hamlet: New Critical Essays*. Shakespeare Criticism 23. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Kinney’s anthology consists of an introductory overview of the play’s critical and theatrical reception and ten new essays ranging in focus from editorial and production issues to studies of race and gender dynamics. The essays are grouped under three headings: (1) “Tudor-Stuart *Hamlet*” (E. Pearlman, “Shakespeare at Work: The Invention of the Ghost”; R. A. Foakes, “Hamlet’s Neglect of Revenge”; and Philip Edwards, “The Dyer’s Infected Hand: The Sonnets and the Text of *Hamlet*”); (2) “Subsequent *Hamlets*” (Paul Werstine, “‘The cause of this defect’: *Hamlet*’s Editors,” and Catherine Belsey, “Was Hamlet a man or a woman? The Prince in the Graveyard, 1800–1920”); and (3) “*Hamlet* after Theory” (Jerry Brotton, “Ways of Seeing *Hamlet*”; Terence Hawkes, “The Old Bill”; Ann Thompson, “*Hamlet* and the Canon”; Peter Erickson, “Can We Talk about Race in *Hamlet*?”; and Richard Levin, “Hamlet, Laertes, and the Dramatic Functions of Foils”). Kinney’s introduction identifies major critical issues and problems raised in *Hamlet* scholarship: Hamlet’s age, inconsistencies in the depiction of Horatio and Fortinbras, the Ghost as either purgatorial or demonic, and the play’s refraction of cultural conditions and beliefs relating to melancholy, suicide, and revenge. The essay also charts critical trends from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through the Romantic and Victorian periods of the nineteenth century to the modern and postmodern phases of the twentieth, assesses the critical discourse that has linked the play to various

ideological concerns (namely, the strands of deconstructivist readings that can be distinguished as feminist criticism, neo-Marxist criticism, New Historicism, and Cultural Materialism), and provides an overview of stage productions (from a performance said to have taken place on a voyage to the East Indies in 1607 to Mark Rylance's revival at the new Globe Theatre in London in 2000) and cinematic transformations (with particular attention to the filmed *Hamlets* of Laurence Olivier [1948], Grigori Kozintsev [1964], Franco Zeffirelli [1990], and Kenneth Branagh [1995]). The volume underscores Kinney's claim that "there is no end to meanings in *Hamlet*, since in 'hold[ing] . . . the mirror up to nature' [3.2.23–24], to changing human nature, it is ever capable of transference and transformation. . . . Discrepant readings and discrepant productions have, since the sixteenth century, been the result."

Kott, Jan. "*Hamlet* of the Mid-Century." In *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, pp. 57–73. London: Methuen, 1964.

For Kott, "an ideal [stage production of] *Hamlet* would be one most true to Shakespeare and most modern at the same time." The production he foregrounds took place in Cracow, Poland, shortly after the twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party and made *Hamlet* "a political drama par excellence," with everyone under constant surveillance by the state—Polonius eying even his own son in Paris through his agent Reynaldo, and then watching from behind the arras the Queen with her son; the King watching Hamlet through his spies Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Shifting to a more general level, Kott divides the roles in the *Hamlet* of the midcentury into those clearly defined by their situations and those not so defined. Among the first are Claudius and Polonius: "Claudius does not play the part of a murderer and

a king. He *is* the murderer and the King. Polonius does not play the part of a despotic father and a king's councillor. He *is* the despotic father and the King's councillor." Among the second are Hamlet and Ophelia: "The situation does not define Hamlet. . . . The situation has been imposed on him. . . . He accepts the part, but is beyond and above it"; Ophelia is "an ordinary girl, who loved her boy, but has been given by the scenario of history a tragic part." At the end, Fortinbras ("the man of the strong arm"), "a vigorous young lad[,] comes, and says with a charming smile: 'Take away these corpses. Now I shall be your king.'"

Kyd, Thomas. *The Spanish Tragedy*. London, 1594.

Shakespeare may have drawn on *The Spanish Tragedy* (c. 1589) in writing *Hamlet*, for Kyd's drama includes many elements also found in Shakespeare's play: the ghost, the difficulty in verifying that the party accused of murder is indeed guilty, the resulting need for delay, the apparent madness of the avenger (however feigned or real), the play-within-the-play, and the moral perplexities facing a sensitive man called to revenge. These shared elements are handled rather differently in the two plays. Kyd's ghost is the Spaniard Don Andrea, killed in battle by the Portuguese Don Balthazar; however, Don Andrea does not visit his friend Don Horatio and impose on him an obligation to avenge his death, but enters at the beginning with the allegorical character Revenge, and the two watch the entire play, remaining aloof from the other characters. It is not, then, the death of Don Andrea that is avenged, but the murder of Don Horatio, whose avenger is his father, the Knight Marshall Hieronimo. The accusation of murder directed against Don Lorenzo and Don Balthazar by Bel-Imperia, the beloved of Don Andrea and then of Don Horatio, literally

falls from the sky into Hieronimo's hands in the form of a letter written in blood. Suspecting that the letter is part of a plot to ensnare his own life, Hieronimo delays. The play-within-the-play, arranged by Hieronimo once he has verified Bel-Imperia's accusation, is the tragedy of Soliman the Turkish emperor, performed by Don Balthazar and the members of the Spanish court. In the course of it, Hieronimo, aided by Bel-Imperia, accomplishes his revenge. In spite of these differences, *The Spanish Tragedy* provides a remarkable counterpoint to *Hamlet*.

Levin, Harry. *The Question of Hamlet*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1959.

For Levin, "Hamlet is, above all, a man in a plight, a mind resisting its body's destiny, a fighter against cosmic odds." Without forgetting that *Hamlet* is an "Elizabethan dramatic production" and that it is a "vehicle for ideas," Levin takes his critical method of a close reading of the play's style and structure from the trivium—rhetoric, logic, and grammar—taught in the schools of Shakespeare's day. His first chapter, called "Interrogation" after the rhetorical trope *interrogatio*, contemplates the play as "a mystery in the . . . highly speculative sense, a rite of initiation to painful experience, an exploration of stages of consciousness which dazzle and elude the spectator 'With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls.'" His second chapter, called "Doubt" after the *dubitatio*, in which the orator deliberates between rival options, focuses on the oppositions between Claudius and Hamlet Senior (which Hamlet in 1.2 presents in terms of the rhetorical figure *icon*, or verbal portraiture), between Ophelia and Gertrude, and between "to be" and "not to be." He concludes with the observation that *Hamlet* "never regains its lost certitudes; nor does it ever relax its

movement of vacillation; but it derives new meaning out of its clash of values; and its overclouded patterns merge into a grander design.” Levin’s third chapter, called “Irony” after the rhetorical trope *ironia*, considers a number of different kinds of irony: “‘the drye mock,’” which is a statement that “means the contrary of what it purports to say” (as when Polonius asks to take his leave of Hamlet and Hamlet replies “You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal,” Hamlet’s politeness barely disguising his eagerness to be free of Polonius); dramatic irony (as when the audience is aware of Hamlet’s knowledge regarding Claudius’s plot on his life in sending him to England, while Claudius is unaware); irony of situation (as when Hamlet, “a cunning hero,” is “forced to wear the mask of stupidity,” his “antic disposition”); and, finally, “cosmic irony,” which “cannot resolve the incalculable contradictions between personal life and the nature of things, yet . . . can teach us to live with them.”

Mack, Maynard. “The World of *Hamlet*.” *Yale Review* 41 (1952): 502–23.

By “the world of *Hamlet*” Mack means “the imaginative environment that the play asks us to enter when we read it or go to see it.” This world is “like our own” in some respects, “but [also] unlike our own in being perfectly, or almost perfectly, significant and coherent.” Mack finds the first attribute of *Hamlet*’s world to be mysteriousness, which “is not simply a matter of missing motivations, to be expunged if only we could find the perfect clue.” Among its mysteries are Hamlet’s “delay, his madness, his ghost, his treatment of Polonius, or Ophelia, or his mother,” and whether the play is a success or failure, whether Hamlet is “a man of exquisite moral sensibility . . . or an egomaniac.”

A second attribute of *Hamlet*'s world is its interrogative mood ("To be or not to be—that is the question"; "What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven?") and its riddles, as, for example, Hamlet's madness: "How much is real? How much is feigned? What does it mean?" In connection with this interrogative mood, Mack also contemplates "the problematic nature of reality and the relation of reality to appearance." Behind the "glittering surface of Claudius's court" may lie murder, adultery, and incest, at least according to an apparition, the Ghost. Or, in 3.3, Hamlet comes upon Claudius, who appears to be praying; but after Hamlet accepts this appearance for reality, we learn that Claudius was unable to pray. The third attribute of *Hamlet*'s world is a "powerful sense of mortality . . . conveyed . . . in three ways": "the failure in man [as] time qualifies everything . . . including love, including purpose," "the emphasis on infection" and poison, and "a profound consciousness of loss." It is in this world that Hamlet is required to take revenge, an act, "though retributive justice, . . . that necessarily involves the doer in the general guilt."

McCoy, Richard C. "A Wedding and Four Funerals: Conjunction and Commemoration in *Hamlet*." *Shakespeare Survey* 54 (2001): 122–39

McCoy examines the play's four funerals (King Hamlet's expedited obsequies, Polonius's "hugger-mugger" burial [[4.5.91](#)], Ophelia's "maimèd rites" [[5.1.226](#)], and the "somewhat incongruous" soldier's funeral for Prince Hamlet) in the context of the ambiguity ("liturgical double-bookkeeping") that marked the Elizabethan compromise over Catholic-Protestant funerary practices and intercessory rituals for the deceased. Informing the discussion is the

doctrine known as “the King’s Two Bodies” (i.e., the Body natural and the Body politic), specifically the efforts of the “cult of Elizabeth” to continue what has been called “the migration of the holy” begun by Henry VIII’s reforms in which “‘the socially integrative powers of the host’ were transferred ‘to the rituals of monarchy and secular community,’” a shifting from the eucharistic real presence to the royal presence. McCoy focuses on the closet scene (3.4) and the final episode (5.2) to argue that in the first, Hamlet desires a “regal apotheosis,” a supernatural conjoining of the king’s two bodies (“form and cause” [3.4.143]) that would recover sacramentally the royal presence. In the second, and more powerful, conjunction, Hamlet “supplants the ghost[,] acquir[ing] some of its uncanny powers.” In asking Horatio to tell his story, Hamlet not only reprises the paternal imperative “Remember me” but also appears to want the conjoining of his own “form and cause”; the final act thus “sustains the kind of conjunction described by [the theologian] Richard Hooker, making Hamlet ‘a *presence of force and efficacie* throughout all generations of men.’” Fortinbras may assert his own “rights of memory in this kingdom” (5.2.432) and order “rite[s] of war” (445) in honor of the dead prince, but Hamlet’s “rights of memory” are “powerfully vindicated” by the play’s conclusion. He, not Fortinbras, dominates modern memory. Like the venerated tomb of Elizabeth (circulating pictures of which, along with other memorial objects, invested commemoration with a degree of intercessory power), the conjunctions in *Hamlet* “permit contact with things absent even if they do not make them a real presence,” thereby demonstrating how “relationships with the living and the dead, with the actual and the imaginary, are . . . inescapable—and the source of much that matters in

literature and in life.” Reformation rites and “rights of memory,” McCoy argues, enjoyed a greater resilience and efficacy than is generally thought.

Mowat, Barbara. “The Form of *Hamlet*’s Fortunes.” *Renaissance Drama* 19 (1988): 97–126.

Mowat engages the view of 1980s editors of *Hamlet* who represent the tradition of editing the play as monolithic. According to such editors, their predecessors uniformly conflated (combined into a composite) the texts of the Second Quarto (Q2 1604–5) and the Folio (F 1623). These 1980s editors react against this imagined tradition by omitting from their editions a great many of the passages unique to Q2. Mowat notes that the *Hamlet* editorial tradition can be characterized as monolithic only in the period 1866–1980, during which the Cambridge edition (1866), produced by W. Aldis Wright and W. G. Clark, exercised, for reasons we cannot now entirely recover, enormous influence on succeeding editors and thereby fixed in place a text of the play. Reviewing the earlier editorial tradition, Mowat finds no uniform practice of conflation of Q2 and F. The play’s first editor, Nicholas Rowe, evidently compared in detail the 1676 quarto (Q1676, based on Q2) with the Fourth Folio (F4, based on F); he included in his edition all passages peculiar to F4, but was highly selective in admitting passages unique to Q1676. Alexander Pope, Rowe’s immediate successor, based his edition on Rowe’s but consulted Q2; Pope not only included yet more Q2-only passages but also cut some F-only passages. The play’s next editor, Lewis Theobald, basing his edition on Pope’s, left out still more F-only lines and added still more Q2-only ones. Edward Capell’s edition of 1768, Mowat notes, was reputed by some twentieth-century experts to have initiated a

reliance on Q2 (although only as conflated with F, as in the 1866 Cambridge edition) that would later characterize twentieth-century editing of *Hamlet*, beginning with J. Dover Wilson's 1934 New Shakespeare edition. However, Mowat finds Capell by no means stable in his preference for Q2. Capell's successors (up to the 1866 Cambridge editors) provide their readers with an ever-changing text of *Hamlet* in their inclusion and exclusion of Q2- and F-only passages and in their preference for the readings of individual words in Q2 and F. Thus the 1980s editors in their reaction against the 1866 Cambridge text of *Hamlet* return the editorial tradition to its customary state—instability.

Neely, Carol Thomas. “‘Documents in Madness’: Reading Madness and Gender in Shakespeare's Tragedies and Early Modern Culture.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42 (1991): 315–38.

Making reference to Hamlet's feigned and Ophelia's real madness, as well as madness in *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, Neely sets out “to begin to examine why, how, and with what consequences madness was read and represented in England in the early modern period by focusing on how representations of madness in Shakespeare's tragedies function within cultural contexts.” To establish such contexts, Neely consults a number of contemporary texts: Edward Jorden's treatise on hysteria, *The Suffocation of the Mother*; Timothy Bright's *Treatise of Melancholy*; Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*; Samuel Harsnett's *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*; and the records of the physician Richard Napier from 1598 to 1624 as presented by Michael MacDonald in his *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England*. All these works witness the English Renaissance's distinguishing of human madness from the supernatural

(demonic or divine possession), the spiritual (sin, guilt, doubt), and witchcraft and bewitchment, and understand madness instead in secular and medical terms. The representation of madness in the secular context of the stage in such plays as *Hamlet* participates in this larger cultural shift. In *Hamlet* itself, Neely observes how madness is gendered, with only Ophelia's madness somatized and eroticized, while Hamlet's feigned madness is "fashionably introspective and melancholy," its implications read as political. Neely notes that the language of what we are to take for actual madness on the stage is marked by fragmentation, obsession, and repetition, which, although prominent in Ophelia's lines in the fourth act, are to be found in Hamlet's speeches only directly after his first encounter with the Ghost in 1.5.

Schleiner, Louise. "Latinized Greek Drama in Shakespeare's Writing of *Hamlet*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990): 29–48.

Schleiner proposes that Aeschylus's *Oresteia* and Euripides' *Orestes* possibly influenced Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Though scholars have generally thought that Shakespeare read relatively little Greek, Schleiner claims he may have had access to the two Greek plays through Latin translations and a pair of now-lost English plays of 1599 titled *Agamemnon* and *Orestes' Furies*. In particular, Schleiner detects the possible influence of the graveyard and matricide scenes of the *Choephoroi* (*Libation Bearers*) in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* on *Hamlet*'s churchyard scene (5.1), for which there is no precedent in the play's known sources and analogues. She also notes similarities in the roles of Horatio and Pylades (in both Aeschylus and Euripides). Even if Shakespeare did not read the Latin translations of these Greek plays himself, he could have learned of them from

such fellow playwrights as Ben Jonson, John Marston, George Chapman, or Thomas Dekker, all of whom adapted Latin texts. Among the details shared by *Hamlet* and the Latinized Greek texts are the emergence from concealment of a pair of young men (Hamlet and Horatio in 5.1, Orestes and Pylades) to confront mourners, and the validation provided by a male friend (Horatio for Hamlet in 5.1, Pylades for Orestes) for the killing of a relative (Claudius by Hamlet, Clytemnestra—his mother—by Orestes). Schleiner concludes her discussion by invoking Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality or "transposition" to analyze the relations of the Greek plays to *Hamlet*.

*Shakespeare Quarterly* 62.2 (Summer 2011).

This issue of *Shakespeare Quarterly* consists of nine entries on *Hamlet* under the headings "Positions," "Articles," and "Horatio Cluster." In the first section, Lee Edelman ("Against Survival: Queerness in a Time That's Out of Joint"), Carla Freccero ("Forget *Hamlet*"), and Kathryn Schwarz ("*Hamlet* without Us") examine the play in light of the work of Jacques Derrida, specifically his notions of spectral haunting, "archive," and "fratriarchy." Bernice W. Kliman's article "All at Sea about *Hamlet* at Sea" claims that the frequently cited record of performances of *Hamlet* off the coast of Africa in 1607 is most likely a forgery by John Payne Collier and should no longer be included in accounts of the play's performance history. Elizabeth Hanson's "Fellow Students: Hamlet, Horatio, and the Early Modern University" examines Prince Hamlet's friendship with the poor scholar Horatio, both students at the University of Wittenberg, finding it "emblematic of the uneasy interpenetration of nobility and the clerical culture of the universities in sixteenth-century England." In "Caviare to

the general'? Taste, Hearing, and Genre in *Hamlet*," Allison Kay Deutermann attends to an overlooked "crucial aspect of the play's interest in audition—its intervention in a turn-of-the-century contest over how plays should sound, and how audiences should hear them." Hamlet's investigation of "formally specific modes of hearing" recuperates "revenge tragedy from charges of creaking irrelevance." The "Horatio Cluster" provides three readings of the lines "Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man / As e'er my conversation coped withal" (3.2.56–57). Lars Engle ("How Is Horatio Just? How Just Is Horatio?") claims that for Hamlet, being just and being conscientious derive from an ability "to take a disinterested, nonstakeholder's attitude toward what one is thinking about," a relative rather than absolute mode of moral thinking that Hamlet admires in Horatio but that he does not claim to have "with any consistency himself." In "Reading Horatio," Jonathan Crewe examines the passage as it appears in the First Quarto and the Folio; while almost identical in both versions, the lines reveal "significant variations" in their respective textual settings to yield different readings of the "same" lines. Karen Newman's "Two Lines, Three Readers: *Hamlet* TLN 1904–05" addresses the "question of male friendship and the intimacies implied in Hamlet's 'my conversation.'" After reviewing the multiple meanings of "conversation" and "coped," she contextualizes the passage by noting how Hamlet's critique of theater and his call for its reform in the lines immediately preceding explain his choice of Horatio as a co-critic in the play-within-the-play scene.

Stallybrass, Peter, Roger Chartier, J. Franklin Mowery, and Heather Wolfe. "Hamlet's Tables and the Technologies of

Writing in Renaissance England.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 55 (2004): 379–419.

Beginning with the observation that “books play a prominent role in *Hamlet*,” the authors suggest that the most important book in the play, “both figuratively and literally,” is the book of memory, a book which Hamlet imagines as an inscribed “table” that can be wiped clean (1.5.102–11)—a “virtual table,” however, requiring “the supplement of actual tables” (1.5.114–15). Philip Melanchthon’s *Rhetoric* (1525) suggests that the indiscriminate collection of maxims and adages in writing tables and commonplace books could produce what is now called “information overload,” something that could be prevented by the use of erasable tables. With its ten blank leaves of specially treated paper and cleaning instructions, the 1604 almanac *Writing Tables with a Kalender for xxiiii. yeeres, with sundry necessarie rules* attests to the existence of such notebooks in England by the early seventeenth century. The essay deals with characteristics of Renaissance erasable notebooks and how one wrote in them without ink under the following headings: “wax tablets,” “erasable paper and asses’ skin,” “marketing writing tables,” “purchasing, giving, and using writing tables,” and “writing implements.” In the final two sections of the essay, “Tables, Memory, and Erasure” and “The Tables of the Mind,” the authors relate the table as an erasable technology to the erasure of memory in both *Hamlet* and Sonnet 122 and argue that the opposition between “technologies of permanence and technologies of erasure” runs throughout the play. To the extent that memory itself works like a table-book—an enduring record and a surface that can be wiped clean—it implies forgetfulness as much as remembrance. “The ‘Booke and Volume’ in which Hamlet imagines memorializing his

father's command fails to work, while the erasable tables, filled with commonplaces and jests, perform an ever-greater role within the play." As the memory of his father's ghost is attenuated after Act 3, the "trivial, fond records" of Yorick, the jester, "increasingly haunt, inhabit, and shape Hamlet." Ultimately, the ghost of Old Hamlet "suffers an even more ignominious fate than does his murderous brother: he simply fades away, erased from the tables of memory."

Weitz, Morris. *Hamlet and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism*. London: Faber, 1964.

Weitz believes that the history of criticism on *Hamlet* is so extensive and varied that an exploration of it can provide the opportunity to address "the traditional question, What is Criticism?" The first part of his book consists of a systematic exposition of the views of some major critics of *Hamlet*. These include from the twentieth century (1) A. C. Bradley, who in his *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904) concentrates on the character Hamlet, whom he identifies as suffering from melancholy; (2) Ernest Jones, with his Freudian psychoanalytical approach in *Hamlet and Oedipus* (1949); (3) G. Wilson Knight, who in *The Wheel of Fire* (1930) offers to interpret "the inner core or essence" of *Hamlet* as "the triumph of mortality over life"; (4) T. S. Eliot, charging, in his essay "Hamlet" (1919), that the play is an artistic failure because its action is allegedly in excess of its essential emotion; (5) "Historical Critics," including J. M. Robertson (*The Problem of "Hamlet"* [1919]), E. E. Stoll (*Hamlet: An Historical and Comparative Study* [1919]; *Art and Artifice in Shakespeare: A Study in Dramatic Contrast and Illusion* [1933]; *Hamlet the Man* [1935]), L. L. Shücking (*Character Problems in Shakespeare's Plays* [1922]; *The Meaning of "Hamlet"* [1937]; *The Baroque Character of the Elizabethan*

*Tragic Hero* [1938]; *Shakespeare und der Tragödienstil seiner Zeit* [1947]), Theodore Spencer (*Shakespeare and the Nature of Man* [1942]), and Lily Bess Campbell (*Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes: Slaves of Passion* [1930]), all of whom are committed to the view that *Hamlet* "can be correctly understood only in Elizabethan terms, where by 'terms' they mean Elizabethan theatrical conditions, stage and dramatic conventions, or philosophical, psychological, and political ideas and ideals"; (6) Francis Fergusson, who in *The Idea of a Theater* (1940) links *Hamlet* with Greek tragedy and ancient ritual; (7) J. Dover Wilson (*The Manuscript of Shakespeare's "Hamlet"* [1934]; a 1934 edition of the play in the New Shakespeare series; *What Happens in "Hamlet"* [1935]), whose twin goals are the establishment of the play's text and the elucidation of its plot; (8) Caroline Spurgeon (*Shakespeare's Imagery* [1935]) and W. H. Clemen (*The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery* [1951]), who seek to understand plays including *Hamlet* in terms of their dominant imagery, that is, their similes and metaphors. Weitz also surveys the writing of earlier critics, beginning as early as the seventeenth century with John Dryden and going forward with Alexander Pope, Samuel Johnson, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Leo Tolstoy. In the second part Weitz outlines what he sees as the main issues in *Hamlet* criticism, including "Is Hamlet mad?," "Does Hamlet vacillate?," "Is Ophelia honest, weak, in love with Hamlet?," "Is Gertrude an adulteress?," and "Why is Hamlet tragic?," among many more.

Werstine, Paul. "The Textual Mystery of *Hamlet*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 (1988): 1–26.

Werstine contemplates the differences among three of the *Hamlet* texts: the Second Quarto (Q2) of 1604–5, the Folio (F) of 1623, and the combination of the two (Q2/F) by the

recent editorial tradition (see Mowat, above). He abstracts from the early printed texts (Q2 and F) a number of contrasting patterns regarding, especially, Laertes and Fortinbras, Hamlet's relations to them, and his relation to Claudius. Because of a number of cuts from 1.2 ([60](#)–62), 4.7 ([77](#)–92, [130](#)–40), and 5.2 ([119](#)–48, [151](#)–56), as well as a small addition to 4.5 ([185](#)–87), F provides the play a Laertes who is more attractive than his counterpart in Q2. It may therefore be appropriate, argues Werstine, that the F Hamlet explicitly identify himself with Laertes in 5.2 in a passage that is not printed in Q2. The editorial combination Q2/F obscures this pattern, for it presents a Laertes who is mocked at length by both Claudius (in 4.7) and Hamlet (in 5.2) but is nonetheless also recognized by a sympathetic Hamlet in 5.2 as pursuing a cause similar to his own. A second patterned difference between Q2 and F arises for Werstine from Q2 Hamlet's ability to maintain an advantage over Claudius until very near the end of the play by inexplicably anticipating the King's plots against him. Only the Q2 Hamlet, because of a substantial cut in that text in 2.2 ([258](#)–89), is able immediately to detect that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Claudius's spies without their betraying themselves to him with their speeches, as they do in F. And only the Q2 Hamlet knows of Claudius's plot to kill him in sending him to England before he boards his ship, as is revealed in a Q2-only speech by Hamlet near the end of 3.4 ([225](#)–33). In contrast the F Hamlet seems far more limited in his ability to contend with Claudius. In the combined Q2/F text it is the limited F Hamlet who appears in 2.2 and the powerfully knowledgeable one in 3.4. However, Werstine does not argue that Shakespeare must be the one who created the patterns of contrast thus abstracted from Q2 and F. Instead Werstine recognizes that his patterns fail to embrace a great many

other differences between Q2 and F that can be distributed into no patterned relations at all; hence his patterns fall short of accounting for texts of Q2 and F as wholes. He therefore observes that other agents, such as theatrical adapters making cuts (as they are known to have done), could have created, perhaps accidentally, the patterns he identifies, if these patterns are not simply the products of his own critical method.

### Shakespeare's Language

Abbott, E. A. *A Shakespearian Grammar*. New York: Haskell House, 1972.

This compact reference book, first published in 1870, helps with many difficulties in Shakespeare's language. It systematically accounts for a host of differences between Shakespeare's usage and sentence structure and our own.

Blake, Norman. *Shakespeare's Language: An Introduction*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983.

This general introduction to Elizabethan English discusses various aspects of the language of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, offering possible meanings for hundreds of ambiguous constructions.

Dobson, E. J. *English Pronunciation, 1500–1700*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

This long and technical work includes chapters on spelling (and its reformation), phonetics, stressed vowels, and consonants in early modern English.

Hope, Jonathan. *Shakespeare's Grammar*. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2003.

Commissioned as a replacement for Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, Hope's book is organized in terms of the two basic parts of speech, the noun and the verb. After extensive analysis of the noun phrase and the verb phrase come briefer discussions of subjects and agents, objects, complements, and adverbials.

Houston, John. *Shakespearean Sentences: A Study in Style and Syntax*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988.

Houston studies Shakespeare's stylistic choices, considering matters such as sentence length and the relative positions of subject, verb, and direct object. Examining plays throughout the canon in a roughly chronological, developmental order, he analyzes how sentence structure is used in setting tone, in characterization, and for other dramatic purposes.

Onions, C. T. *A Shakespeare Glossary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

This revised edition updates Onions's standard, selective glossary of words and phrases in Shakespeare's plays that are now obsolete, archaic, or obscure.

Robinson, Randal. *Unlocking Shakespeare's Language: Help for the Teacher and Student*. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, 1989.

Specifically designed for the high-school and undergraduate college teacher and student, Robinson's book addresses the problems that most often hinder present-day readers of Shakespeare. Through work with his own students, Robinson found that many readers today are

particularly puzzled by such stylistic characteristics as subject-verb inversion, interrupted structures, and compression. He shows how our own colloquial language contains comparable structures, and thus helps students recognize such structures when they find them in Shakespeare's plays. This book supplies worksheets—with examples from major plays—to illuminate and remedy such problems as unusual sequences of words and the separation of related parts of sentences.

Williams, Gordon. *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature*. 3 vols. London: Athlone Press, 1994.

Williams provides a comprehensive list of words to which Shakespeare, his contemporaries, and later Stuart writers gave sexual meanings. He supports his identification of these meanings by extensive quotations.

### Shakespeare's Life

Baldwin, T. W. *William Shakspeare's Petty School*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1943.

Baldwin here investigates the theory and practice of the petty school, the first level of education in Elizabethan England. He focuses on that educational system primarily as it is reflected in Shakespeare's art.

Baldwin, T. W. *William Shakspeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*. 2 vols. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944.

Baldwin attacks the view that Shakespeare was an uneducated genius—a view that had been dominant among Shakespeareans since the eighteenth century. Instead, Baldwin shows, the educational system of Shakespeare's

time would have given the playwright a strong background in the classics, and there is much in the plays that shows how Shakespeare benefited from such an education.

Beier, A. L., and Roger Finlay, eds. *London 1500–1700: The Making of the Metropolis*. New York: Longman, 1986.

Focusing on the economic and social history of early modern London, these collected essays probe aspects of metropolitan life, including “Population and Disease,” “Commerce and Manufacture,” and “Society and Change.”

Chambers, E. K. *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930.

Analyzing in great detail the scant historical data, Chambers’s complex, scholarly study considers the nature of the texts in which Shakespeare’s work is preserved.

Cressy, David. *Education in Tudor and Stuart England*. London: Edward Arnold, 1975.

This volume collects sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and early eighteenth-century documents detailing aspects of formal education in England, such as the curriculum, the control and organization of education, and the education of women.

Duncan-Jones, Katherine. *Shakespeare: An Ungentle Life*. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2010.

This biography, first published in 2001 under the title *Ungentle Shakespeare: Scenes from His Life*, sets out to look into the documents from Shakespeare’s personal life—especially legal and financial records—and it finds there a man very different from the one portrayed in more traditional biographies. He is “ungentle” in being born to a lower social class and in being a bit ruthless and more than a bit stingy. As the author notes, “three topics were formerly

taboo both in polite society and in Shakespearean biography: social class, sex and money. I have been indelicate enough to give a good deal of attention to all three.” She examines “Shakespeare’s uphill struggle to achieve, or purchase, ‘gentle’ status.” She finds that “Shakespeare was strongly interested in intense relationships with well-born young men.” And she shows that he was “reluctant to divert much, if any, of his considerable wealth towards charitable, neighbourly, or altruistic ends.” She insists that his plays and poems are “great, and enduring,” and that it is in them “that the best of him is to be found.”

Dutton, Richard. *William Shakespeare: A Literary Life*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989.

Not a biography in the traditional sense, Dutton’s very readable work nevertheless “follows the contours of Shakespeare’s life” as it examines Shakespeare’s career as playwright and poet, with consideration of his patrons, theatrical associations, and audience.

Honan, Park. *Shakespeare: A Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Honan’s accessible biography focuses on the various contexts of Shakespeare’s life—physical, social, political, and cultural—to place the dramatist within a lucidly described world. The biography includes detailed examinations of, for example, Stratford schooling, theatrical politics of 1590s London, and the careers of Shakespeare’s associates. The author draws on a wealth of established knowledge and on interesting new research into local records and documents; he also engages in speculation about, for example, the possibilities that Shakespeare was a tutor in a Catholic

household in the north of England in the 1580s and that he acted particular roles in his own plays, areas that reflect new, but unproven and debatable, data—though Honan is usually careful to note where a particular narrative “has not been capable of proof or disproof.”

Potter, Lois. *The Life of William Shakespeare: A Critical Biography*. Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

This critical biography of Shakespeare takes the playwright from cradle to grave, paying primary attention to his literary and theatrical milieu. The chapters “follow a chronological sequence,” each focusing on a handful of years in the playwright’s life. In the chapters that cover his playwriting years (5–17), each chapter focuses on events in Stratford-upon-Avon and in London (especially in the commercial theaters) while giving equal space to discussions of the plays and/or poems Shakespeare wrote during those years. Filled with information from Shakespeare’s literary and theatrical worlds, the biography also shares frequent insights into how modern productions of a given play can shed light on the play, especially in scenes that Shakespeare’s text presents ambiguously.

Schoenbaum, S. *William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Schoenbaum’s evidence-based biography of Shakespeare is a compact version of his magisterial folio-size *Shakespeare: A Documentary Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975). Schoenbaum structures his readable “compact” narrative around the documents that still exist which chronicle Shakespeare’s familial, theatrical, legal, and financial existence. These documents, along with those discovered since the 1970s, form the basis of almost all

Shakespeare biographies written since Schoenbaum's books appeared.

### Shakespeare's Theater

Bentley, G. E. *The Profession of Player in Shakespeare's Time, 1590–1642*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Bentley readably sets forth a wealth of evidence about performance in Shakespeare's time, with special attention to the relations between player and company, and the business of casting, managing, and touring.

Berry, Herbert. *Shakespeare's Playhouses*. New York: AMS Press, 1987.

Berry's six essays collected here discuss (with illustrations) varying aspects of the four playhouses in which Shakespeare had a financial stake: the Theatre in Shoreditch, the Blackfriars, and the first and second Globe.

Berry, Herbert, William Ingram, and Glynne Wickham, eds. *English Professional Theatre, 1530–1660*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Wickham presents the government documents designed to control professional players, their plays, and playing places. Ingram handles the professional actors, giving as representative a life of the actor Augustine Phillips, and discussing, among other topics, patrons, acting companies, costumes, props, playbooks, provincial playing, and child actors. Berry treats the twenty-three different London playhouses from 1560 to 1660 for which there are records, including four inns.

Cook, Ann Jennalie. *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Cook's work argues, on the basis of sociological, economic, and documentary evidence, that Shakespeare's audience—and the audience for English Renaissance drama generally—consisted mainly of the “privileged.”

Dutton, Richard, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Dutton divides his study of the theatrical industry of Shakespeare's time into the following sections: “Theatre Companies,” “London Playhouses,” “Other Playing Spaces,” “Social Practices,” and “Evidence of Theatrical Practices.” Each of these sections is further subdivided, with subdivisions assigned to individual experts. W. R. Streitberger treats the “Adult Playing Companies to 1583”; Sally-Beth MacLean those from 1583 to 1593; Roslyn L. Knutson, 1593–1603; Tom Rutter, 1603–1613; James J. Marino, 1613–1625; and Martin Butler, the “Adult and Boy Playing Companies 1625–1642.” Michael Shapiro is responsible for the “Early (Pre-1590) Boy Companies and Their Acting Venues,” while Mary Bly writes of “The Boy Companies 1599–1613.” David Kathman handles “Inn-Yard Playhouses”; Gabriel Egan, “The Theatre in Shoreditch 1576–1599”; Andrew Gurr, “Why the Globe Is Famous”; Ralph Alan Cohen, “The Most Convenient Place: The Second Blackfriars Theater and Its Appeal”; Mark Bayer, “The Red Bull Playhouse”; and Frances Teague, “The Phoenix and the Cockpit-in-Court Playhouses.” Turning to “Other Playing Spaces,” Suzanne Westfall describes how “‘He who pays the piper calls the tune’: Household Entertainments”; Alan H. Nelson, “The Universities and the Inns of Court”; Peter Greenfield, “Touring”; John H. Astington, “Court Theatre”;

and Anne Lancashire, "London Street Theater." For "Social Practices," Alan Somerset writes of "Not Just Sir Oliver Owlet: From Patrons to 'Patronage' of Early Modern Theatre," Dutton himself of "The Court, the Master of the Revels, and the Players," S. P. Cerasano of "Theater Entrepreneurs and Theatrical Economics," Ian W. Archer of "The City of London and the Theatre," David Kathman of "Players, Livery Companies, and Apprentices," Kathleen E. McLuskie of "Materiality and the Market: The Lady Elizabeth's Men and the Challenge of Theatre History," Heather Hirschfield of "'For the author's credit': Issues of Authorship in English Renaissance Drama," and Natasha Korda of "Women in the Theater." On "Theatrical Practices," Jacalyn Royce discusses "Early Modern Naturalistic Acting: The Role of the Globe in the Development of Personation"; Tiffany Stern, "Actors' Parts"; Alan Dessen, "Stage Directions and the Theater Historian"; R. B. Graves, "Lighting"; Lucy Munro, "Music and Sound"; Dutton himself, "Properties"; Thomas Postlewait, "Eyewitnesses to History: Visual Evidence for Theater in Early Modern England"; and Eva Griffith, "Christopher Beeston: His Property and Properties."

Greg, W. W. *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931.

Greg itemizes and briefly describes almost all the play manuscripts that survive from the period 1590 to around 1660, including, among other things, players' parts. His second volume offers facsimiles of selected manuscripts.

Harbage, Alfred. *Shakespeare's Audience*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1941.

Harbage investigates the fragmentary surviving evidence to interpret the size, composition, and behavior of

Shakespeare's audience.

Keenan, Siobhan. *Acting Companies and Their Plays in Shakespeare's London*. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2014.

Keenan "explores how the needs, practices, resources and pressures on acting companies and playwrights informed not only the performance and publication of contemporary dramas but playwrights' writing practices." Each chapter focuses on one important factor that influenced Renaissance playwrights and players. The initial focus is on how "the nature and composition of the acting companies" influenced the playwrights who wrote for them. Then, using "the Diary of theatre manager Philip Henslowe and manuscript playbooks showing signs of theatrical use," Keenan examines the relations between acting companies and playwrights. Other influences include "the physical design and facilities of London's outdoor and indoor theatrical spaces" and the diverse audiences for plays, including royal and noble patrons.

Shapiro, Michael. *Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of Shakespeare's Time and Their Plays*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.

Shapiro chronicles the history of the amateur and quasi-professional child companies that flourished in London at the end of Elizabeth's reign and the beginning of James's.

### The Publication of Shakespeare's Plays

Blayney, Peter W. M. *The First Folio of Shakespeare*. Hanover, Md.: Folger, 1991.

Blayney's accessible account of the printing and later life of the First Folio—an amply illustrated catalogue to a 1991 Folger Shakespeare Library exhibition—analyzes the mechanical production of the First Folio, describing how the Folio was made, by whom and for whom, how much it cost, and its ups and downs (or, rather, downs and ups) since its printing in 1623.

Hinman, Charlton. *The Norton Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996.

This facsimile presents a photographic reproduction of an “ideal” copy of the First Folio of Shakespeare; Hinman attempts to represent each page in its most fully corrected state. This second edition includes an important new introduction by Peter W. M. Blayney.

Hinman, Charlton. *The Printing and Proof-Reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.

In the most arduous study of a single book ever undertaken, Hinman attempts to reconstruct how the Shakespeare First Folio of 1623 was set into type and run off the press, sheet by sheet. He also provides almost all the known variations in readings from copy to copy.

Werstine, Paul. *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts and the Editing of Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Werstine examines in detail nearly two dozen texts associated with the playhouses in and around Shakespeare's time, conducting the examination against the background of the two idealized forms of manuscript that have governed the editing of Shakespeare from the twentieth into the

twenty-first century—Shakespeare’s so-called foul papers and the so-called promptbooks of his plays. By comparing the two extant texts of John Fletcher’s *Bonduca*, one in manuscript and the other printed in 1647, Werstine shows that the term “foul papers” that is found in a note in the *Bonduca* manuscript does not refer, as editors have believed, to a species of messy authorial manuscript but is instead simply a designation for a manuscript, whatever its features, that has served as the copy from which another manuscript has been made. By surveying twenty-one texts with theatrical markup, he demonstrates that the playhouses used a wide variety of different kinds of manuscripts and printed texts but did not use the highly regularized promptbooks of the eighteenth-century theaters and later. His presentation of the peculiarities of playhouse texts provides an empirical basis for inferring the nature of the manuscripts that lie behind printed Shakespeare plays.

# Key to Famous Lines and Phrases

For this relief much thanks.

[*Francisco*—[1.1.8](#)]

. . . prologue to the omen coming on . . .

[*Horatio*—[1.1.135](#)]

. . . the morn in russet mantle clad . . .

[*Horatio*—[1.1.181](#)]

A little more than kin and less than kind.

[*Hamlet*—[1.2.67](#)]

O, that this too, too sullied flesh would melt . . .

[*Hamlet*—[1.2.133](#)]

. . . frailty, thy name is woman!

[*Hamlet*—[1.2.150](#)]

In my mind's eye[.]

[*Hamlet*—[1.2.193](#)]

A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

[*Horatio*—[1.2.247](#)]

. . . the primrose path of dalliance . . .

[*Ophelia*—[1.3.54](#)]

This above all: to thine own self be true[.]

[*Polonius*—[1.3.84](#)]

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

[*Marcellus*—[1.4.100](#)]

Murder most foul, as in the best it is[.]

[*Ghost*—[1.5.33](#)]

Leave her to heaven[.]

[*Ghost*—[1.5.93](#)]

. . . one may smile and smile and be a villain.

[*Hamlet*—[1.5.115](#)]

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

[*Hamlet*—[1.5.187](#)–88]

The time is out of joint.

[*Hamlet*—[1.5.210](#)]

. . . brevity is the soul of wit[.]

[*Polonius*—[2.2.97](#)]

More matter with less art.

[*Queen*—[2.2.103](#)]

Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't.

[*Polonius*—[2.2.223](#)–24]

. . . there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it  
so.

[*Hamlet*—[2.2.268](#)–70]

What a piece of work is a man . . .

[*Hamlet*—[2.2.327](#)]

I am but mad north-north-west. . . . I know a hawk from a handsaw.

[*Hamlet*—[2.2.402](#)–3]

. . . caviary to the general.

[*Hamlet*—[2.2.461](#)]

Use every man after his desert and who shall 'scape whipping?

[*Hamlet*—[2.2.555](#)–57]

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!

[*Hamlet*—[2.2.577](#)]

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba[.]

[*Hamlet*—[2.2.586](#)]

. . . the devil hath power  
T' assume a pleasing shape[.]

[*Hamlet*—[2.2.628](#)–29]

The play's the thing[.]

[*Hamlet*—[2.2.633](#)]

To be or not to be—that is the question[.]

[*Hamlet*—[3.1.64](#)]

The glass of fashion and the mold of form,  
Th' observed of all observers[.]

[*Ophelia*—[3.1.167](#)–68]

It out-Herods Herod.

[*Hamlet*—[3.2.14](#)–15]

Suit the action to the word, the word to the action[.]

[*Hamlet*—[3.2.18](#)–19]

The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

[*Queen*—[3.2.254](#)]

A king of shreds and patches[.]

[*Hamlet*—[3.4.117](#)]

. . . 'tis the sport to have the enginer  
Hoist with his own petard[.]

[*Hamlet*—[3.4.229](#)–30]

How all occasions do inform against me[.]

[*Hamlet*—[4.4.34](#)]

There's such divinity doth hedge a king . . .

[*King*—[4.5.138](#)]

Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio[.]

[*Hamlet*—[5.1.190](#)–91]

Imperious Cæsar, dead and turned to clay . . .

[*Hamlet*—[5.1.220](#)]

Sweets to the sweet[.]

[*Gertrude*—[5.1.254](#)]

There's a divinity that shapes our ends[.]

[*Hamlet*—[5.2.11](#)]

There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow.

[*Hamlet*—[5.2.233](#)–34]

# Commentary

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## ⟨ACT 1⟩

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### ⟨Scene 1⟩

**1.1** On the guards' platform at Elsinore, Horatio waits with Barnardo and Marcellus to question a ghost that has twice before appeared. The Ghost, in the form of the late King Hamlet of Denmark, appears but will not speak. Horatio decides to tell his fellow student, Prince Hamlet, about the Ghost's appearance.

**2. unfold yourself:** disclose your identity

**14. The rivals of my watch:** my fellow sentries     **watch:** continuous lookout, for protection or defense

**17. the Dane:** the Danish king

**18. Give:** God give

**23. what:** an interjection introducing a question

**30. of us:** by us

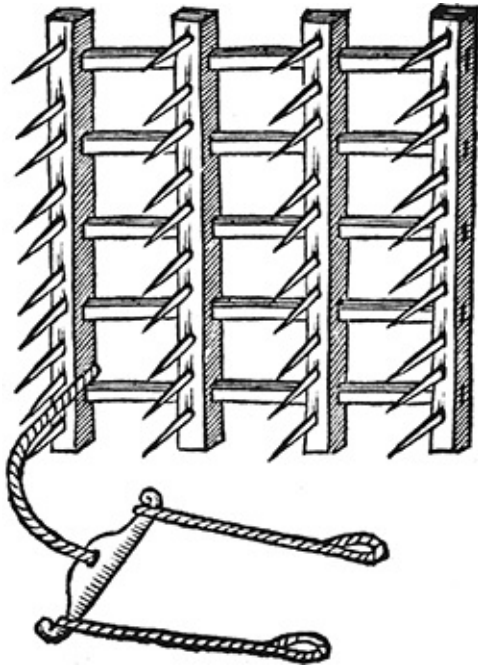
**32. watch:** keep watch during

**34. approve our eyes:** confirm our observation

**43. pole:** Polaris, the North Star

**44. his:** its

**51. harrows:** torments (A harrow is a farm implement used to break up the ground.) See picture.



The harrow. ([1.1.51](#); [1.5.21](#))

From Gervase Markham, *The English husbandman* (1613).

**56. buried Denmark:** the **buried** king of **Denmark**

**57. sometimes:** formerly

**65. on 't:** of it

**67. sensible:** attested by the senses; **avouch:** guarantee, testimony

**72. Norway:** i.e., the king of **Norway** (the elder Fortinbras)

**73. parle:** parley, meeting

**74. smote:** attacked or, perhaps, defeated; **sledded Polacks:** Polish military riding in sleds (See picture.)



Sledded warriors: “sledded Polacks on the ice.” ([1.1.74](#))

From Cesare Vecellio, *Habiti antichi et moderni* (1598).

[76. jump](#): exactly

[78–79. In what . . . opinion](#): i.e., I cannot be precise, **but in** my general **opinion**

[81. Good now](#): i.e., please, I entreat you; **tell . . . knows**: i.e., let him who **knows tell me**

[82. watch](#): See note to [line 14](#), above.

[83. toils](#): causes to labor; wearies; **subject of the land**: i.e., subjects of the realm

[85. foreign mart](#): international trade

[86. impress](#): enforced service

[88. toward](#): approaching, about to happen

[95. Thereto . . . pride](#): stirred to do this (i.e., to dare King Hamlet to combat) by a proud desire to rival the Danish king

98. **sealed compact:** contract or covenant bearing a seal guaranteeing its authenticity

99. **law and heraldry:** the **law** of arms, regulating tournaments and battles

101. **stood seized of:** legally possessed

102. **a moiety competent:** an appropriate portion

103. **gagèd:** engaged, i.e., pledged; **which had: which** would have

104. **inheritance:** possession

105. **comart:** perhaps, bargain

106. **carriage of the article designed:** i.e., meaning carried by the agreement drawn up

108. **unimprovèd:** i.e., untested, unused

110. **Sharked up:** i.e., gathered indiscriminately

111. **For . . . to:** i.e., as means or provisions for

112. **stomach:** spirit of adventure

118. **head:** fountainhead, source

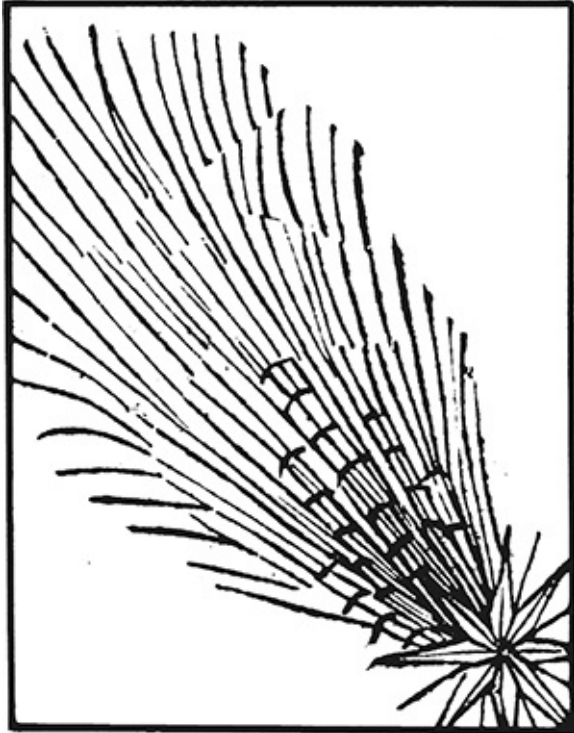
119. **posthaste:** extreme haste; **rummage:** bustle, commotion

121. **Well may it sort:** i.e., it would thus be fitting

125. **palmy:** triumphant, worthy to bear the palm

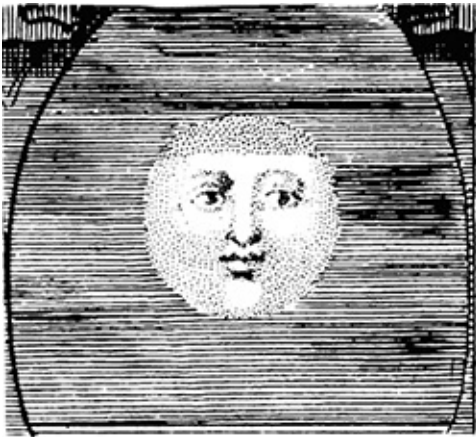
127. **sheeted:** wrapped in their shrouds

129–30. **As stars . . . sun:** These lines are awkward; probably some text has been lost. **Disasters:** threatening signs



“As stars with trains of fire.” (1.1.129)  
 From Hartmann Schedel, *Liber chronicorum* . . . [1493].

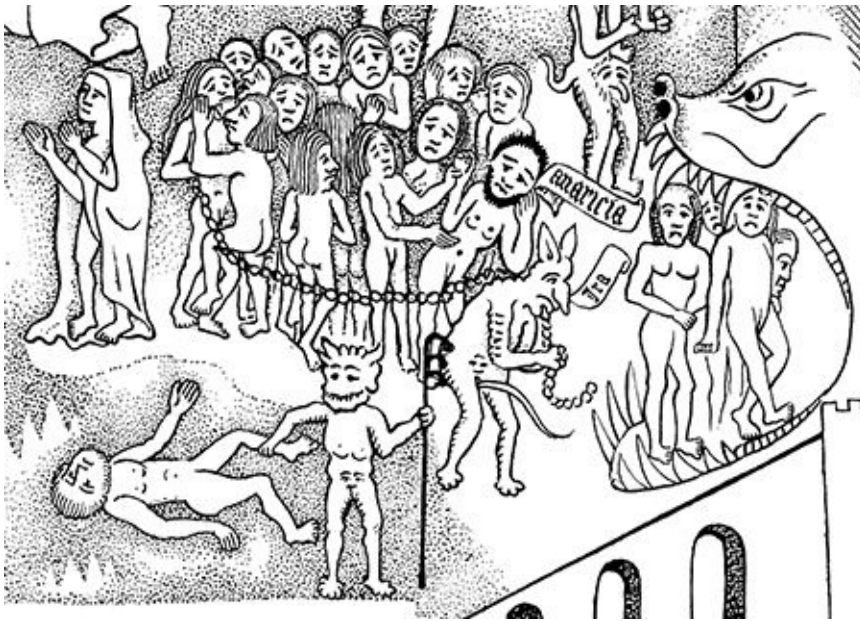
**130. moist star:** the moon, believed to be cold and **moist** (See picture.)



“The moist star.” (1.1.130)  
 From Laurentius Wolffgang Woyt, . . . *Emblematicher Parnassus* . . . (1728–30).

**131. Upon . . . stands:** i.e., by **whose influence** the sea is controlled  
**Neptune:** Roman god of the sea

**132. doomsday:** i.e., the end of the world, Judgment Day (See picture.)



The Last Judgment, or Doomsday. ([1.1.132](#); [2.2.257](#); [3.4.59](#); [5.1.61](#), [237](#)).

From *A Series . . . of Ancient . . . Paintings . . . on the Walls of the Chapel . . . at Stratford-upon-Avon* (etched and published by Thomas Fisher in 1807).

**133. even . . . precurse:** the same kind of foreshadowing

**134. still:** always; **the fates:** that which is destined to happen

**135. omen:** i.e., ominous event

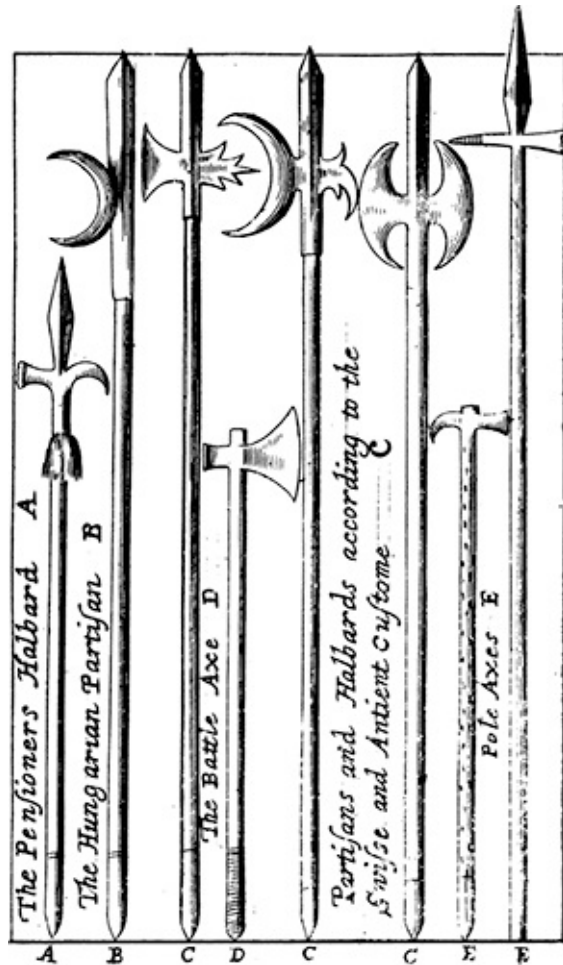
**137. climatures:** geographic regions

**138. soft:** an exclamation requesting silence

**139. cross it:** meet it face to face, encounter it; block its path; **blast me:** shrivel or blight me, destroy me

**146. happily:** perhaps; or, fortunately

153.



Partisans and other weapons. (1.1.153)  
From Louis de Gaya, *A treatise of the arms* . . . (1678).

162.



A cock. (1.1.162, 165, 172)

From Konrad Gesner, *Historiae animalium* . . . (1585–1604).

164. **fearful**: terrifying; **heard**: heard that

165. **trumpet to**: trumpeter who proclaims the arrival of

169. **extravagant** . . . **spirit**: a supernatural being who has wandered out of **his confine** (line 170) or place of confinement; **hies**: hurries

171. **made probation**: demonstrated

173. **'gainst**: just before

177. **strike**: destroy through malign influence

178. **takes**: puts under a magic spell

179. **gracious**: full of grace, blessed

181. **russet**: coarse homespun fabric in gray or reddish brown

## ⟨ACT 1⟩

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### ⟨Scene 2⟩

**1.2** In an audience chamber in Elsinore, Claudius, the new king of Denmark, holds court. After thanking his courtiers for their recent support, he dispatches ambassadors to Norway to halt a threatened attack from Fortinbras. He gives Laertes permission to return to France but denies Hamlet's request to return to the university in Wittenberg. Hamlet, mourning for his father's death, is left alone to vent his despair at what he regards as his mother's all too hasty marriage to his uncle, Claudius. The audience learns that the marriage took place "within a month" of the former king's death.

Horatio, Barnardo, and Marcellus arrive and tell Hamlet about the Ghost. Hamlet makes plans to join them that night.

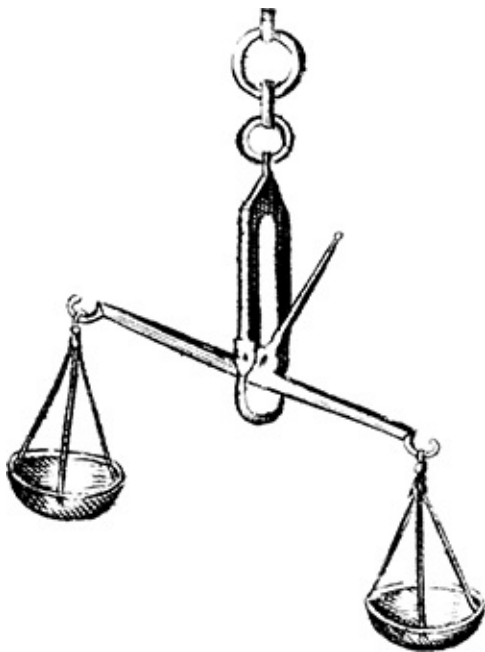
0 SD. **Flourish:** a trumpet sound signaling a royal entry

8. **our sometime sister:** my former sister-in-law (Claudius uses the royal “we” throughout, when he is speaking as king.)

9. **jointress:** a woman who owns property jointly with her husband

11. **With . . . eye:** as if smiling **with** one **eye** and crying **with** the other

13. **equal scale:** a perfectly balanced **scale** (See picture.) **dole:** grief



A balance. (1.2.13; 4.5.180–81)

From Silvestro Pietrasanta, . . . *Symbola heroica* . . . (1682).

17. **that you know:** **that** which **you** already **know**

18. **a weak . . . worth:** i.e., a low opinion of my ability

21. **Colleaguèd:** i.e., in league with; **advantage:** i.e., superior position

29. **impotent:** helpless; **bedrid:** confined to bed

31. **gait:** course

31–33. **in that . . . subject:** i.e., since the troops and supplies are drawn from Norway’s own subjects

37. **To business:** to negotiate

38. **these . . . articles:** this detailed account

39. **let . . . duty:** i.e., **let your** speedy departure take the place of ceremonious leave-taking

41. **nothing:** not at all

44. **Dane:** Danish king

45. **lose your voice:** i.e., waste your words

48. **native:** naturally connected

58. **leave and pardon:** permission to depart

60–61. **wrung . . . petition:** i.e., finally persuaded me to allow him

62. **Upon . . . consent:** i.e., I reluctantly agreed to his wishes

64–65. **Take . . . will:** a courteous formula giving Laertes permission to return to France

66. **cousin:** kinsman

67. **more than kin:** i.e., twice related: uncle/nephew and “father”/“son”; **less than kind:** i.e., in a less-than-natural relationship

69. **in the sun:** a pun on **sun/son**

70. **nighted color:** i.e., black (mourning) clothing

71. **Denmark:** the king of Denmark

72. **vailèd lids:** i.e., lowered eyes

74. **common:** belonging to all human beings

78. **particular:** special, personal

80–86. **'Tis . . . truly:** i.e., it is not only my black clothes, my sighs and tears, my downcast face, and other outward signs of grief that

indicate my real feelings

87. **play:** perform as on a stage

96. **obsequious:** dutiful (Claudius seems to be playing on the related word *obsequy*, funeral service.)

97. **obstinate condolment:** sorrow that refuses comfort

99. **incorrect to heaven:** uncorrected by the divine will

101. **simple:** i.e., dull

103. **As . . . sense:** As anything that is **the most** familiar object of perception

108. **still:** always, habitually

109. **corse:** corpse (The **first corse**, according to Genesis, was Abel, murdered by his brother, Cain. See Genesis 4.1–16, and picture.)



Cain murders Abel (1.2.109; 3.3.41; 5.1.79)

From Gabriel Chappuys, *Figures de la Bible* . . . (1582).

111. **unprevailing:** futile, useless

113. **most immediate:** next in line of succession

116. **impart toward:** give to

118. **retrograde:** opposite, contrary

119. **bend you:** perhaps, incline or dispose yourself

129. **jocund health:** merry toast

130. **tell:** count out; report

131. **rouse:** deep drink; **bruit again:** i.e., echo

132. **earthly thunder:** the sound of **the great cannon** (line 130)

133. **sullied:** stained, defiled (The Second Quarto [Q2] reads “sallied,” an alternate spelling for “sullied”; the Folio [F] reads “solid.”)

136. **canon:** divine law

143. **that was to this:** in comparison to **this** king

144. **Hyperion to a satyr:** i.e., like the sun god as compared to a goatlike **satyr** (See pictures.)



A satyr. ([1.2.144](#))

From Vincenzo Cartari, *Le vere e noue imagini* . . . (1615).



The sun god in his chariot. ([1.1.167](#); [1.2.144](#); [3.2.176](#); [3.4.66](#))

From Vincenzo Cartari, *Le vere e noue imagini* . . . (1615).

[145.](#) **might not beteem:** would not allow

[151.](#) **or ere:** before

[153.](#) **Niobe:** In Greek mythology, **Niobe**, so grief-stricken at the loss of her children that she could not cease crying, was transformed into a stone from which water continually flowed. (See picture.)



Niobe. ([1.2.153](#))

From Giovanni Battista Cavalleriis, *Antiquarum statuarum . . .* (1585–94).

[154.](#) **wants . . . reason:** lacks the ability to reason

[158.](#) **Hercules:** in Greek mythology, a hero of extraordinary strength and courage (See picture.)



Hercules. ([1.2.158](#); [2.2.384](#); [5.1.310](#))

From Vincenzo Cartari, *Le vere e noue imagini* . . . (1615).

[160.](#) **Had . . . eyes:** i.e., had stopped turning **her eyes** red

[161.](#) **post:** rush (as in riding a post-horse)

[162.](#) **incestuous:** Hamlet calls the marriage of his mother and his uncle “incestuous”—i.e., a violation of the laws against intercourse between close kin. The Ghost will also make this charge ([1.5.49](#)). Other members of the Danish court seem to see the marriage of Gertrude and Claudius as legal and legitimate. Debates about the incestuousness of a marriage between a widow and her dead husband’s brother were heated in the sixteenth century (especially during the divorce trial of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon). The Bible gives conflicting commands about such marriages. How one is to view the marriage of Gertrude and Claudius is an ongoing focus of interest for students of *Hamlet*.

[169.](#) **I’ll . . . you:** i.e., instead of your calling yourself my **servant**, we’ll call each other **friend**

[170.](#) **what . . . from: what** are **you** doing away **from**

[186.](#) **hard upon:** soon after

[188.](#) **coldly:** served cold (as leftovers)

[189.](#) **dearest:** most grievous; bitterest

[194.](#) **goodly:** admirable, excellent

[201.](#) **Season your admiration:** i.e., control your astonishment

[202.](#) **attent:** attentive; **deliver:** narrate, describe

[210.](#) **at point exactly, cap-à-pie: at every point,** from head to foot (See picture.)



“Armed at point exactly, cap-à-pie.” (1.2.210)

From Henry Peacham, *Minerua Britannia* [1612].

**213. oppressed and fear-surprisèd:** terrified

**214. truncheon's:** A truncheon is a short staff (here carried as a symbol of authority). **distilled:** melted, dissolved

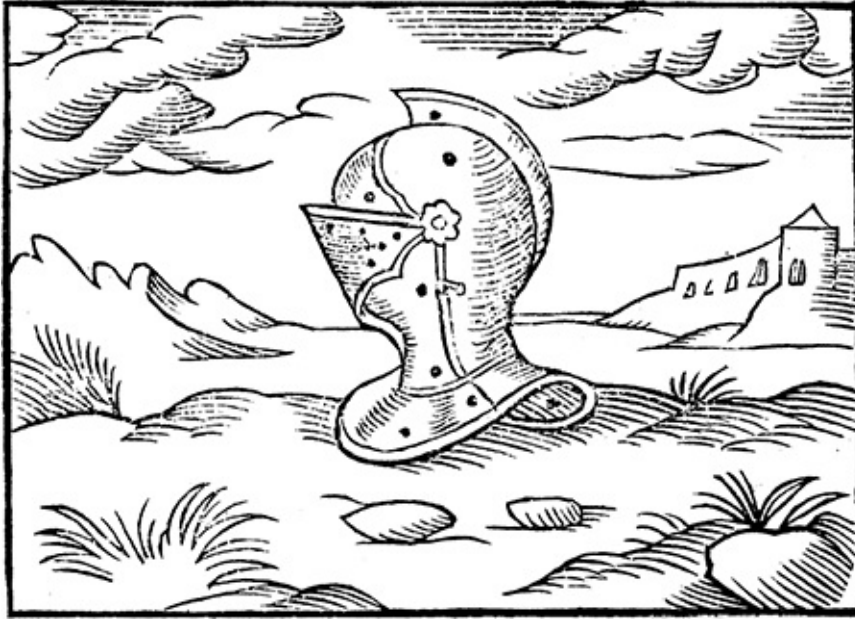
**215. the act of fear: the action of fear** upon them

**227. methought:** it seemed to me

**228–29. did address . . . speak:** i.e., began to move **as if it would speak**

**230. even then:** at that very moment

**245. beaver:** frontpiece of a helmet (See picture.)



Helmet with beaver down. ([1.2.245](#))  
From Henry Peacham, *Minerua Britannia* [1612].

[248.](#) **red:** a natural healthy color

[252.](#) **would:** wish

[255.](#) **tell:** count

[259.](#) **grizzled:** gray

[269.](#) **tenable:** withheld, kept secret

[278.](#) **doubt . . . play:** suspect some unfair or treacherous dealing

[280.](#) **o'erwhelm:** cover, bury

## ⟨ACT 1⟩

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### ⟨Scene 3⟩

**1.3** In Polonius's chambers, Laertes says good-bye to his sister, Ophelia, and tells her not to trust Hamlet's promises of love. Polonius

joins them, sends Laertes off, then echoes Laertes's warnings to Ophelia, finally ordering her not to see Hamlet again.

3. **convey is assistant:** transport is available

6. **For:** as **for; trifling . . . favor:** i.e., his flirting or dallying with you

7. **fashion:** a temporary enthusiasm; **toy in blood:** amorous flirtation

8. **in . . . nature: in the** early days **of** its prime

9. **Forward:** ardent, eager

10. **perfume . . . minute:** that which makes the moment sweet and fills it with pleasure

14–15. **nature . . . bulk:** i.e., a growing human **does not** increase only in strength and size

15. **this temple:** the body; **waxes:** grows larger

17. **withal:** at the same time

18. **soil:** moral stain; **cautel:** deceit

20. **greatness:** high rank

21. **birth:** noble lineage

23. **Carve:** i.e., choose

26. **voice and yielding:** judgment and consent; **that body:** i.e., the Danish state

31. **give his saying deed:** put his words into action

32. **withal:** along with

34. **credent:** gullible; **list:** listen to

35–36. **your chaste . . . importunity:** i.e., surrender **your** chastity **to his** uncontrolled pleading

**38. keep . . . affection:** i.e., hold yourself back from actions your feelings would lead you into (The metaphor is from warfare, and is continued in the next line.)

**40. chariest:** most careful; **maid:** maiden, virgin

**42. strokes:** blows

**43. The canker . . . spring:** i.e., the cankerworm destroys the early spring blossoms (See picture.)



A cankerworm. (**1.3.43**)

From John Johnstone, *Opera aliquot . . .* (1650–62).

**44. buttons be disclosed:** buds have opened

**46. Contagious:** noxious, pernicious; **blastments:** withering blights

**48. Youth . . . else near:** i.e., **youth** loses self-control even without a tempter

**51. ungracious:** ungodly

**52–54. Show me . . . treads:** i.e., **show me** how to live a strict and virtuous life while he **himself** follows a life of self-indulgence (See Matthew 7.13–14.)

**55. recks not his own rede:** does **not** heed **his own** advice

**58. A double . . . grace:** i.e., to receive one's father's **blessing** twice is a **double** favor from heaven

**59. Occasion smiles upon:** i.e., opportunity (personified as **Occasion**) kindly grants me; **leave:** leave-taking

65. **Look thou character:** see that you inscribe

66. **unproportioned:** immoderate; **his:** its

67. **familiar:** friendly; **vulgar:** i.e., indiscriminate

71. **unfledged courage:** spirited youngster

74. **voice:** approval, support

75. **censure:** synonymous with **judgment**

76. **habit:** clothing

80. **Are . . . in that:** This puzzling line reads, in Q2, “Or of a most select and generous, chiefe in that”; in F it reads, “Are of a most . . . cheff in that.” The line seems to mean, generally: the French show their refinement chiefly in the way they choose their apparel.

83. **husbandry:** management of one’s money

89. **invests:** i.e., presses upon (Many editors prefer the Folio’s “invites.”) **tend:** i.e., await you

98. **Marry:** a mild oath derived from “By the Virgin Mary”; **bethought:** considered

103. **so ’tis put on me:** so I have been told

108–9. **tenders . . . to me:** offers to me of his affection

110. **green:** gullible; inexperienced

111. **Unsifted in:** i.e., naive about

115. **tenders:** coins that should be “legal tender” but are not because they **are not sterling** (line 116)

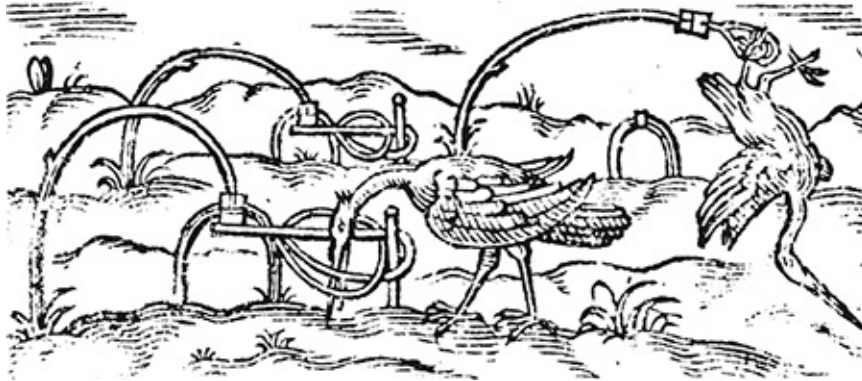
116. **Tender yourself more dearly:** regard yourself at a higher rate

117–18. **not to . . . thus:** not to run **the phrase**, as if it were a horse, so hard that it becomes winded

**118. tender me a fool:** (1) show yourself to **me** as **a fool**; (2) make **me** look like **a fool**; (3) present me with a grandchild (The word “fool” was used as a term of endearment for a child.)

**122. given . . . to:** supported, backed up

**124. springes:** snares; **woodcocks:** birds thought to be stupid and easily captured (See picture.)



Woodcocks in a springe. (**1.3.124**; **5.2.336**)

From Henry Parrot, *Laquei ridiculosi* . . . (1613).

**127–28. extinct . . . a-making:** i.e., **both** the **light** and the **heat** of such **blazes** dying out almost as soon as they appear

**131. Set . . . rate:** i.e., place a greater value on your conversation

**132. command to parle:** summons to speak (**Entreatments** and **parle** usually referred to military negotiations for truce or surrender.)

**135. In few:** i.e., in short

**136–40. brokers . . . beguile:** See longer note. **brokers:** agents **investments:** clothing, vestments **implorators:** solicitors **Breathing:** speaking **beguile:** deceive; entice (**Bawds** was suggested by Lewis Theobald; Q2 and F read “bonds.”)

**142. slander:** disgrace by misusing

## 〈ACT 1〉

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### 「Scene 4」

**1.4** While Claudius drinks away the night, Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus are visited by the Ghost. It signals to Hamlet. Hamlet's friends try to stop his following the Ghost, but Hamlet will not be held back.

**1. shrewdly:** keenly, intensely

**2. eager:** sharp (from the French *aigre*)

**7. held his wont:** has been accustomed

**7 SD. pieces:** i.e., **pieces** of artillery (to create the sound of the **great cannon** promised by Claudius at [1.2.130](#))

**9. doth . . . rouse:** stays awake tonight drinking

**10. Keeps wassail:** carouses; **upspring:** a German dance, particularly associated with heavy drinking

**11. Rhenish:** Rhine wine

**13. triumph of his pledge:** his feat of emptying the cup in one draft

**17. to the manner born:** destined through birth to accept this custom

**20. taxed of:** censured by

**21. clepe:** call; **swinish phrase:** Proverbial: “as drunk as a pig”

**22. addition:** titles of honor

**25. pith and marrow:** essence; **attribute:** reputation

**26. So:** in the same way; **oft it chances in:** it often happens with

**27. mole of nature:** natural fault

**30. o'ergrowth . . . complexion:** i.e., the increase of one of the four humors, which were thought to control man's physical and emotional being

**31. pales and forts:** palings and ramparts

**32. o'erleavens:** radically changes

**33. plausible:** pleasing

**35. nature's livery:** i.e., something by which one is marked by nature (as in **their birth** [line 28], or **the o'ergrowth of some complexion** [line 30]); **fortune's star:** something determined by luck (as in the accidental forming of **some habit** [line 32])

**36. His virtues else:** the other **virtues** of **these men** (line 33)

**37. undergo:** experience

**39–41. The dram . . . scandal:** These difficult lines have never been satisfactorily repaired, but the general sense may be that a small amount of **evil** makes even something admirable seem disreputable.

**44. goblin:** demon

**48. questionable:** problematic

**52. canonized:** i.e., buried in accord with the canons of the church (accent on the second syllable); **hearsèd:** placed in or under a hearse (an elaborate framework covering the coffin of a distinguished person during the funeral)

**53. cerements:** a waxed cloth used to wrap a corpse for burial (pronounced as “seerments”) See picture.



A corpse in a shrouding sheet or cerements. ([1.4.53](#); [5.1.97](#))

From Richard Day, *A booke of Christian prayers* . . . (1590).

[59](#)–61. **and we . . . our souls:** and causing us weak humans to agitate our minds **with thoughts** that go **beyond** what even **our souls** can reach to

[64](#). **some . . . desire: did desire** to impart something

[73](#). **a pin's fee:** the cost of a pin

[74](#). **And for: and as for**

[77](#). **flood:** sea

[79](#). **beetles . . . base:** i.e., overhangs its **base** (as if it were a face with beetle brows—prominent jutting eyebrows)

[81](#). **deprive your sovereignty of reason:** depose **reason** as ruler of **your** mind

[83](#). **toys of desperation:** desperate impulses

[92](#). **arture:** artery (Arteries were believed to carry the body's invisible vital spirits. Here, the word may have its more obscure meaning of "ligament.")

[93](#). **the Nemean lion's nerve:** the sinews of the lion killed by Hercules as one of his twelve labors

[95](#). **lets me:** holds me back

[99](#). **Have after:** let's follow

## ⟨ACT 1⟩

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### 「Scene 5」

**1.5** The Ghost tells Hamlet a tale of horror. Saying that he is the spirit of Hamlet's father, he demands that Hamlet avenge King Hamlet's murder at the hands of Claudius. Hamlet, horrified, vows to "remember" and swears his friends to secrecy about what they have seen.

**3. Mark me:** pay attention to me

**9. lend thy serious hearing:** listen intently

**10. unfold:** reveal

**11. bound:** ready (The word also means "in duty bound" and "obligated," which is the sense to which the Ghost responds in the following line.)

**16. And for:** and during

**17. crimes:** offenses, sins

**21. harrow up:** tear up (agricultural image) For a picture of a harrow, see note [1.1.51](#).

**22–23. stars . . . spheres:** According to Ptolemaic astronomy, each planet (star) is carried around the earth in a crystalline sphere. (See picture.)



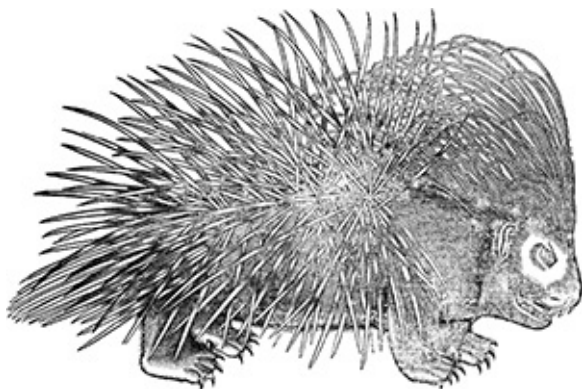
Ptolemaic universe. ([1.5.22](#)–23; [4.7.17](#))

From Marcus Manilius, *The sphere of . . .* (1675).

[24.](#) **knotted and combinèd locks:** Editors suggest that this describes Hamlet's carefully—perhaps elaborately—arranged hair.

[25.](#) **an end:** on end

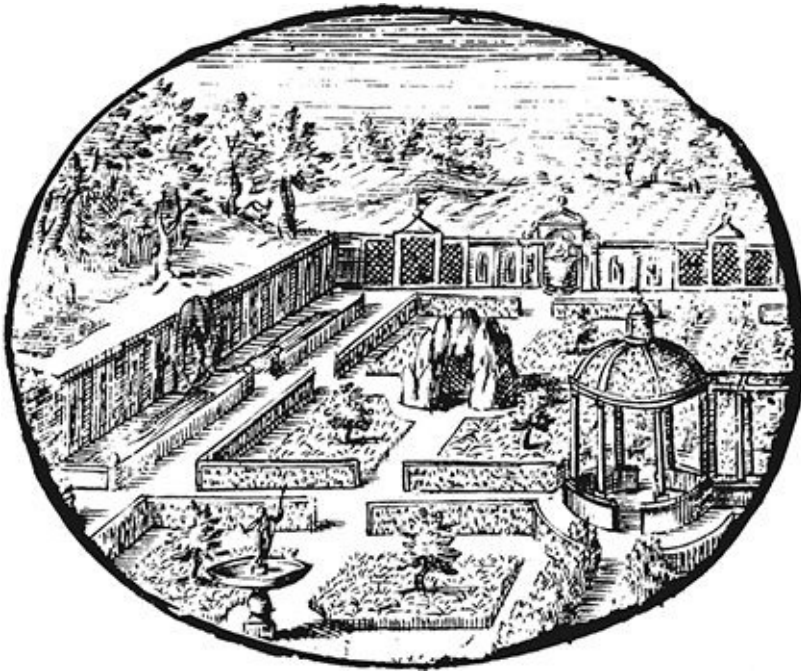
[26.](#) **fearful porpentine:** uneasy (threatened) porcupine (See picture.)



A porcupine. ([1.5.26](#))

From Edward Topsell, *The historie of foure-footed beastes . . .* (1607).

27. **eternal blazon:** description of that which is **eternal**
39. **duller . . . be:** you would **be duller**; **fat:** thick
40. **Lethe wharf:** bank of the river **Lethe** (the river of forgetfulness)
41. **Wouldst thou not:** if you did **not**
42. **orchard:** palace garden (See picture.)



Orchard. (1.5.42)  
From Octavio Boldoni, *Theatrum temporaneum* (1636).

44. **forgèd process:** false story
45. **Rankly abused:** grossly deceived
- 57–58. **decline / Upon:** to turn to (with the sense of *declining* as falling, bending downward)
60. **moved:** affected, stirred
65. **soft:** “enough,” or “wait a minute”
68. **Upon . . . hour:** at a time I felt safe

**69. hebona:** a poison (perhaps a name for the poisonous weed called “henbane”)

**71. leprous distilment:** distillation causing a condition like leprosy

**75. posset:** clot

**76. eager:** acid

**78–80. a most instant tetter . . . body:** i.e., sores and scabs, as on a leper, covered **my body with** a **vile crust** like the bark of a tree **tetter:** a skin disease marked by sores and scabs **lazar-like:** like a leper (*Lazar* is a word that refers to Lazarus the beggar in Luke 16.19–31. See picture.)



The beggar Lazarus: “lazar-like.” (**1.5.79**)

From [Guillaume Guérault,] *Figures de la Bible* (1565–70).

**82. dispatched:** dispossessed

**84. Unhouseled . . . unaneled:** without having received final rites

**85. No reck’ning made:** i.e., **no** chance to ask forgiveness for my sins (literally, no rendering an account of my conduct); **my account:** i.e., God’s judgment of me

**90. luxury:** lust; **incest:** See note to **1.2.162**, above.

96. **matin:** morning

104. **globe:** Hamlet perhaps gestures to his head.

105. **table:** i.e., erasable writing tablet (See [longer note](#).)

106. **fond records:** foolish jottings (**Records** is accented on the second syllable.)

107. **saws of:** sayings or commonplaces from; **pressures:** impressions

108. **youth and observation:** youthful **observation**

114. **tables:** a word used interchangeably with **table** (See note to [line 105](#), above.) **meet it is: it is** appropriate that

117. **word:** perhaps, promise; or, perhaps, the **commandment** (line 109) given Hamlet by the Ghost (line 98)

125. **Hillo, ho . . . bird, come:** Hamlet mocks Marcellus's call, as if it were the call of a falconer.

138. **arrant:** complete

142. **circumstance:** ceremony

154. **honest:** genuine

165. **sword:** an appropriate object on which to swear an oath, in that the hilt and guard form a cross (See picture.)



A sword. ([1.5.165](#))

From Jacobus a. Bruck, *Emblemata moralia & bellica* (1615).

[170.](#) **truepenny:** honest fellow

[177.](#) **Hic et ubique:** here and everywhere (Latin)

[184.](#) **pioner:** a foot soldier who digs trenches; a digger or miner;  
**remove:** move to another spot

[186.](#) **as a stranger give it welcome:** welcome **it as** one should welcome **a stranger**

[188.](#) **your philosophy:** i.e., **philosophy** in general

[189](#)–202. **never . . . help you:** i.e., **swear never to note**, even through gestures and hints, that **you know** anything about **me**, no matter **how** strangely I act

[190.](#) **How . . . some'er:** howsoever **strange or odd**

[191](#)–92. **As I . . . on:** since **I** may in the future **think** it appropriate to act bizarrely

[194.](#) **With arms . . . headshake:** **with** your **arms** folded or shaking your head in a knowing way

[195.](#) **doubtful:** ambiguous

[196.](#) **an if: if**

[197.](#) **would:** wished to

[198.](#) **list:** should choose

[200.](#) **giving-out:** expression; **note:** indicate

[204.](#) **Rest, rest, perturbèd spirit:** These words suggest that Horatio and Marcellus have sworn the oath demanded by Hamlet and the Ghost; Q2 and F give no stage direction to indicate when they do so.

[209.](#) **still . . . lips:** i.e., always keep the secret (as you swore)

210. **spite:** malicious fate or fortune

212. **Nay, come:** Horatio and Marcellus perhaps wait for Hamlet to precede them.

## ⟨ACT 2⟩

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### 「Scene 1」

2.1 Polonius sends his servant Reynaldo to Paris to question Laertes's acquaintances. Ophelia enters, deeply disturbed about a visit she has just had from an apparently mad Hamlet. Polonius decides that Hamlet has been made insane by Ophelia's refusing to see him. Polonius rushes off to tell the king.

0 SD. **man:** servant

4–5. **make inquire / Of:** ask questions about

8. **Inquire me:** i.e., **inquire** on my behalf; **Danskers:** Danes

9. **what means:** **what** is their supply of money

10. **keep:** live

12. **encompassment and drift of question:** roundabout conversation (Polonius's language itself tends to be roundabout.)

13–14. **come you . . . touch it:** i.e., **you will come** closer (to getting answers) than you would by specific questions

15. **Take you, as 'twere:** assume, **as** it were

21. **put on him:** accuse him of

22. **forges:** invented faults; **rank:** great; offensive

24. **wanton:** rebellious

25–26. **are companions . . . liberty: are known to** accompany youthful activity

27. **gaming:** gambling

29. **drabbing:** dealing with prostitutes

31. **season . . . charge:** make **the charge** seem less serious by your way of stating it    **season:** temper

33. **open to incontinency:** habitually inclined to sexual indulgence

34. **breathe:** speak

35. **quaintly:** cunningly

36. **taints of liberty:** slight faults that accompany independence

38–39. **A savageness . . . assault:** i.e., a wildness **in** untamed **blood**, which all young people can be accused of

41. **Wherefore:** why

44. **fetch of wit:** clever trick

46. **soiled i' th' working:** i.e., **soiled** by handling as it is being made

48. **sound:** sound out or question

49. **prenominate crimes:** before-named wrongdoings

51. **closes . . . consequence:** agrees **with you** as follows

53. **addition:** form of address

66. **o'ertook in 's rouse:** overcome by drink

69. **Videlicet:** namely, that is to say (Latin)

69–70. **See . . . truth:** i.e., **you** can **see** this deceptive **bait** capture a real fish

71. **reach:** mental ability

**72. windlasses . . . bias:** indirect approaches (A *windlass* is an indirect course in hunting, and the **bias** is the curve that brings the ball to the desired point in the game of bowls. See picture.)



The game of bowls. ([2.1.72](#); [3.1.73](#))

From *Le centre de l'amour* (1650).

**75. Shall you my son: you shall** (find out) **my son**

**79. in yourself:** yourself (instead of in reports)

**87. closet:** private room

**88. doublet:** close-fitting jacket; **unbraced:** unfastened

**89. fouled:** dirty

**90. down-gyvèd to his ankle:** fallen down around his ankles like gyves or chains (See picture.)



A man in gyves. ([2.1.90](#); [4.7.23](#))

From Cesare Vecellio, *Degli habiti antichi et moderni* (1590).

[114.](#) **ecstasy:** madness

[115.](#) **violent property:** characteristic violence; **fordoes:** destroys

[125.](#) **coted:** observed

[126.](#) **wrack:** destroy; **bescrew my jealousy:** curse my suspicious thoughts

[127.](#) **proper to our age:** characteristic of the old

[128.](#) **cast beyond ourselves:** i.e., go too far (**Cast** could mean—among other things—calculate, predict, and throw.)

[130.](#) **discretion:** good judgment

[131.](#) **close:** hidden

[131](#)–33. **might . . . love: this love might** cause **more grief** if hidden **than** hatred if spoken of

## ⟨ACT 2⟩

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### ⟨Scene 2⟩

**2.2** Claudius and Gertrude set Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two boyhood friends of Hamlet, to spy on him.

When Hamlet himself enters, he is confronted first by Polonius and then by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, whom he quickly identifies as Claudius's spies. As they talk, a company of touring actors enters. Hamlet persuades one of them to deliver a speech, and recognizes, to his shame, that he has shown less intensity in avenging his father's murder than the actor has done in performance. Hamlet hopes that when the players stage *The Murder of Gonzago* for the court, he can determine whether Claudius is guilty of King Hamlet's death.

**6. Sith:** since; **nor . . . nor:** neither . . . **nor**

**12. neighbored to:** acquainted with; **youth and havior:** perhaps, youthful manners or behavior

**13. vouchsafe your rest:** agree to stay

**18. opened:** laid bare, revealed

**22. gentry:** generosity (or, perhaps, courtesy)

**24. supply . . . hope:** support and benefit of what we hope for

**32. in the full bent:** fully, totally (The term suggests an archer's bow, bent to its limit.) See picture.



A bow “in the full bent.” ([2.2.32](#))

From Jacobus a. Bruck, *Emblemata moralia & bellica* (1615).

[40.](#) **practices:** actions (with perhaps a suggestion of intrigues, maneuvers, and plots)

[45.](#) **still:** always

[50.](#) **Hunts . . . sure:** i.e., does not follow **so** successfully **the trail of** statecraft (See picture.)



A dog hunting the trail. ([2.2.50](#))

From George Turberville, *The noble art of venerie* (1611).

[55.](#) **fruit:** dessert

[56.](#) **do grace to:** honor

[58.](#) **head and source:** fountainhead, origin; **distemper:** derangement, illness

[59.](#) **doubt:** suspect; **the main:** the central point

[61.](#) **sift:** examine closely (as if through a sieve) (See picture.)



A sieve. (2.2.61)

From Geoffrey Whitney, *A choice of emblemes* (1586).

63. **our brother:** i.e., my fellow king of

65. **first:** i.e., **first** making known our business

70. **impotence:** helplessness

71. **falsely borne in hand:** systematically deceived; **arrests:** orders to desist

73. **in fine:** in conclusion

75. **give . . . against:** attack, assault

84. **On such . . . allowance:** according to **such** terms **of safety** for Denmark and of permission for Fortinbras

86. **likes:** pleases

93. **expostulate:** make a speech about

97. **brevity . . . wit:** i.e., in a wise speech, a few words carry the central meaning

98. **flourishes:** ornaments

103. **More . . . art:** i.e., get to the point more quickly by cutting out the rhetorical ornamentations

104. **I use no art:** i.e., my language is natural

106. **figure:** figure of speech

113. **Perpend:** consider carefully

115. **mark:** note, notice this

116. **gather:** i.e., listen (literally, collect by observation, infer); **surmise:** form an idea

117–18. **To . . . Ophelia:** These lines, along with line 121, form the superscription, the address written on the outer leaf of the letter.

121. **In her . . . these, etc.:** This part of the superscription is unusual in two ways. See longer note. **these:** i.e., this (letter) The plural word **these** was often used to refer to a single piece of correspondence, following the Latin *litterae*, a plural form meaning “an epistle.”

123. **stay:** wait; **be faithful:** fulfill my duty

124–27. **Doubt . . . I love:** Hamlet’s poem plays on different meanings of **doubt:** (1) to be skeptical about (e.g., the ancient truths about **the stars** and **the sun**); (2) to suspect (that, e.g., **truth** might **be a liar**); (3) to disbelieve (e.g., Hamlet’s love).

128. **ill . . . numbers:** unskilled at writing verse

129. **art:** skill; artistic ability; **reckon:** i.e., express in poetic meter (literally, count)

131–32. **whilst . . . to him:** i.e., while I still occupy this body

134. **above:** besides

135. **fell out:** happened, occurred

140. **fain:** gladly

145. **played . . . table-book:** remained silent, keeping this knowledge hidden as **if I had** put it in a **desk** or a diary

146. **given . . . winking:** made **my heart** close its eyes to what was going on

149. **my young mistress:** this **young** lady (i.e., Ophelia); **bespeak:** speak to

150. **out of thy star:** a Polonian construction for “beyond your sphere” (See note to 1.5.22–23, and picture.)

151. **prescripts:** instructions

152. **resort:** i.e., visits (literally, recourse to her)

153. **tokens:** things given as an expression of affection

155–59. **he . . . Fell into . . . madness:** Polonius lists what were supposed to be the classic stages of the **declension** (decline) into love-madness: from **sadness**, to **a fast** (failure to eat), to **a watch** (insomnia), to **weakness**, to **lightness** (light-headedness), to insanity.

168. **Take this from this:** Polonius gestures to his head and his shoulder (or to his chain of office and his neck, or to his staff of office and his hand), indicating that he would yield up his life (or his office) if proved wrong.

171. **center:** the earth’s **center**, which, in the Ptolemaic system, is also the **center** of the universe (See picture.)

172. **try:** test

174. **lobby:** anteroom

176. **loose:** turn her loose (The figure is that of releasing an animal from its chains, either for the hunt or for purposes of mating.)

177. **arras:** a hanging screen of rich tapestry fabric

179. **thereon:** because of that, thereat

180. **assistant for a state:** perhaps, one who helps run a government

181. **keep . . . carters:** i.e., manage **a farm and** its workers (such as men who drive carts)

186. **board:** i.e., speak to; **presently:** immediately

198. **a good kissing carrion:** perhaps, **a good** piece of **dead** flesh for **the sun** to kiss

216. **purging:** issuing forth, discharging

218. **wit:** understanding; **hams:** buttocks and thighs

220. **honesty:** good manners

221. **old:** as **old**

224. **out of the air:** indoors (The open Elizabethan stage allowed the scene to shift from the anteroom of line 174 to the outdoor setting suggested here.)

227. **pregnant:** full of meaning; **happiness:** aptness of phrasing

229. **so . . . delivered of:** i.e., **so** successfully give birth to

234. **withal:** with

245. **As . . . earth:** like the general run of mortals

247. **Fortune's:** The goddess Fortuna was said to control a person's luck and therefore happiness. (See picture.) **the very button:** the topmost spot



Fortune. ([2.2.247](#), [260](#), [536](#)–37; [3.2.71](#))

From Charles de Bouelles, *Que hoc volumine continentur* . . . [1510].

[252](#). **privates**: intimates, with a pun on living within Fortune’s “private parts” (This sexual wordplay begins with Hamlet’s reference to Fortune’s **favors** [line 251] and continues with his question about **the secret parts of Fortune** and his calling Fortune **a strumpet** [lines 253–54]. See [picture](#), and note to [2.2.518](#).)

[257](#). **doomsday**: See note to [1.1.132](#).

[264](#). **goodly**: large

[264](#)–65. **confines**: places of confinement

[282](#)–84. **beggars bodies . . . beggars’ shadows**: i.e., if **ambition is but a shadow’s shadow**, then **beggars** (who are without **ambition**) are the only humans with substantial **bodies**, and kings **and heroes** (ruled by **ambition**) are only **the beggars’ shadows outstretched**: i.e., outsized, larger-than-life (literally, distended)

[284](#). **fay**: faith

[286](#). **wait upon**: accompany; serve

287. **sort you with:** put **you** in the same class **with**

290. **what make you at:** i.e., why did you come to

292. **occasion:** reason

294. **sure:** surely

295. **too dear a halfpenny:** not worth **a halfpenny**

300. **but . . . purpose:** except a straight answer

307–8. **the consonancy of our youth:** the harmony we enjoyed when we were younger

309. **by . . . dear:** by whatever is **more** valuable

310. **proposer:** speaker; **charge you withal:** urge you with; **even:** straightforward

313. **of:** on

316–17. **my anticipation . . . discovery:** my saying it first will keep you from having to reveal it

317–18. **your secrecy . . . molt no feather:** **your** promise of **secrecy** not be diminished

319. **wherefore:** why

320–21. **it goes . . . disposition:** my mood is **so** somber

321. **frame:** structure

323–24. **canopy, firmament, roof:** Each of these words refers to the sky or heavens overhead. **look you:** an imperative used to request someone's attention **brave:** splendid

324. **fretted:** adorned

328. **faculties:** abilities, capacities

329. **express:** well framed

330. **apprehension:** understanding

332. **quintessence:** very essence (The word is usually used to describe that which transcends the four earthly essences, but here is used ironically to describe mankind as, in essence, **dust**—made from dust to return to dust. See Genesis 2.7, 3.19.)

340. **Lenten entertainment:** i.e., meager or dismal welcome

341. **coted:** passed

344. **tribute on:** tokens of homage from

345. **foil and target:** blunted smallsword and shield

346. **gratis:** without payment; **the humorous man:** the actor playing the eccentric character

347. **the clown:** the actor who plays the comic roles

348. **tickle o' th' sear:** i.e., easily made to laugh **sear:** the catch in a gunlock that keeps the hammer cocked (When the sear is **tickle** or loose, the gun goes off easily.) **the lady:** the actor playing the female role

350. **halt:** limp; go awkwardly or irregularly

353. **Their residence:** their remaining in the city

355–56. **their . . . innovation:** The **inhibition** that forces the tragedians from the city and **the innovation** that caused it may reflect London theatrical or political happenings.

358. **followed:** i.e., admired, sought out

361–62. **keeps . . . pace:** continues as usual

362. **aerie:** nest

363. **eyases:** hawks; **cry out . . . question:** speak their lines in loud, shrill voices

365. **berattle the common stages:** berate the public theaters

366. **many wearing rapiers:** i.e., fashionable gentlemen

366–67. **are afraid . . . thither:** fear the satirical pens of children's company poets if they attend the public theaters

369. **escoted:** financially supported

369–70. **pursue . . . sing:** follow the acting profession only until their voices change in adolescence

371–72. **to common players:** to be adult actors

374. **exclaim . . . succession:** i.e., attack the careers they will follow

376. **tar:** provoke, incite

377–79. **There was . . . in the question:** i.e., no plays were salable that did not take up the quarrel between the children's poets and the adult players

383. **carry it away:** carry off the victory

384–85. **Hercules and his load too:** i.e., the boy actors win over the whole world of playgoers (Hercules' **load** was the globe, which he bore on his shoulders for Atlas. The sign of the Globe theater is said to have been a picture of Hercules bearing the globe.)

387. **mouths:** contorted faces

389. **picture in little:** miniature portrait

390. **'Sblood:** a strong oath (by God's blood)

394. **Th' appurtenance of:** that which belongs to

395–96. **comply . . . garb:** use courteous action **with you in this** way

396. **my extent:** i.e., what I show

402. **mad north-north-west:** only at certain times (**when the wind** sits in certain directions)

403. **I know . . . a handsaw:** a proverb that means “I can distinguish between things that do not resemble each other”

407. **swaddling clouts:** cloth for swaddling a newborn baby

408. **Haply:** perhaps

409. **twice a child: a child** for the second time (proverbial)

414. **Roscius:** a Roman actor in the first century B.C.E.

417. **Buzz, buzz:** a rude response, suggesting that Polonius’s news is old news

423–24. **scene . . . unlimited:** perhaps, plays that observe the classical unities of time and place, as well as those that pay no attention to such limits

424. **Seneca:** a Roman philosopher and writer of tragedies; **heavy:** serious

425. **Plautus:** a Roman writer of comedies; **For the law . . . liberty:** i.e., for plays that follow the rules of composition and those that do not

427. **Jephthah:** According to the biblical story (Judges 11.29–40), Jephthah, because of a rash vow, had to sacrifice his daughter. Hamlet goes on to sing lines from a popular ballad based on Jephthah’s story.

432. **passing:** surpassingly, exceedingly

440. **lot:** chance; **wot:** knows

443. **row:** stanza; **chanson:** ballad

444. **my abridgment:** that which cuts short my recitation

447. **valanced:** fringed (i.e., with a beard)

448. **beard:** defy, confront; **What:** an interjection introducing an exclamation or question

**449. my young lady and mistress:** addressed to the boy actor who plays the women's parts; **By'r Lady:** a mild oath on the Virgin Mary

**451. the altitude of a chopine:** the height of the thick sole of a shoe called a **chopine**—i.e., the boy has grown several inches in height

**451–53. a piece . . . ring:** Hamlet thus expresses his hope that the boy's **voice** is **not cracked** but is still suitable for female parts. (A coin is not lawful money if it has a crack that extends inward from the edge into **the ring** that surrounds the image of the sovereign's head.)

**453. e'en to 't:** go at it

**454. fly at anything we see:** i.e., undertake **anything**, no matter how difficult

**455. straight:** straightaway, at once

**456. quality:** professional ability

**461. caviary to the general:** i.e., like caviar, too exotic for average tastes

**463. cried . . . of:** spoke with more authority than

**464. digested:** ordered, arranged

**465. modesty:** restraint; **cunning:** skill

**466. sallets:** i.e., spicy (indelicate) words

**467. no matter:** nothing

**468. affection:** artificiality, affectation

**470. fine:** gaudy

**471–73. Aeneas' tale . . . of Priam's slaughter:** Aeneas, hero of Virgil's *Aeneid*, tells **Dido**, queen of Carthage, stories of the Trojan War. Among them is that of Priam, king of Troy, who was killed by

Pyrrhus seeking revenge for the death of his father, Achilles. **thereabout of it:** near that part **of it**

**475. Hyrcanian beast:** a tiger (Hyrcania, in Roman times, was the name of a region now in Iran at the southern end of the Caspian Sea. In the *Aeneid*, it is associated with tigers.)

**477. arms:** armor

**479. horse:** the wooden **horse** in which the Greeks hid themselves to gain entry into Troy

**480. this . . . complexion:** i.e., **this** (already) dreadful and dark appearance

**482. gules:** red (a heraldic term); **tricked:** decorated

**484. impasted:** formed into a crust; **parching:** scorching (because Troy is on fire) See picture.



Burning Troy. ([2.2.484](#), [530](#))

From Thomas Heywood, *The Iron Age* . . . (1632).

**485. tyrannous:** oppressive

486. **their lord's murder:** the (impending) **murder** of Priam, lord of Troy, and hence of its **streets** (line 484)

487. **o'ersizèd:** covered as with *size*, a glaze or filler

488. **carbuncles:** deep red jewels that in myth were said to glow in the dark

492. **discretion:** judgment, discernment

496. **Repugnant to:** opposing, resisting

498. **fell:** cruel

499. **senseless:** without human senses; **Ilium:** the royal citadel within Troy

501. **his base:** its foundation

503. **declining:** descending

506. **will and matter:** perhaps, desire and means of accomplishing it

508. **against:** i.e., just before

509. **rack:** high clouds driven by the wind

510. **orb:** i.e., Earth

514. **Cyclops':** The Cyclops were Titans who forged thunderbolts for Jove, king of the Roman gods. (See [picture of Jove](#).)

515. **Mars's:** Mars was the Roman god of war; **for proof eterne:** to stand the test of eternity



Mars. ([2.2.515](#); [3.4.67](#))

From Vincenzo Cartari, *Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi . . .* (1587).

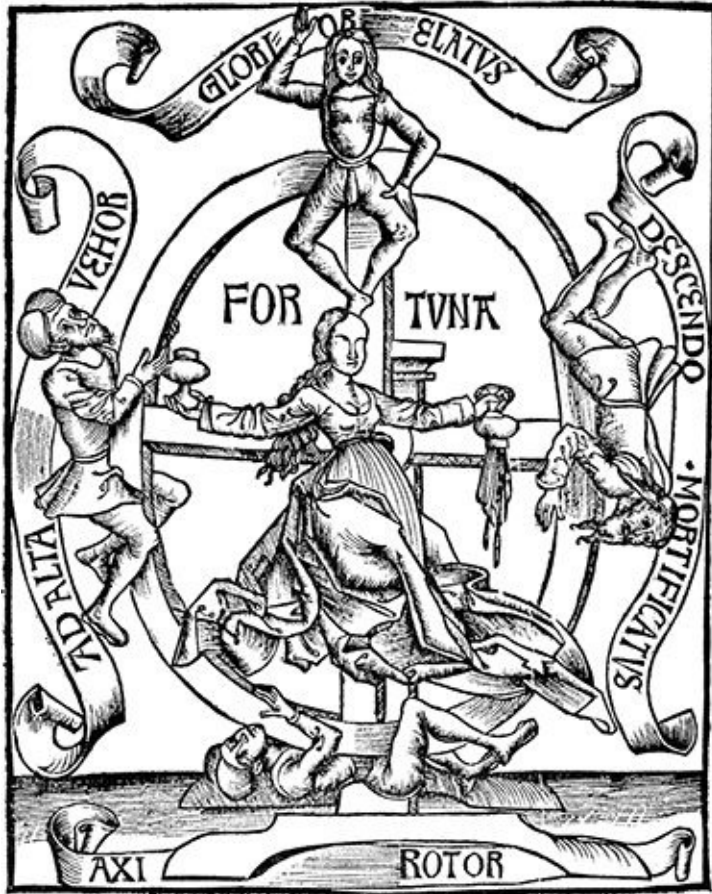
**518. Out:** an exclamation of indignant reproach; **strumpet:** **Fortune** is called a **strumpet** because she gives her favors whimsically and she is faithful to no man. (See picture.)



“ . . . thou strumpet Fortune.” ([2.2.518](#); see also [2.2.253](#)–54; [3.2.75](#))

From *Fortunes tennis-ball: a warning . . .* (1640).

**520. fellies:** sections of the wheel's rim; **wheel:** Fortune was often pictured as controlling human life by turning a great wheel on which she stood or sat. (See picture.)



Fortune turning her wheel. (2.2.520)  
From Gregor Reisch, *Margarita philosophica* . . . [1503].

**521. nave:** hub of the wheel

**525. jig:** a lively, mocking song

**526. Hecuba:** the wife of Priam and queen of Troy

**527. moblèd:** To moble oneself is to muffle one's head or face.

**531. bisson rheum:** blinding tears; **clout:** cloth

**533. lank and all o'erteemèd:** shrunken and worn out with childbearing

536–37. **'Gainst . . . pronounced: would have** uttered treasonous statements against **Fortune's** rule (See picture.)

543. **milch:** wet with tears, milky

544. **passion:** i.e., (aroused) deep emotion

545. **wh'er:** whether

549. **bestowed:** lodged, housed

550. **abstract:** summary

552. **ill:** bad, unfavorable

555. **God's bodykins:** a mild oath (by **God's** little body)

579. **But:** merely

580–81. **Could . . . wanned:** i.e., **could** work **his soul** into such accord with **his** thought that, from his soul's **working** on his body, **his** face grew pale

582. **aspect:** face, facial expression

583–84. **his whole function . . . conceit:** i.e., all the bodily powers that express emotion responding with outward appearances to match his thoughts

591. **Make mad . . . free:** i.e., madden guilty spectators and terrify those who are innocent

592. **Confound the ignorant:** dumbfound those previously ignorant; **amaze:** astound

594. **muddy-mettled:** dull-spirited; **peak:** mope

595. **John-a-dreams:** a proverbial name for an absent-minded dreamer; **unpregnant of:** unfilled by, and therefore never to give birth (to action)

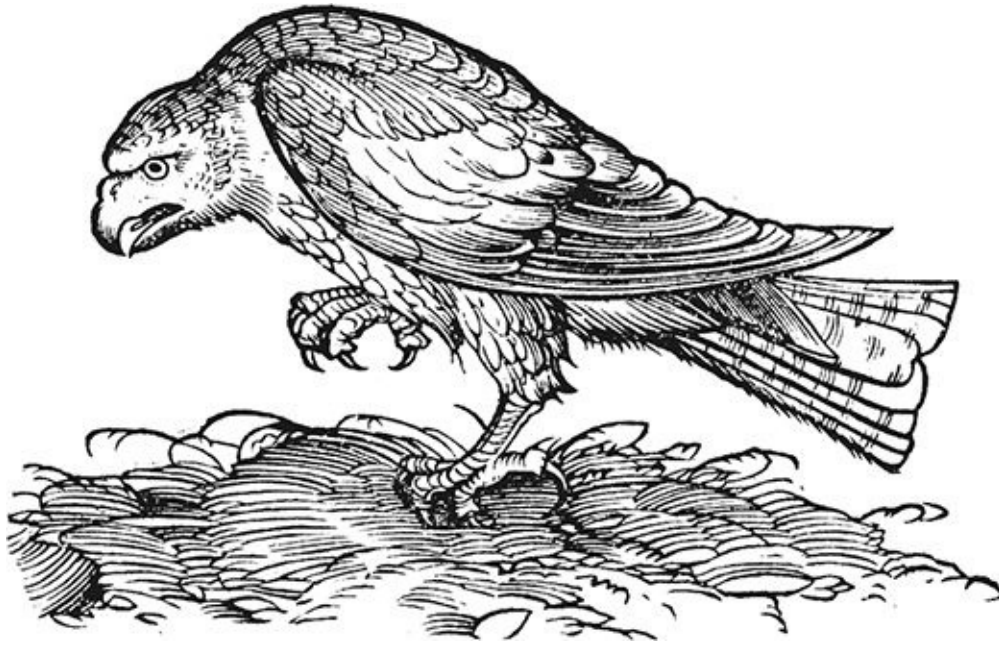
598. **defeat:** overthrow

601–2. **gives me . . . lungs:** i.e., calls me an absolute liar

603. **'Swounds:** a strong oath (by Christ's wounds)

604–5. **I am . . . bitter:** For the complicated wordplay in these lines, see longer note.

606. **kites:** birds of prey (See picture.)



A kite. (2.2.606)

From Konrad Gesner, *Historiae animalium* . . . (1585–1604).

608. **kindless:** unnatural

611. **brave:** admirable

615. **drab:** prostitute

616. **stallion:** courtesan

617. **About:** i.e., turn around

619. **cunning:** art, skill; **scene:** performance

620. **presently:** instantly

626. **tent:** probe (as into a wound)

631. **spirits:** i.e., emotional states (such as **melancholy**)

632. **Abuses:** deceives, deludes

633. **relative:** pertinent

## 「ACT 3」

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### 「Scene 1」

**3.1** After Rosencrantz and Guildenstern report their failure to find the cause of Hamlet's madness, Polonius places Ophelia where he and Claudius may secretly observe a meeting between her and Hamlet. Hamlet is at first courteous to Ophelia, but suddenly he turns on her: he denies having loved her, asks where her father is, attacks womankind, and tells her she should enter a nunnery. After Hamlet exits, Claudius decides that Hamlet's erratic behavior is not caused by love and announces a plan to send Hamlet on an embassy to England. Polonius persuades Claudius to take no action until Gertrude talks with Hamlet after the play, which is scheduled for that evening.

1. **drift:** conscious direction, steering; **conference:** discourse, conversation

2. **puts . . . confusion:** acts in this distracted way

3. **Grating:** i.e., afflicting, vexing

5. **distracted:** perturbed, unsettled

7. **forward . . . sounded:** i.e., eager to be questioned

14–15. **Niggard . . . reply:** not inclined to talk, but willing to answer fully our questions

16. **assay:** tempt

17. **fell out:** happened

18. **o'erraught:** overtook

21. **order:** instruction

28. **give . . . edge:** i.e., sharpen his desire

32. **closely:** privately

34. **Affront:** meet face to face

35. **espials:** spies

38. **as he is behaved:** according to how he acts

51–52. **show . . . loneliness:** i.e., the apparent reading of a Bible or prayer book would give a pretext for Ophelia's being alone

52. **to blame:** i.e., guilty, blameworthy

59–61. **The harlot's . . . word:** i.e., the pock-marked **cheek** of the whore **is not** uglier, when compared to the illusion of beauty she creates with cosmetics, than is what I have done in comparison to my artful language

64. **the question:** the matter to be debated (See [longer note.](#))

71. **That flesh . . . to: that** we inherit as mortals; **consummation:** condition that fulfills desires and aims

73. **rub:** obstacle (a technical term from the game of bowls, where a **rub** is any obstruction that hinders or deflects the course of the bowl) See [picture.](#)

75. **shuffled off this mortal coil:** i.e., untangled ourselves from the flesh; also, detached ourselves from the turmoil of human affairs

76. **respect:** consideration

77. **makes calamity of so long life:** i.e., **makes** us put up with unhappiness for such a **long** time

78. **time:** perhaps, the times, the age we live in; or, perhaps, the damages that **time** inflicts on us

80. **despised:** unrequited (accent on the first syllable)

81. **office:** i.e., those in **office**

83. **his quietus make:** settle his own account (from *quietus est*, a legal term meaning “he is quit”)

84. **bare bodkin:** a mere dagger; or, an unsheathed dagger; **fardels:** burdens, loads

87. **undiscovered:** unexplored; **bourn:** frontier

88. **puzzles:** i.e., paralyzes

91. **conscience:** i.e., knowledge, consciousness

92. **native hue:** natural color

93. **cast:** shade

94. **pitch:** height (the **pitch** is the highest point in a falcon’s flight); **moment:** importance



A falcon in flight. (3.1.94; 4.7.70)

From George Turberville, *The booke of faulconrie* . . . (1575).

95. **With this regard:** on this account; **their currents turn awry:** i.e., the great enterprises are like rivers that, turned aside from their main channels, **lose** momentum and become stagnant

96. **Soft you now:** an exclamation to interrupt speech (“wait a moment,” “hold,” “enough”)

113. **honest:** chaste (the usual meaning of this word in Shakespeare when applied to a woman)

115. **fair:** beautiful

117. **honesty:** chastity

118. **discourse to:** conversation with

123. **his:** its

124. **sometime:** formerly; **paradox:** a statement contrary to what is generally thought

125. **the time:** the present age

127–29. **virtue . . . relish of it:** The metaphor here is of grafting a bud or branch to produce better fruit. (See picture.) **Virtue**, Hamlet says, may be grafted onto (may **inoculate**) sinful human nature (**our old stock**), but the fruit produced will still taste (**relish**) of the original sinfulness.



Grafting (“inoculating”) tree stock. (3.1.128)

From Marco Bussato, *Giardino di agricoltura* (1599).

**131. nunnery:** convent (The word was sometimes used mockingly to refer to a brothel.)

**132–33. indifferent honest:** reasonably virtuous

**151. monsters:** cuckolds (In the standard joke, a cuckold—a man whose wife was unfaithful—grew horns on his forehead. See picture.)



A cuckold. ([3.1.151](#); [4.5.132](#))  
From *Bagford Ballads* (printed in 1878).

**154.**



A lady “painting” herself. ([3.1.154](#)–56; [5.1.199](#)–201)  
From Hannah Woolley, *The accomplish’d ladies delight* . . . (1684).

**157. nickname:** call by the wrong name

157–58. **make . . . ignorance:** call **your** immorality **ignorance** (The word **wantonness** may here have the less frequent meaning of “affectation.”)

159. **on ’t:** of it

164–65. **courtier’s . . . sword:** i.e., **the courtier’s eye, the scholar’s tongue, the soldier’s sword**

166. **expectancy:** i.e., hope; **rose:** paragon

167. **glass of fashion:** mirror of proper behavior; **mold of form:** model of attractiveness

172. **out of time:** out of correct rhythm

173. **blown:** vigorous, fresh (The word, applied to flowers in bloom, picks up the earlier **rose of the . . . state** [line 166].)

174. **Blasted with ecstasy:** blighted by madness

176. **affections:** emotions, mental state

180. **doubt:** fear; **the hatch and the disclose:** Both **hatch** and **disclose** mean to break out of the egg—here, the “egg” on which Hamlet’s **melancholy sits on brood** (line 179).

184. **For . . . tribute:** i.e., to demand that England pay the overdue money it sends to Denmark (as a sign of submission or for protection or peace)

187. **something-settled:** somehow fixed

197. **round:** plainspoken

199. **find him not:** i.e., does not discover his secret

## 「ACT 3」

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## 「Scene 2」

**3.2** Hamlet gives direction to the actors and asks Horatio to help him observe Claudius's reaction to the play. When the court arrive, Hamlet makes bawdy and bitter comments to Ophelia. The traveling actors perform, in dumb show and then with dialogue, a story that includes many elements of Claudius's alleged seduction of Gertrude and murder of King Hamlet. At the moment that the Player King is murdered in his garden by his nephew, Claudius stops the play and rushes out. Hamlet is exuberant that the Ghost's word has been proved true. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern return to tell Hamlet that Claudius is furious and that Gertrude wishes to see Hamlet at once in her sitting room. Hamlet promises himself that he will not harm her, though he will "speak daggers."

**3. I had as lief:** I'd just as soon

**9. robustious:** noisy, boisterous

**11. groundlings:** spectators who stood in the theater yard rather than sitting in gallery seats or around the stage, and thus paid less for their tickets (This is the first recorded use of this word.)

**12. capable of:** able to appreciate

**14. Termagant:** a figure who medieval Christians wrongly believed was worshipped by Muslims (He was probably shown onstage as ranting and unrestrained, though no plays are extant in which he appears.)

**15. Herod:** Herod of Judea, who appears in medieval drama as a raging tyrant

**20. modesty:** moderation, absence of excess

**21. from:** opposite to

**22. playing:** acting

**25. the . . . time:** i.e., the present exactly as it is

26. **his:** its; **pressure:** shape

26–27. **come tardy off:** done inadequately

27. **the unskillful:** those lacking judgment

28–29. **the censure . . . one:** the judgment of even one **of which**

29. **allowance:** estimation

32. **not to speak it profanely:** not intending **to** be profane in what I'm about to say

33. **Christians:** respectable human beings (an informal usage)

36. **journeymen:** hirelings who work for daily wages

38. **indifferently:** pretty well

41. **clowns:** comic roles

42. **of them:** i.e., some **of them**

43. **barren:** dull, unintelligent

45. **question:** matter, subject, topic

50. **presently:** immediately

57. **my conversation coped withal:** my experience has brought me into contact with

61. **revenue:** accent on the second syllable

64. **the candied . . . pomp:** i.e., the flatterer fawn on the wealthy (See [longer note.](#))

65. **pregnant:** ready (to bend)

66. **thrift:** profit

67. **dear:** highly prized

68. **election:** choice

71. **Fortune's buffets and rewards:** See note to [2.2.247](#) and [picture](#).

73. **blood:** i.e., emotions, passions

74. **commeddled:** mixed together

75. **pipe:** small wind instrument, like a flute

76. **sound:** i.e., play; **stop:** i.e., note (literally, hole that the musician's finger or thumb covers to produce a given sound)

84. **comment:** observation

85. **occulted:** deliberately hidden

86. **unkennel:** a term describing the driving of a fox from its lair

89. **Vulcan's stithy:** forge of the Roman god of fire and metalworking (See picture.)



Vulcan in his stithy. ([3.2.88](#)–89)

From Johann Basilius Herold, *Heydenweldt* . . . [1554].

92. **censure of:** i.e., forming an opinion about; **seeming:** appearance, behavior

96. **idle:** This word could mean “out of one's mind, delirious.”

97 SD. **Trumpets and Kettle Drums:** men carrying (and perhaps playing) **trumpets and** kettledrums

98. **fares:** does (In lines 99–101, Hamlet responds as if the word carried its meaning of “feeds,” i.e., “eats.”)

99. **chameleon’s dish:** Chameleons were thought to live off **air** (line 100).

102. **have nothing with:** can make **nothing** of

103. **are not mine:** perhaps, say nothing to me

104. **now:** i.e., **now** that I’ve spoken them (proverbial)

105. **played:** acted onstage

113–14. **stay . . . patience:** await your pleasure

116–31. **Here’s metal . . . my lord:** See [longer note](#).

132. **your only jig-maker:** the best comic of them all

134. **within ’s:** within this

137. **black:** i.e., mourning garments

138. **a suit of sables:** luxurious fur garments

142. **suffer not thinking on:** endure oblivion

142–43. **the hobby-horse:** a character in morris dances (The song that Hamlet quotes expresses sorrow that such figures are gone and forgotten.) See picture.



A hobby horse. ([3.2.143](#))

From *Morris dancers* . . . (Anon., n.d.).

[144 SD.](#) **Dumb show:** a scene without words

[150.](#) **his crown:** the King's **crown**

[152.](#) **makes passionate action:** i.e., gestures as if grief-stricken

[158.](#) **miching mallecho:** skulking misdeed (**Miching** is dialect for “sneaking”; **mallecho** is the Spanish *malhecho*, “misdeed.”)

[160.](#) **Belike:** perhaps; **imports:** makes known, conveys; **argument:** plot

[168.](#) **naught:** naughty, indecent; **mark:** pay attention to

[173.](#) **posy of a ring:** a poem inscribed in a ring

[176–77.](#) **Full . . . ground:** The language of this play-within-the-play is set apart from that surrounding it by rhymed couplets, complicated word order, frequent repetition, and arcane diction. **Phoebus' cart:** the chariot of the sun god, which appears to circle the Earth daily. (See [longer note](#), and [picture](#).) **Neptune's salt wash:** the ocean (Neptune was the Roman god of the sea and Tellus was the Roman goddess of the Earth.)

[180.](#) **Hymen:** god of marriage

181. **commutual:** mutual, reciprocal

184. **of late:** lately

186. **distrust you:** fear for you

188. **For women . . . love:** This line is part of an incomplete couplet; perhaps the completing line was dropped in the printing house.

189–90. **women's . . . extremity:** i.e., **women's love and fear** are parallel: where **they** do not **love**, **they** do not **fear**; where **they love** extremely, **they** suffer extreme **fear**

196. **My operant powers . . . leave to do:** my vital **powers** cease to function

198. **haply:** perhaps

200. **confound the rest:** i.e., don't finish your sentence    **confound:** destroy

204. **wormwood:** i.e., bitter, harsh

205. **instances:** causes; **move:** prompt, actuate

206. **thrift:** worldly profit

211. **Purpose is but the slave to memory:** i.e., a **purpose** must be remembered if it is to be carried out

212. **validity:** vigor

215–16. **Most . . . debt:** i.e., **we** conveniently **forget** the promises we make **to ourselves**

220. **enactures:** enactments

222. **Grief joys:** i.e., **grief** rejoices; or, **grief** turns into **joy**; **on slender accident:** on the slightest impetus

223. **aye:** ever

227. **down:** fallen in esteem; **mark:** notice; **favorite:** chosen companion; **flies:** deserts him

229. **hitherto:** thus far

230. **who not needs:** he who lacks nothing

231. **try:** test (his friendship)

232. **seasons him:** turns him into

235. **devices still:** plans always

236. **ends:** outcome, result

239. **Nor Earth:** (may) neither **Earth**

242. **An anchor's . . . scope:** (may) **an** anchorite's (hermit's) food and drink **be my prospect in prison**

243. **opposite . . . joy:** obstacle that makes joy's **face** turn pale (or, perhaps, that deprives joy's **face of** all expression)

247. **If . . . now:** perhaps, (1) **if** the Player Queen breaks her word after placing this curse on herself; or, (2) **if** Gertrude speaks out or breaks down after hearing this speech

249. **fain:** gladly; **beguile:** while away

251. **rock:** soothe

254. **methinks:** it seems to me

256. **argument:** plot

261. **Marry:** a mild oath; **how:** perhaps, **how** are we to understand this name; **Tropically:** i.e., as a trope, a figure of speech

264. **anon:** soon; **knaveish:** impertinent

265. **free:** innocent

**266–67. Let . . . unwrung:** a proverb that says, in effect: let guilty persons flinch; we have clear consciences **galled jade:** a horse with raw skin **withers:** ridge between the horse's shoulders **unwrung:** not chafed

**269. a chorus:** a character who (as in Shakespeare's *Henry V*) tells the audience what they are about to see

**270–71. I could . . . dallying:** i.e., **I could** play the role of narrator at a puppet show in which **you and your** lover are shown making love

**273–74. take off mine edge:** make me less sharp; satisfy my desire (Hamlet gives a sexual meaning to Ophelia's "**You are keen**" [i.e., sharp, penetrating] and responds with this double entendre.)

**275. better and worse:** more witty and more offensive

**276. So you mis-take:** i.e., in the same way, you take falsely (Wives promise to "take" their husbands "for better, for worse.")

**278–79. the croaking . . . revenge:** Hamlet here amusingly condenses two lines from the anonymous *The True Tragedy of Richard III* (c. 1591): "The screeking **raven** sits croaking **for revenge**. / Whole herds of beasts comes bellowing **for revenge**."

**282. Confederate season:** i.e., time being my ally; **else:** otherwise

**284. With Hecate's ban:** by the curse of Hecate, the goddess of sorcery and witchcraft; **blasted:** cursed, blighted

**285. dire property:** dreadful or evil attribute or quality

**286. On . . . usurp:** unjustly steal or encroach upon **wholesome life**

**292. false fire:** discharge of a gun loaded only with powder

**299. watch:** stay awake

**301. feathers:** worn on actors' hats

**302. turn Turk with me: turn** against me

**303. Provincial roses:** i.e., *Roses de Provence*, double damask **roses** (probably made of fabric); **razed:** slashed decoratively

**303–4. a fellowship in a cry of players:** a partnership in a theater company

**307. Damon:** renowned, in Roman mythology, for the depth of his friendship for Pythias

**308. dismantled:** stripped

**309. Jove:** king of the Roman gods (See picture.)



Jove. (**3.2.309**; **3.4.66**)

From Vincenzo Cartari, *Le vere e noue imagini . . .* (1615).



Jove with his thunderbolt. ([3.2.309](#)–10; [3.4.66](#))  
From Vincenzo Cartari, *Le vere e noue imagini* . . . (1615).

[310.](#) **pajock:** possibly “peacock”

[311.](#) **rhymed:** The obvious rhyme word is *ass*.

[317](#)–18. **recorders:** wind instruments, straight like a flute but end-blown, with seven holes (or *stops*) along the top length and one stop underneath for the thumb

[320.](#) **perdy:** from the French *par dieu*, “by God”

[327.](#) **retirement:** withdrawal into seclusion

[327](#)–28. **distempered:** upset (with a second meaning of “ill” or “drunk,” which is how Hamlet chooses to interpret it)

[330.](#) **choler:** biliousness (The word has a second meaning of “anger,” which Hamlet plays on at line 334.)

[332.](#) **signify:** announce, tell

[333.](#) **purgation:** medical cleansing; spiritual purification

336. **frame:** order; **start:** shy away (like a nervous or wild horse)

344. **wholesome:** sane

345. **pardon:** permission to depart

351. **as you . . . mother:** Hamlet calls attention to their presumption in referring to the Queen as “your **mother.**”

355. **admiration:** wonder

360. **closet:** private chamber

362. **trade:** Shakespeare generally uses this word in connection with lower-class occupations, sex workers, and merchants.

364. **by these . . . stealers:** i.e., **by these** hands (The phrase borrows from the catechism, where one is told “to keep [one’s] hands from picking and stealing.”)

367. **deny your griefs:** refuse to disclose the cause of your suffering

372. **“While the grass grows”:** The rest of **the proverb** reads “the horse starves.”

373. **something musty:** somewhat stale, i.e., so familiar it need not be quoted in full (The proverb, in Latin, was in use 350 years before *Hamlet* was written.)

376–77. **go . . . toil:** try to get to the windward side of me, **as if** to force **me into a** trap (Hamlet speaks as if they were hunters and he their quarry.)

381. **this pipe:** the recorder

387. **ventages:** finger holes, or **stops** (line 390), of the recorder (See note to lines 317–18 above.)

396. **sound me:** (1) play me like a musical instrument; (2) measure my depths, as with a fathom line; (3) test me for my secrets (a triple pun)

397. **compass:** (1) full range of an instrument's sound; (2) limits, scope

399. **organ:** musical instrument; '**Sblood:** a strong oath (by God's, or Christ's, blood)

402. **fret:** (1) annoy; (2) torment; (3) provide a stringed instrument with frets (the raised parts on the fingerboard that guide the fingers)

405. **presently:** immediately

413. **by and by:** soon, before long; or, perhaps, right away

414. **fool:** trifle with; **top of my bent:** limit of my endurance (For the source of this phrase in archery, see note to 2.2.32, above.)

420. **churchyards yawn:** graves open

425. **Soft:** i.e., wait a minute, not so fast

427. **Nero:** murderer of his mother, Agrippina

431. **How . . . somever:** however; **shent:** punished

432. **give them seals:** i.e., validate my **words** (by putting them into action)

## 「ACT 3」

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### 「Scene 3」

**3.3** Claudius orders Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to take Hamlet to England. Polonius tells Claudius of his plans to spy on Hamlet's conversation with Gertrude. Left alone, Claudius reveals his remorse for killing his brother, and he tries to pray. Hamlet comes upon him kneeling and draws his sword, but then stops to think that if he kills Claudius at prayer, Claudius will go to heaven. Hamlet decides to kill Claudius when the king is committing a sin so that Claudius will instead go to hell. After Hamlet leaves, Claudius rises, saying that he has been unable to pray.

- 1. I . . . not:** i.e., I do **not like** the way he is acting
- 3. forthwith dispatch:** prepare at once
- 5. The terms of our estate:** my position as a king
- 7. brows:** forehead (presumably alluding to Hamlet's brain)
- 8. ourselves provide:** prepare **ourselves**
- 9. fear:** apprehension, solicitude, concern
- 12. single and peculiar:** individual and private
- 14. noyance:** injury
- 16. cess:** cessation, decease
- 17. gulf:** whirlpool
- 18. it is a: it is like a**
- 21. mortised:** securely fastened

23. **Attends:** i.e., participates in; **boist'rous:** violent, savage
25. **Arm you . . . to:** i.e., prepare yourself for
26. **fear:** ground or reason for alarm, cause of **fear**
30. **convey:** i.e., conceal
31. **process:** discussion; **I'll warrant:** I promise
- 31–32. **tax him home:** reprimand him strongly
34. **meet:** appropriate
36. **of vantage:** from the vantage point of concealment
41. **primal eldest curse:** The first **curse**, which condemned Cain to a life of “a fugitive and a vagabond,” was laid on him for his murder of his brother, Abel (Genesis 4.10–12). See [picture](#).
50. **Whereto . . . mercy:** what purpose does **mercy** serve
51. **the visage of offense:** perhaps, the face of the offended Deity; or, perhaps, the sinful acts of the offender
- 53–54. **forestallèd . . . down:** i.e., the **twofold force** of **prayer** (line 52) is that we not be led into temptation and that we be forgiven our trespasses (See Matthew 7.13–15.)
- 57–58. **am still possessed / Of: still** possess
58. **effects:** i.e., rewards, acquisitions
60. **th' offense:** that which has been gained through the crime
61. **currents:** course of events
62. **Offense's gilded hand:** the golden **hand** of the offender, **gilded** through money illegally obtained; **shove by:** thrust aside
64. **'tis not so above:** this is not the case in heaven

65. **There is no shuffling:** in heaven, one cannot escape through evasion

65–68. **the action . . . in evidence:** i.e., in God's court, **the** legal **action** must be brought in accord with the facts; **we** are forced **even** to testify against **ourselves**

68. **rests:** remains

72. **limèd:** trapped, like a bird caught in birdlime

73. **engaged:** entangled; **Make assay:** put forth all your efforts

77. **pat:** opportunely

80. **would be scanned:** i.e., needs to be examined

84. **hire and salary:** i.e., something Claudius should pay me for

85. **grossly, full of bread:** in the full enjoyment of the world (See Ezekiel 16.49: "Pride, fullness **of bread**, and abundance of idleness.")

87. **audit:** final account

88. **circumstance . . . thought:** i.e., limited circumstantial knowledge

89. **'Tis . . . him:** i.e., his spirit is in a serious condition

90. **him:** i.e., Claudius; **purging:** cleansing

93. **know thou a more horrid hent:** i.e., wait for a more horrible occasion

100. **stays:** waits

101. **This physic:** this medicine (i.e., this postponement of the killing; or, Claudius's purging of himself through prayer)

## 「ACT 3」

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### 「Scene 4」

**3.4** In Gertrude's room, Polonius hides behind a tapestry. Hamlet's entrance so alarms Gertrude that she cries out for help. Polonius echoes her cry, and Hamlet, thinking Polonius to be Claudius, stabs him to death. Hamlet then verbally attacks his mother for marrying Claudius. In the middle of Hamlet's attack, the Ghost returns to remind Hamlet that his real purpose is to avenge his father's death. Gertrude cannot see the Ghost and pities Hamlet's apparent madness. After the Ghost exits, Hamlet urges Gertrude to abandon Claudius's bed. He then tells her about Claudius's plan to send him to England and reveals his suspicions that the journey is a plot against him, which he resolves to counter violently. He exits dragging out Polonius's body.

**1. straight:** straightaway, immediately; **lay home to him:** reprove him thoroughly

**2. pranks:** malicious deeds

**7. round:** blunt

**9. I'll warrant you:** I promise; **Fear me not:** don't doubt me

**14. idle:** foolish

**16. how now:** an expression of reproach

**18. forgot me:** forgotten who I am

**19. by the rood:** a mild oath    **rood:** cross

**22. set . . . speak:** perhaps, summon those to whom you will listen

**24. glass:** looking glass, mirror

**29. Dead for a ducat:** i.e., **dead**, I'll wager **a ducat**

41. **Leave:** leave off, cease

45. **damnèd custom:** habitual wickedness

46. **proof:** invulnerable (like armor); **sense:** feeling

50. **blurs:** stains; defiles

51–53. **takes off . . . there:** The **rose** is associated with female perfection and the **blister** with punishment threatened prostitutes (though no evidence exists that such punishment was ever carried out).

55. **contraction:** i.e., the marriage contract

57. **rhapsody:** jumble; **Heaven's . . . glow:** See picture.



“Heaven’s face does glow.” (3.4.57)  
From Richard Day, *A booke of Christian prayers* (1590).

58. **this . . . mass:** i.e., the Earth

59. **against the doom:** when Judgment Day comes (See note to 1.1.132.)

60. **Is thought-sick:** i.e., heaven is **thought-sick**

**62. That roars . . . index:** i.e., that receives such a violent introduction (The **index** was the table of contents or preface introducing a book.)

**64. counterfeit presentment:** representation in portraits (These are perhaps miniatures—Claudius's on a chain around Gertrude's neck, King Hamlet's around Prince Hamlet's neck—or are perhaps paintings hung upon the wall.)

**66. Hyperion's:** Hyperion is the name of the sun god, often said to be the most beautiful of the pagan deities. (See [picture](#).) **front:** forehead (See [picture of Jove](#).)

**68. A station . . . Mercury:** a way of standing that is like that of the winged messenger of the gods (See picture.)



Mercury. ([3.4.68](#))

From Giovanni Battista Cavalleriis, *Antiquarum statuarum* (1585–94).

**70. combination:** group of features

**74. ear:** i.e., of a cereal plant like wheat

**75. Blasting:** blighting; **his:** its

**76. leave to feed:** stop feeding

77. **batten:** glut yourself; **moor:** barren land

79. **heyday:** state of excitement; **blood:** passion

81. **Sense:** perception through the senses

83. **apoplexed:** suffering from apoplexy, paralyzed

84. **sense . . . thrallèd:** i.e., the five senses are never so subjected by lunacy (Hamlet's argument is that even in madness, Gertrude's senses would have **reserved some quantity of choice** [line 85]—i.e., retained a trace of the power to choose.)

87. **cozened:** tricked; **hoodman-blind:** the game of blindman's buff (See picture.)



A game of hoodman-blind. (3.4.86–87)

From *Officium beate Marie v[ir]ginis ad vsum saru[m]* . . . [c. 1512].

89. **sans all:** without the other senses

91. **so mope:** be so stupefied

93. **mutine:** incite rebellion

94–95. **be . . . fire:** i.e., **melt** like the **wax** in a burning candle

95–98. **Proclaim . . . will:** i.e., do not call it shameful **when** youthful passion acts impetuously, **since** the **frost** of age is **itself** aflame **and reason** is acting as a pander for desire instead of controlling it

101. **grainèd:** indelible (*Grain* was a “fast” or permanent dye.)

102. **leave their tinct:** give up their color

104. **enseamed:** greasy

112. **a vice of kings:** a buffoon of a king (a reference to the comic Vice of the morality plays)

113. **cutpurse:** thief

123. **lapsed in time and passion:** “suffered having **time** to slip and **passion** to cool” (Samuel Johnson)

124. **important:** importunate, urgent

128. **amazement on thy mother sits:** i.e., your **mother** is in a state of extreme shock

130. **Conceit:** imagination

135. **incorporal:** immaterial

137. **in th’ alarm:** waked by the call to arms

138. **bedded hair:** smooth-lying **hair; like . . . excrements:** as if a lifeless outgrowth (*excrement*) had come to life

139. **an end:** on **end**

144. **capable:** responsive

147. **effects:** purposes

148. **want:** lack

155. **in . . . lived:** dressed **as he** did when **he lived**

158. **ecstasy:** madness

164. **reword:** repeat word for word

165. **gambol from:** skip away from

166. **flattering unction:** soothing salve

169. **mining:** undermining

173. **ranker:** more coarsely luxuriant

174. **fatness:** grossness; **pursy:** fat, flabby

176. **curb:** bow

182–83. **That monster . . . devil:** This passage may contain mistakes in the printing. (Editors often change “devil” to “evil.”) The general meaning may be “**Custom**, a **monster** that consumes the perceptive faculties, is therefore like a **devil** in suggesting evil **habits**.”

184. **use:** habit

186. **aptly:** easily

190. **either** <sup>「 . . . 」</sup> **the devil:** A word seems to have been lost; Q2 reads “either the devil”; many editors (to complete the line and the thought) insert the verb “master,” found in the quarto of *Hamlet* printed in 1611.

191. **potency:** strength

196. **their scourge:** heaven’s lash or whip; instrument of divine punishment; **minister:** agent

197. **answer well:** perhaps, justify; or, perhaps, make amends for or suffer the consequences of

200. **remains behind:** is yet to come

203. **Not . . . means . . . :** After this general statement of negation, Hamlet lists the things he would have Gertrude *not* do (e.g., go **to bed** with Claudius).

206. **reechy:** filthy

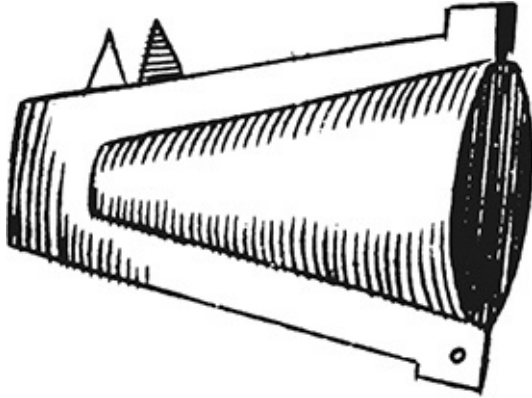
210. **mad in craft:** cunningly **mad**, pretending to be **mad**; **’Twere . . . know:** said sarcastically, as are lines 211–18

212. **paddock:** toad; **gib:** tomcat

**213. Such dear concernings:** such important matters

**215–18. Unpeg . . . neck down:** The story that Hamlet alludes to here is lost. (See [longer note](#).) **Unpeg:** unfasten **To try conclusions:** to experiment

**229–30. to have the enginer . . . petard:** to have the maker of military devices blown up by **his own** explosives (See [picture](#).)



A petard. ([3.4.230](#))

From Louis de Gaya, *A treatise of the arms* . . . (1678).

**230–31. and 't . . . I will:** i.e., and, with any luck, **I will**

**231. mines:** tunnels dug under a fortress wall

**234. packing:** leaving the country; carrying off a burden

**239. to draw toward an end with you:** to come to the **end** of my business **with you** (with a pun on **draw**, as Hamlet drags him away)

## 「ACT 4」

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### 「Scene 1」

**4.1** Gertrude reports Polonius's death to Claudius, who sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to find Hamlet and recover the body.

1. **matter:** significance

11. **brainish apprehension:** brainsick belief

12. **unseen:** hidden

13. **heavy:** dreadful

14. **with us:** with me (Note that Claudius uses the royal “we” throughout this largely private scene. Only in the final line does he use the first-person singular.)

17. **answered:** justified, explained, satisfied

18. **laid to us, whose providence:** charged against me, **whose** foresight

19. **short:** i.e., on a **short** leash; **out of haunt:** away from others

23. **divulging:** coming to light

26–27. **like . . . base:** perhaps, **like** a vein of gold in a mine of **base metals**; or, perhaps, **like** gold that separates out as liquid from **base metals** when the metal is heated

32–33. **with all our majesty . . . excuse:** i.e., **with all** my royal authority I **must countenance**, and **with all** my **skill** I **must excuse**

34. **join you . . . aid:** find others to help you

41. **and what’s untimely done:** Both Q2 and F print this short line; the four lines following in Q2 require that some words be inserted to provide a reference for “Whose whisper” in line 42. Many editions accept the eighteenth-century editorial insertion of “So haply slander” to complete line 41. Other editors suggest that lines 42–45 had been marked for deletion.

43. **As level . . . blank:** with as sure an aim as **the cannon** hitting its mark

## 「ACT 4」

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### 「Scene 2」

**4.2** Hamlet refuses to tell Rosencrantz and Guildenstern where he has put Polonius's body.

**3. soft:** an exclamation here enjoining silence

**6. dust . . . kin:** "thou art **dust**, and unto **dust** shalt thou return" (Genesis 3.19)

**12–13. to be demanded . . . what replication:** being questioned by . . . **what** reply

**15. countenance:** favorable looks

**17–18. like an ape an apple:** as **an ape** keeps **an apple**

**23. knavish:** mischievous; **sleeps in:** is not understood by

**30–31. Hide fox . . . :** perhaps a line from a child's game like hide-and-seek

## 「ACT 4」

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### 「Scene 3」

**4.3** Hamlet is brought to Claudius, who tells him that he is to leave immediately for England. Alone, Claudius reveals that he is sending Hamlet to his death.

**4. loved of: loved** by; **distracted:** unsettled

6–7. **where 'tis so . . . offense:** i.e., **where** the people love with **their eyes** instead of their reason, they judge the punishment (the **scourge**) rather than the crime (**the offense**)

7. **To bear . . . even:** to manage everything smoothly and evenly

9. **Deliberate pause:** the result of careful thought

9–10. **Diseases . . . relieved:** Proverbial: **Desperate diseases** require **desperate** remedies.

23. **convocation of politic worms:** perhaps an allusion to the Diet of Worms, **a convocation** (council) summoned at the city of Worms by the Holy Roman Emperor in 1521

24. **Your worm:** i.e., the **worm**

26–27. **is but . . . service:** are merely different kinds of food

35. **progress:** royal journey

45. **Which . . . grieve: which we tender as dearly** (value as highly) **as we dearly** (deeply) **grieve**

49. **bark:** ship; **at help:** favorable

50. **tend:** attend you, wait for you; **bent:** ready

56. **I see . . . them:** Heaven's angels (cherubim), Hamlet suggests, can see Claudius's **purposes** (line 55).

63. **at foot:** at his heels; **tempt:** entice

65–66. **everything . . . affair:** i.e., **everything else that** relates to the matter is completed

67. **England:** the king of **England**

68. **As . . . sense: as my power** may give you a **sense thereof** (i.e., of the value of retaining **my love**)

69. **cicatrice:** scar

70–71. **thy free awe . . . us:** i.e., **awe** of Denmark's power makes England pay **homage to** Denmark

71. **coldly set:** i.e., ignore

72. **Our . . . process:** my royal order; **imports:** i.e., demands

73. **congruing:** agreeing (accent on the first syllable)

74. **present:** immediate

75. **the hectic:** continual fever

77. **Howe'er my haps:** whatever my fortunes

## 「ACT 4」

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### 「Scene 4」

**4.4** Fortinbras and his army cross Hamlet's path on their way to Poland. Hamlet finds in Fortinbras's vigorous activity a model for himself in avenging his father's murder; Hamlet resolves upon bloody action.

2–4. **by his license . . . Over his kingdom:** In formal language, **Fortinbras**, having been given **license** from Claudius to march across Denmark, now asks for an escort. (See 2.2.81–85.) **conveyance of:** escort during

5. **would aught with us:** wishes anything of me (Note his use of the royal “we.”)

6. **in his eye: in his** presence

9. **softly:** slowly

10. **powers:** military forces

16. **the main:** the main part

18. **addition:** i.e., overstatement, exaggeration

20. **the name:** the mere **name** of conquest

21. **To pay . . . farm it: I would not pay five ducats to** rent the land for farming

23. **ranker:** higher; **in fee:** outright

27. **Will not debate . . . this straw:** are not enough to pay for settling this trifling quarrel

28. **impostume:** abscess

29. **without:** on the outside

34. **inform against:** denounce

36. **market . . . time:** “that for which he sells **his time**” (Samuel Johnson)

38–39. **discourse, . . . before and after:** power of thought that looks into the past and the future

41. **fust:** become moldy

42. **Bestial oblivion:** mindlessness like the beasts’

42–43. **craven scruple / Of thinking:** cowardly hesitation that results from **thinking**

48. **Sith:** since

49. **gross as Earth:** as evident **as** the **Earth** itself

53. **Makes mouths at: makes** faces **at** (i.e., holds in contempt)

56–59. **Rightly . . . at the stake:** i.e., **to be** truly **great**, one should **not** fight except when the **argument** is itself **great**, unless honor is involved **at the stake:** at risk (as in gambling)

61. **Excitements of:** motives or incentives for; **blood:** passion

64. **trick of fame:** illusion of honor

66. **Whereon . . . cause:** on which **the numbers** of fighting men do not have room to fight the battle

67–68. **Which is not . . . hide the slain: which is not** large **enough** to be a **tomb** or receptacle for those who will be killed **continent:** container

69. **bloody:** bloodthirsty

## 「ACT 4」

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### 「Scene 5」

4.5 Reports reach Gertrude that Ophelia is mad. Ophelia enters singing about death and betrayal. After Ophelia has gone, Claudius agonizes over her madness and over the stir created by the return of an angry Laertes. When Laertes breaks in on Claudius and Gertrude, Claudius asserts his innocence with regard to Polonius's death. The reappearance of the mad Ophelia is devastating to Laertes.

3. **distract:** distraught; **will needs be:** must be

6. **tricks:** plots, deception

8. **Spurns enviously at straws:** takes offense angrily at trifles; **in doubt:** obscurely

9–11. **Her speech . . . to collection: her speech** makes no sense, but its very formlessness makes her **hearers** draw conclusions

11. **aim:** guess

12. **botch . . . thoughts:** patch the words together to match their guesses

20. **ill-breeding:** evil-breeding

22. **as sin's true nature is:** i.e., sin, in its **true nature, is** a sickness of the **soul**

23. **toy:** trifle; **amiss:** disaster

24. **artless:** awkward, stupid; **jealousy:** unreasonable suspicions

25. **spills:** destroys; **spilt:** divulged

25 SD. **distracted:** insane, mentally disturbed

28–31. **How should I . . . shoon:** Ophelia sings a version of a popular ballad, which continues at lines 34 and 41. **cockle hat:** A **hat** with a **cockle** shell denoted a pilgrim returning from the shrine of St. James of Compostela. (See picture.) **shoon:** shoes



Pilgrim with “cockle hat and staff.” (4.5.30)

From Henry Peacham, *Minerua Britannia* (1612).

43. **Larded all:** strewn all over

44. **did not go:** The word “not” has been inserted into the ballad as Ophelia’s addition.

**47. God dild you: God** yield (reward) you

**47–48. the owl . . . daughter:** There exist an old legend and an unrelated ballad either of which could be alluded to here.

**50. Conceit upon:** i.e., (she is) thinking about

**53–60. Tomorrow . . . more:** The song alludes to the ancient custom that the first girl a man sees on **Valentine's day** is to be his true love. The song continues in lines 63–68, 70–71. **betime:** early **dupped:** opened **maid:** virgin (This song has not been found elsewhere.)

**63. Gis:** Jesus

**66. Cock:** a substitution for “God” in oaths; **to blame:** blameworthy

**71. An:** if

**74. cannot . . . weep: cannot** help weeping

**83. spies:** individual soldiers sent by the army to scout out the territory

**85–86. most violent . . . remove:** the cause, through his violence, of his justly earned removal **author:** cause

**86. muddied:** stirred up, confused

**89–90. we have . . . greenly:** I have acted foolishly

**91. In hugger-mugger:** without proper ceremony; secretly and hastily (See [longer note](#).)

**96. wonder:** bewilderment, perplexity; **in clouds:** i.e., in a cloud of suspicion

**97. wants not buzzers:** does not lack gossipers

**99. of matter beggared:** lacking facts

**100. Will nothing stick . . . arraign: will** not hesitate to accuse me of the crime

**101–3. this . . . superfluous death: this** (battalion of troubles) kills me over and over, as if I were shot at by **a murd'ring piece**, a cannon that scatters its shots

**103 SD. within:** offstage

**105. Attend:** listen

**106. Switzers:** Swiss bodyguards

**109–12. The ocean . . . your officers:** i.e., **Laertes** and his followers are overbearing the king's **officers** as quickly and pitilessly as an **ocean** flooding its flatlands (See picture.) **overpeering of his list:** overflowing its shore **head:** armed force



“The ocean . . . eats . . . the flats.” (**4.5.109–10**)

From Geoffrey Whitney, *A choice of emblemes* . . . (1586).

**113–16. as the world . . . They cry:** as if **the world were to begin** right **now**, with tradition and **custom** completely forgotten **ratifiers and props of every word:** probably refers to **antiquity** and **custom**, the supports of words and promises

**117. Caps . . . clouds:** Their **caps**, that is, are thrown into the air as **hands** and voices express approval loudly.

120. **counter:** In hunting, a dog goes **counter** when it follows **the trail** (line 119) in the wrong direction; **false:** treacherous, faithless

122. **without:** outside

124. **give me leave:** i.e., please leave me

126. **Keep:** guard

132. **cuckold:** betrayed husband (See [picture](#).) **brands the harlot:** See note to [3.4.51](#)–53.

134. **true:** faithful, chaste

137. **fear our: fear** for my

138. **hedge:** surround in order to protect

139. **would:** i.e., **would** like to do

140. **his:** its

148. **juggled with:** manipulated and thus deceived

152. **both . . . negligence:** i.e., **I** don't care what happens to me in this world or the next

154. **thoroughly:** thoroughly

157. **And for: and** as **for**

160–61. **certainty / Of:** truth or facts about

162. **swoopstake:** literally, take all the stakes on the gambling table (The metaphoric meaning of line 162 is “are you determined to take revenge on friends and enemies both?”)

168. **life-rend'ring pelican:** The mother **pelican** was thought to feed her young **with** her own **blood** (line 169). (See picture.)



A pelican with its young. (4.5.168–69)  
From Conrad Lycosthenes, *Prodigiorum* . . . (1557).

**173. sensibly:** intensely

**174. level:** intelligible, plain

**176. Let . . . in:** This line is given by Q2 to Laertes. Many editors move the line to follow “what noise is that,” and some then give it to Claudius. We have chosen to have the line be part of the offstage **noise**.

**179. virtue:** power

**180–81. paid . . . beam:** avenged (The image is of putting an excess of weight in one **scale** until it overbalances the other **scale**, or turns **the beam**. See [picture](#).)

**185. fine in:** refined by

**186. instance of itself:** sample of its refined nature—here, Ophelia’s wits

**188–90. They . . . tear:** See [longer note](#).

**193. move thus:** be this moving

194–95. **You must sing “. . . a-down-a”**: Ophelia perhaps instructs others around her to sing refrains to her song.

195. **the wheel**: perhaps, the refrain of the song; or, perhaps the turning of **the** spinning **wheel**, to which motion ballads were sung

196. **false steward**: perhaps a reference to a story or ballad no longer known

198. **This nothing’s . . . matter: this** nonsense speaks **more** eloquently than does serious speech

199. **There’s rosemary**: Ophelia begins here to distribute real or imaginary flowers.



Rosemary. (4.5.199)

From *The grete herball* . . . (1529).

202. **document**: lesson, instruction

202–3. **thoughts . . . fitted**: i.e., Ophelia has wisely linked **thoughts** and remembrance

204. **fennel**: In flower symbolism, **fennel** symbolized flattery and deceit.

205. **rue**: symbol of sorrow or repentance

**207. a difference:** a heraldic term for a variation in a coat of arms;  
**daisy:** symbol of dissembling

**208. violets:** symbol of faithfulness

**211. Thought:** melancholy; **passion:** suffering

**213–22. And . . . soul:** This lyric has not been found elsewhere. **poll:** head

**226. commune with:** share

**228. whom your:** which of your

**230. by collateral hand:** i.e., as an accessory

**231. find us touched:** find me implicated

**233. in satisfaction:** as compensation

**239. hatchment:** tablet displaying his coat of arms

**240. ostentation:** ceremony

**242. That:** so that



A beheading. ([4.5.244](#); [5.2.27–28](#))

From [Richard Verstegen,] *Theatre des cruauitez des hereticques de nostre temps* . . . (1607).

## 「ACT 4」

### 「Scene 6」

**4.6** Horatio is given a letter from Hamlet telling of the prince's boarding of a pirate ship and his subsequent return to Denmark.

**9. an 't:** if it

**10. th' ambassador:** i.e., Hamlet

**14. overlooked:** read; **means: means** of access

**16. pirate . . . appointment:** pirate ship well equipped for battle



Sixteenth-century ships at sea. (**4.6.15**–19)

From William Okeley, *Eben-ezer; or, A small monument of great mercy* . . . (1684).

**17–18. put on a compelled valor:** became, under compulsion, courageous

21. **thieves of mercy:** merciful **thieves**

23. **repair thou:** come

25–26. **too light for the bore of the matter:** too light for the caliber **of the** gun; i.e., inadequate

32. **way:** means of access

## 「ACT 4」

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### 「Scene 7」

4.7 Claudius gets a letter from Hamlet announcing the prince's return. Claudius enlists Laertes's willing help in devising another plot against Hamlet's life. Laertes agrees to kill Hamlet with a poisoned rapier in a fencing match. If he fails, Claudius will give Hamlet a poisoned cup of wine. Gertrude interrupts their plotting to announce that Ophelia has drowned.

1. **my acquittance seal:** ratify my acquittal, i.e., acknowledge my innocence

3. **knowing:** intelligent, understanding

7. **feats:** deeds

8. **capital:** deadly

10. **mainly:** greatly; **stirred up:** motivated

12. **unsinewed:** weak

16. **conjunctive:** closely joined

17. **star . . . sphere:** According to Ptolemaic astronomy, each planet (**star**) is inseparable from its **sphere**. (See note to 1.5.22–23.)

19. **count:** accounting, judgment
20. **the general gender:** the common people
22. **Work . . . stone:** function **like** springs of water that petrify **wood**
23. **Convert his gyves:** transform his shackles (See [picture](#).)
25. **reverted:** returned
28. **terms:** condition
29. **if praises . . . again:** if I may praise what she used to be
- 30–31. **Stood challenger . . . perfections: her worth** challenged **all the age** to equal **her** excellence
50. **naked:** defenseless
52. **pardon:** permission
55. **abuse:** deceit, imposture
57. **character:** handwriting
68. **So:** provided that
70. **checking at:** refusing to continue (The image is of a falcon in flight turning away from the prey she is supposed to be pursuing.) See [picture](#).
72. **device:** devising, planning
75. **uncharge the practice:** not blame his death on our plot **uncharge:** lift a burden from **practice:** stratagem, treachery
79. **organ:** agent, instrument
83. **Your . . . parts:** all of your qualities combined
86. **unworthiest siege:** least important rank
88. **A . . . youth:** a mere decoration in youth's **cap**

89–92. **youth no less becomes . . . graveness:** i.e., clothes worn by **youth** are as becoming to the young as the garments of **age** are to their comfortably prosperous wearers **sables:** furs; or, robes with sable trim **weeds:** garments **Importing:** signifying



A fencer in doublet and hose.  
From George Silver, *Paradoxes of defence* (1599).

95. **can well:** are skillful

98. **As had he been:** as if he had been; **encorpsed and demi-natured:** made into a single body (with the horse) to form a double-natured creature like the centaur (See picture.)



A centaur. (4.7.98)

From Gabriel Rollenhagen, *Nucleus emblematum selectissimorum* (1611).

99. **brave:** noble; **topped:** surpassed

100. **in forgery of:** in inventing

101. **Come . . . did:** fall **short of** his actual performance

108. **made confession of you:** acknowledged you

110. **art and exercise . . . defense:** theory and practice of fencing

113. **'scrimers:** fencers (French *escrimeurs*)



A duel. (4.7.113)

From Sebastian Heussler, *Künstliches Abprobirtes* . . . (1665).

119. **play:** fence

128. **passages of proof:** proven instances

129. **qualifies:** diminishes, lessens

131. **snuff:** the burned part of the wick of a candle

132. **is at a like goodness still:** remains always at the same level of goodness

133. **a pleurisy:** an excess (not to be confused with the disease of the same name)

134. **his own too-much:** its **own** excess; **That: that** which

139–40. **spendthrift . . . by easing:** According to old notions of medicine, **a sigh** eases distress but draws blood away from the heart.

140. **to . . . th' ulcer:** i.e., **to the** main point

142. **indeed:** in fact; also, in action

145. **should murder sanctuarize:** i.e., should protect a murderer (like Hamlet) from punishment

147. **Keep close:** stay in strict confinement or hidden

149. **put on those shall:** incite **those** who **shall**

151. **in fine:** in conclusion

153. **remiss:** carelessly indifferent

154. **generous:** noble-minded; **contriving:** treachery

156. **shuffling:** shifting of the foils, legerdemain

157. **unbated:** not blunted (as rapiers for such matches should be); **a pass of practice:** a treacherous thrust

161. **of a mountebank:** from a quack doctor

162. **mortal:** deadly

163. **cataplasma:** poultice

164. **Collected from:** composed of; **simples:** medicinal plants;  
**virtue:** medicinal power

166. **withal:** with it

167. **contagion:** poison that infects the blood

167–68. **if . . . death: if I** scratch **him** he will die

171. **May fit us to our shape: may** suit **our** plan

172. **And that:** and if

172–73. **drift . . . performance:** intention reveal itself through our bungling

175. **back or second:** backup position

176. **blast in proof:** blow up in the testing

177. **your cunnings:** Hamlet's skills and yours

179. **motion:** exertion

183. **for the nonce:** for this purpose

184. **venomed:** poisonous; **stuck:** thrust (a fencing term)

190. **askant:** aslant



A willow. (4.7.190)

From Henry Peacham, *Minerua Britannia* . . . [1612].

191. **hoar:** gray

192. **Therewith:** i.e., with willow branches

193. **long purples:** like **dead men's fingers** (line 195), a name given to various species of *Orchis*

194. **liberal:** plainspoken; **grosser:** coarser, less decent

195. **cold:** chaste

197. **pendant:** downhanging; **coronet weeds:** **weeds** made into garlands

198. **envious sliver:** malicious branch

202. **lauds:** hymns

203. **incapable of:** without ability to understand

204. **endued:** naturally adapted

207. **lay:** song

213. **It . . . trick:** i.e., weeping is natural

214–15. **When these . . . out:** **when these** tears **are** shed, my female-like weakness **will be** spent

216. **fain:** gladly

## 「ACT 5」

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### 「Scene 1」

**5.1** Hamlet, returned from his journey, comes upon a gravedigger singing as he digs. Hamlet tries to find out who the grave is for and reflects on the skulls that are being dug up. A funeral procession approaches. Hamlet soon realizes that the corpse is Ophelia's. When Laertes in his grief leaps into her grave and curses Hamlet as the cause of Ophelia's death, Hamlet comes forward. He and Laertes struggle, with Hamlet protesting his own love and grief for Ophelia.

**0 SD. Enter Gravedigger and Another:** In Q2 and Folio *Hamlet*, this stage direction reads "Enter two clowns," thus indicating that the Gravedigger and his companion were played by comic actors.

**1. in Christian burial:** i.e., in consecrated ground (Suicide was considered self-murder; it was also held to be an offense against God and against the Christian church. The suicide was thus forbidden **Christian burial.**)

**4. straight:** straightaway, immediately; **crowner:** coroner; **sat on her:** conducted a formal inquest into her death; **finds it:** decided that her death warrants

**9. se offendendo:** in self-offense (the gravedigger's rendering of the common legal phrase *se defendendo*, "in self-defense")

**11. wittingly:** deliberately

**12. Argal:** a mistake for Latin *ergo*, "therefore"

**14. goodman:** a form of address prefixed, as here, to the name of an occupation

**15. Give me leave:** let me go on

**17. will he, nill he:** willy-nilly, whether wished or not

23. **'quest:** inquest

27. **there thou sayst:** you said it correctly

28. **count'nance:** legal approval

30. **even-Christian:** fellow Christians

32. **hold up:** maintain

34. **bore arms:** was given heraldic insignia (with a pun on **arms** as part of the body)

41. **Go to:** an exclamation of impatience

44.



A gallows or gibbet. (5.1.44–45)  
From *Warhafftige . . . Verrätherey . . .* (1606).

53. **unyoke:** i.e., quit, as a farmer does when he unyokes his team of oxen

54. **Marry:** a mild oath (See note to 1.3.98.)

56. **Mass:** by the **Mass** (another mild oath)

58–59. **your . . . beating:** i.e., a stupid donkey does not move more quickly because it is beaten

**61. doomsday:** See note to [1.1.132](#), and [picture](#).

**63–66. In youth . . . meet:** The words of the Gravedigger's song are found, with variations, printed in Richard Tottel's *Miscellany* (1557), entitled "The aged lover renounceth love." The "O" and "a's" (lines 65–66) may mark the breathing or grunts of the Gravedigger, or may be part of his song, which continues off and on through line 123. **behave:** benefit **meet:** suitable

**69–70. Custom . . . easiness:** i.e., habit makes it easy for him

**71. of little employment:** not frequently used

**72. hath the daintier sense:** is more sensitive

**78. jowls:** dashes

**81. o'erreaches:** gets the better of

**91. chapless:** without a lower jaw (See picture.) **mazard:** head (a slang term)



A chapless skull. ([5.1.91](#))

From Henry Peacham, *Minerua Britannia* [1612].

**94. loggets:** a game played by throwing pieces of wood at a stake

**101. quiddities:** hair-splitting definitions

**102. quillities:** quibbles; **tenures:** holdings

**103. suffer:** allow

104. **sconce:** head (a slang term)

106–7. **his statutes, his recognizances . . . :** Hamlet begins here a list of legal terms referring to buying and holding property.

108. **the fine:** the end, the conclusion

112. **pair of indentures:** contracts (See longer note.)

113. **conveyances:** deeds; **this box:** i.e., **this** skull

114. **inheritor:** owner

120. **sirrah:** term of address to a lower-class male

125. **out on 't:** outside of it

129. **quick:** living

131. **quick:** quickly moving

140. **absolute:** precise

140–41. **by the card:** i.e., with precision

143–45. **the age . . . kibe:** i.e., **the** present **age** has become so affected **that** peasants walk on the very heels of courtiers **picked:** affected **his kibe:** the courtier's sore **heel**



A courtier and a peasant. (5.1.143–44)

From Robert Greene, *A quip for an vpstart courtier* . . . [1592].

**165. Upon what ground:** under what circumstances, for what reason

**170. pocky:** rotten, as if infected with syphilis

**171. scarce hold the laying in:** barely hold together long enough to be buried

**177. your water:** i.e., water

**177–78. your . . . body:** i.e., bodies    **whoreson:** vile

**178. lien you:** lain

186.



A jester. (5.1.186–87)

From George Wither, *A collection of emblemes . . .* (1635).

192. **fancy:** imagination

199. **chapfallen:** (1) dejected; (2) without the lower jaw (See picture.)

199–200. **my lady's chamber:** i.e., the room of the gentlewoman you would entertain

201. **favor:** appearance

204. **Alexander:** **Alexander** the Great, who died in 323 B.C.E. as ruler of the known world (See picture.)



Alexander. ([5.1.204](#), [211](#), [216–17](#))  
 From Valentin Thilo, *Icones heroum* . . . (1589).

[212.](#) **curiously:** elaborately

[215.](#) **modesty:** moderation, reserve

[217.](#) **returneth to dust:** See Genesis 3.19.

[220.](#) **Imperious:** imperial; majestic

[222.](#) **that earth:** the body of **Caesar** (line 220), made from **earth** (See Genesis 3.19.)

[223.](#) **expel:** keep out; **flaw:** gust of wind

[226.](#) **maimèd:** impaired, diminished

[228.](#) **Fordo:** destroy; **some estate:** high rank

[229.](#) **Couch we:** let us hide; **mark:** observe

[234.](#) **doubtful:** suspicious

[235.](#) **but that . . . order:** except for the fact **that** the king's **command** overrides the rule of the church

[236–37.](#) **in ground . . . trumpet:** in unhallowed **ground** **been** buried until the Judgment Day (See 1 Corinthians 15.52: “for **the trumpet**

shall blow, and the dead shall be raised up incorruptible.”) See [picture](#), and note to [5.1.1](#).

[237](#). **For:** instead of

[238](#). **Shards:** bits of pottery

[240](#). **crants:** garlands

[241](#). **strewments:** flowers strewn on a grave

[241](#)–42. **bringing . . . burial:** being brought to the grave, her last home, to the sound of the bell

[246](#). **such rest:** i.e., to pray for **such rest**

[247](#). **peace-parted souls:** i.e., **souls** that depart in peace

[252](#). **howling:** i.e., in hell

[254](#). **Sweets to the sweet:** sweet flowers to the sweet maiden

[256](#). **decked:** adorned, arrayed

[260](#)–61. **thy most . . . Deprived thee of:** i.e., **deprived** you **of** your mind

[265](#). **Pelion:** a high mountain on which, in Greek mythology, the giants placed Mount Ossa in their attempt to scale Mount **Olympus** (line 266) **skyish:** lofty

[268](#). **an emphasis:** intensity, force of feeling

[269](#). **wand’ring stars:** planets

[275](#). **splenitive:** quick-tempered

[289](#). **forbear him:** be patient with him

[290](#). **’Swounds:** by Christ’s wounds (a strong oath); **thou’t:** thou wilt

[291](#). **Woo’t:** wilt thou

293. **eisel:** vinegar

295. **outface me:** put me to shame

296. **quick:** alive

298. **our ground:** i.e., the mound of earth piled on us

299. **his pate:** its head; **the burning zone:** that **zone** in the celestial sphere in which the sun seems to circle the Earth

300. **Ossa:** See note to line 265. **mouth:** orate pompously

305. **golden couplets:** twin birds covered with yellow down; **disclosed:** hatched

308. **use me thus:** presumably referring to Laertes's curses on Hamlet at lines 258–61 and 272

310–11. **Let Hercules . . . day:** See longer note.

312. **wait upon him:** accompany him

315. **to the present push:** into immediate action

318. **thereby:** often replaced by F's "shortly"

## 「ACT 5」

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### 「Scene 2」

**5.2** In the hall of the castle, Hamlet tells Horatio how he discovered the king's plot against him and how he turned the tables on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Osric enters to ask, on Claudius's behalf, that Hamlet fence with Laertes. Hamlet agrees to the contest, despite his misgivings.

Hamlet is winning the match when Gertrude drinks from the poisoned cup that Claudius has prepared for Hamlet. Laertes then wounds Hamlet with the poisoned rapier. In the scuffle that follows, Hamlet forces an exchange of rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes. As Gertrude dies, Laertes, himself dying, discloses his and Claudius's plot against Hamlet. Hamlet kills Claudius. Before Hamlet dies, he asks Horatio to tell the full story that has led to these deaths and gives Fortinbras his support for the kingship. After Hamlet's death, Fortinbras arrives, claims the crown, and orders a military funeral for Hamlet.

6. **mutines:** mutineers; **bilboes:** shackles

8. **indiscretion:** impulsive action

9. **pall:** lose strength; **learn:** teach

11. **our ends:** outcome of our actions

12. **Rough-hew them how we will:** no matter how roughly we ourselves shape them

18. **Fingered:** stole; **in fine:** finally

23. **Larded:** ornamented

25. **bugs and goblins in my life:** causes of alarm if I were allowed to live **bugs:** bugbears

26–28. **on . . . struck off:** i.e., as soon as the document has been read, Hamlet is to be executed, the immediacy of the execution not being reduced (**bated**) by any delay (**leisure**) (See [picture](#).)

34. **Or:** before

36. **fair:** in the clear hand of a clerk

37–38. **hold it . . . A baseness:** consider it, as **our** statesmen **do**, a lower-class skill

40. **yeoman's:** substantial; loyal

41. **effect:** substance

44. **tributary:** a nation that pays tribute to another nation (In this passage—lines 43–52—Hamlet parodies the formal language he used in writing the **new commission** [line 36].)

46. **Paix.**



Peace. (5.2.46)

From Gilles Corrozet, *Hecatographie* . . . (1543).

47. **stand . . . amities:** serve to link their friendship

48. **suchlike . . . charge:** similar “whereas” legal phrases **of great** import

51. **those bearers:** the men bearing the document

52. **shriving time:** time for confession

54. **ordinant:** working to control events

55. **signet:** small seal

56. **model:** replica

58. **Subscribed it, gave 't th' impression:** signed it, sealed it with the signet on wax

60. **changeling:** exchange (As the fairies substituted elves or imps for human babies, so Hamlet has replaced the king's document with his

own forged one.)

61. **what to this was sequent:** what followed this

65. **defeat:** destruction

66. **insinuation:** winding themselves into the affair

67. **baser:** inferior

68. **pass:** thrust; **fell:** destructive; **points:** i.e., swords

71. **Does . . . upon—:** is it **not now** my duty—

73. **election:** See longer note. **hopes:** expectations

74. **angle:** fishhook; **proper:** very

77. **quit:** requite, pay back

79. **canker:** sore that eats and spreads; cancer

80. **In:** into

87–88. **by . . . his: I see the** portrait **of** Laertes's situation in that **of my own**

89. **bravery:** boastful showiness

95. **waterfly:** iridescent insect

99–100. **Let a beast . . . king's mess:** if a man, no matter how bestial, has enough money he will be welcome at **the king's** table **crib:** stall of an ox **mess:** i.e., table (literally, regular eating companions)

100. **chough:** i.e., jackdaw (a chattering bird, and thus a chatterer)

105. **Put your bonnet . . . use:** i.e., **put** on **your** hat (Hats were commonly worn by men, even indoors, but removed in the presence of superiors. Osric continues to hold his hat in his hand despite Hamlet's insistence; see 5.2.117.) See picture.



“Put your bonnet to his right use: ’tis for the head.” (5.2.105–6)  
 From *Bagford Ballads* (printed in 1878).

**110. indifferent:** somewhat

**112. complexion:** temperament

119–95. Throughout these exchanges, Osric’s language is florid, affected, and imprecise; Hamlet answers him in a style even more exaggerated. Often we can only guess at what they may be saying.

**120.**



“An absolute gentleman.” (5.2.120)

From Cesare Vecellio, *Habiti antichi et moderni* (1598).

**121. differences:** distinguishing characteristics

**122–23. the card or calendar of gentry:** perhaps, the model of courtly manners (See [picture](#).)

**124. continent:** container, receptacle

**125. definement:** definition; **perdition:** loss

**126–28. to divide him . . . quick sail:** perhaps, to inventory his qualities would stagger one's **memory**, but the inventory would fall short of his excellence

**129–33. a soul . . . nothing more:** Hamlet's mockingly affected language says, in essence, that Laertes is a fine man, so special that he can be matched only by **his** image in a **mirror**; everyone else in comparison to him is only his **umbrage**, or shadow.

**135–36. Why . . . breath?** i.e., **why** are **we** talking about him?

**138–39. Is 't . . . really:** Editors are divided about whom these lines address and what they mean. Because Shakespeare does not use *really* elsewhere, some suggest substituting *rarely*.

**140. nomination:** naming

**143. all 's:** all his

**147. would:** wish

**148. approve:** commend

**154–55. imputation:** reputation

**155. meed:** merit

**155–56. unfellowed:** unmatched

**158. Rapier and dagger:** In rapier fencing, the **rapier**, carried in the right hand, led the attack; the **dagger**, in the left hand, parried the opponent's attack. (See [picture](#))

**161. he has impawned:** i.e., Laertes (or **the French** [line 176]) **has** pledged

**162. poniards:** daggers (See picture.)



Poniard. ([5.2.162](#))

From Louis de Gaya, *A treatise of the arms* . . . (1678).

**163. assigns:** accessories; **girdles, hangers, and so:** sword belts, attaching straps, **and so** forth

**164. carriages:** literally, wheeled supports on which cannons are mounted; **dear to fancy:** fancifully designed

**165. responsive:** well matched

**166. liberal conceit:** perhaps, imaginative design

**167. What call you the “carriages”?:** i.e., what are **you** calling carriages?

**168–69. edified by the margent:** aided through a note in the margin

**173. would . . . be:** would rather they **be** called

**175. liberal-conceited:** See note to [line 166](#), above.

**178. laid:** bet

**178–79. a dozen passes between yourself and him:** a dozen exchanges **between** Hamlet and Laertes

**180–81. twelve for nine:** No one has satisfactorily explained this phrase so that it fits in with the terms of the wager.

**182. vouchsafe the answer:** condescend to present yourself at the match (Hamlet chooses to understand the words as meaning “give an answer.”)

187. **breathing time of day:** the **time** I take my exercise

188. **foils:** weapons blunted for fencing

189. **an:** if

192. **deliver you e'en so:** relate your response in exactly these words

195. **commend:** offer (The word also means "praise," as Hamlet takes it at lines 196–97.)

197–98. **for 's turn:** for his purpose

199–200. **This lapwing . . . head:** i.e., this bird has just emerged from its **shell** (The baby **lapwing** reportedly ran around **with the shell on its head.**)

201. **comply . . . with his dug:** say polite things to the breast he was about to nurse from

203. **drossy:** worthless

204. **tune:** manner of speaking

204–7. **out . . . opinions:** perhaps, **out of** repeated social encounters, they have got a **collection** of frothy language that wins acceptance from refined persons

207–8. **blow . . . out:** In this image, Osric and his kind are themselves composed of froth; when one blows on **them** to see if there is anything to them, they collapse like **bubbles.**

209. **commended him: commended** himself

215–16. **If . . . now: if** the king is **ready**, so am I

219. **In happy time:** opportunely (a courteous phrase)

220–21. **use . . . Laertes:** receive **Laertes** in a friendly way

225–26. **at the odds:** with **the odds** (advantage) allowed me

230. **gaingiving:** misgiving

232. **repair:** coming

233–34. **a special providence . . . a sparrow:** See Matthew 10.29–31: “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father? . . . Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

237–38. **of aught he leaves knows: knows** anything about what **he leaves** behind

238. **betimes:** early

238 SD. **Trumpets, Drums:** i.e., trumpeters, drummers; **state:** court

241. **This presence: this** royal audience

243. **needs:** necessarily

244. **sore:** severe, grave

245. **exception:** dislike, dissatisfaction

246. **Roughly awake:** harshly awaken

255. **disclaiming from:** proclaiming my innocence (disavowing all part in); **purposed:** intended

257. **That I have:** as if I had

259. **in nature:** in terms of my natural affection for my father and for my sister

261. **terms of honor:** offense to my **honor**

262–65. **will no reconciliation . . . ungored: will** accept **no** reconciliation until experts in those questions give a decision that may serve as a **precedent** for making **peace**, thus freeing **my** reputation from a charge of dishonor **voice:** authority **name ungored:** reputation unwounded

269. **frankly:** freely, willingly

272. **your foil:** i.e., the background against which you will shine (a courteous pun on the word **foils**, used at line 270 to request the blunted weapons)

274. **Stick fiery off:** stand out in brilliant contrast

280. **laid the odds . . . side:** i.e., the king's stake, much greater than Laertes's, is bet on Hamlet, who here again claims to be **weaker** than Laertes

282. **we have therefore odds: we have** been given **odds** (in that Laertes must make three more hits than Hamlet in order to win)

283. **Let me see another:** Here Laertes selects the sharpened, poisoned rapier.

284. **This likes me:** I like **this; have all a length:** are all the same length

285 SD. **play:** fence

288. **quit in answer of the third exchange:** requite (Laertes) for earlier hits by scoring **the third hit**

291. **union:** large pearl

294. **kettle:** kettledrum

295. **without:** outside

314. **napkin:** handkerchief

315. **carouses:** drinks a toast

326. **pass:** thrust

327. **make a wanton of me:** play with me as if I were a child

330 SD. **in scuffling they change rapiers:** This stage direction, in Q1, reads "they catch one anothers' rapiers," which suggests that Hamlet forces the exchange through a contemporary method of disarm called the "left-hand seizure." (See picture.)



The left-hand seizure. ([5.2.330](#) SD)  
 From Saint Didier, *Traicte contenant* . . . (1573).

[336.](#) **woodcock:** a proverbially stupid bird; **to mine own springe:** caught in my **own** trap (See [picture](#).)

[348.](#) **Unbated and envenomed:** sharp and poisoned; **foul practice:** disgraceful or shameful plot or conspiracy

[351.](#) **can no more:** **can** do or say nothing further

[357.](#) **union:** probable pun on **union** as “pearl” (See note to [line 291](#).) and **union** in marriage and death

[360.](#) **tempered:** mixed, compounded

[366.](#) **this chance:** these events

[367.](#) **mutes:** actors without speaking parts

[368.](#) **fell sergeant:** cruel **sergeant** at arms (arresting officer) See picture.



“This fell sergeant, Death.” (5.2.368)

From *Todten-Tantz* . . . (1696).

**374. antique Roman:** For ancient Romans, suicide was an honorable choice when faced with defeat or great loss.

**382. Absent thee from felicity awhile:** i.e., keep yourself from the happiness of death

**384 SD. A march . . . within:** i.e., the sounds of a distant march and shots offstage

**386–88. Young Fortinbras . . . volley:** i.e., **Fortinbras**, returning victoriously from **Poland**, has shot off a **volley** of gunfire to salute the **ambassadors** approaching from **England**

**390. o’ercrows:** triumphs over

392–93. **prophecy . . . Fortinbras:** predict that **Fortinbras** will be chosen as king (See [longer note](#) on **election** [[5.2.73](#)].)

393. **voice:** vote

394–95. **occurents . . . solicited:** occurrences that have brought on

396. **O, O, O, O!:** This series of Os, usually omitted by editors, may simply be an indication for the actor to make the sounds appropriate to Hamlet's dying.

399 SD. **Colors:** those carrying the flags or standards of Fortinbras's army

403. **This quarry . . . havoc:** i.e., **this** heap of dead bodies proclaims that **havoc** (devastation, destruction) has been at work (The phrase "cry **havoc**" alludes to the military order "**Havoc!**" which signaled that massacre and pillage should begin.)

404. **toward:** in preparation



Death's "eternal cell." (5.2.404)

From *Todten-Tantz* . . . (1696).

409. **senseless:** incapable of sensing

410. **him:** i.e., Claudius

417. **jump upon this bloody question:** so immediately after **this bloody** quarrel

420. **stage:** platform

424. **casual:** occurring by chance

425. **put on:** instigated

426. **this upshot: this** conclusion to it all

428. **deliver:** tell

432. **rights of memory: rights** remembered

**433. Which . . . me:** **which my** presence here at this advantageous time invites **me to claim**

**435–36. And from his mouth . . . on more:** i.e., with words **from** Hamlet's **mouth, whose** vote **will** be seconded by others

**437. this same:** the process proposed in lines 419–22; **presently:** immediately

**440. On . . . happen:** i.e., **happen** as a result of **plots and errors**

**443. put on:** **put** to the test, allowed to rule as king

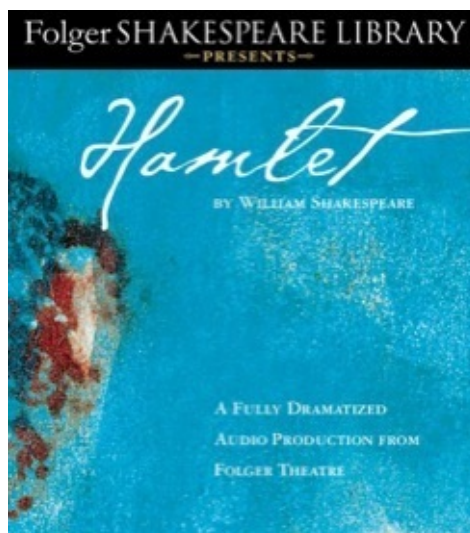
**444. passage:** passing, death

**445. rite of war:** perhaps, a special roll of drums; or, perhaps, a volley of gunfire

**448. field:** **field** of battle

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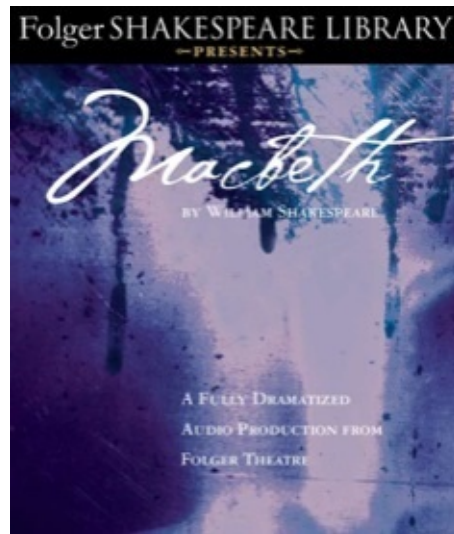
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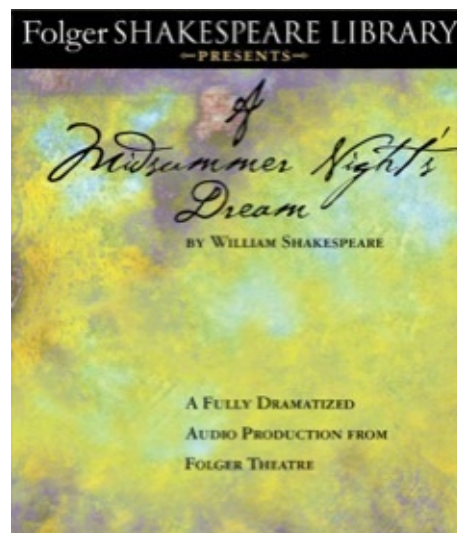
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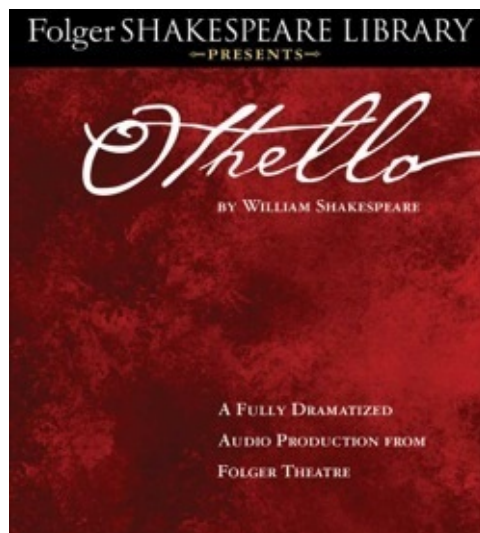
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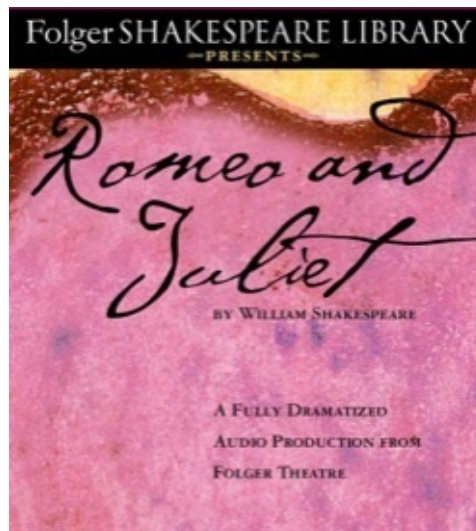
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