

# HAMLET

by

William Shakespeare

on the radio

The Old Globe and KPBS, Winter, 2021

Radio Edit 04.04.21

## **CHARACTERS**

THE GHOST of Hamlet, King of Denmark  
 HAMLET, Prince of Denmark, son of the King 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, counsel to the King

HORATIO, Hamlet's friend and confidant

Courtiers at the Danish court:  
 ROSENCRANTZ  
 GUILDENSTERN  
 OSRIC  
 GENTLEMAN in service to the King

Danish soldiers:  
 FRANCISCO  
 BARNARDO  
 MARCELLUS

PLAYERS

SAILOR  
 GRAVEDIGGER  
 DOCTOR OF DIVINITY

## **PLACE**

Elsinore Castle, Denmark

This script is adapted from The Old Globe's performance text, Summer, 2017. That text originated in the Folger Digital Text and was based upon the Second and Third Arden editions. Lines were cut, and some material was rearranged in consultation with the early published texts of the play, particularly the First Quarto of 1603. This draft prepared for production at The Old Globe and KPBS by Barry Edelstein, Winter, 2021.

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**PROLOGUE**

*Silence, then we hear, "Who's there?" Distant, spectral. It's repeated by many voices: some agitated, some confused, some despairing. The sequence builds in frenzy until one last "who's there" is whispered, in unison. After a breath:*

HAMLET:  
Who's there?

ANNOUNCER:  
KPBS presents The Old Globe production of HAMLET by William Shakespeare, directed by Barry Edelstein.

**SCENE ONE**

*Enter Barnardo to Francisco.*

BARNARDO:  
Who's there?

FRANCISCO:  
Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

BARNARDO:  
Long live the King!

FRANCISCO:  
Barnardo.

BARNARDO:  
He.

FRANCISCO:  
You come most carefully upon your hour.

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

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

BARNARDO:  
Have you had quiet guard?

FRANCISCO:  
Not a mouse stirring.

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

*Enter Horatio and Marcellus.*

FRANCISCO:  
I think I hear them. Stand ho! Who is there?

MARCELLUS:  
Friends to this ground.

FRANCISCO:  
Give you good night.

*Francisco exits.*

MARCELLUS:  
Holla, Barnardo.

BARNARDO:  
Say, what, is Horatio there?

HORATIO:  
A piece of him.

BARNARDO:  
Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.

HORATIO:  
What, has this thing appeared again tonight?

BARNARDO:  
I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS:  
Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy  
And will not let belief take hold of him  
Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us.

HORATIO:  
Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

BARNARDO:  
Let us once again assail your ears—  
That are so fortified against our story,  
What we two nights have seen.

*Enter Ghost.*

MARCELLUS:  
Peace, break thee off! Look where it comes again.

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

HORATIO:  
Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder.

MARCELLUS:

Thou art a scholar. Speak to it, Horatio.

HORATIO:

Stay, illusion!

If thou hast any sound or use of voice,  
Speak to me.

If there be any good thing to be done  
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,  
Speak to me.

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,  
Which happily foreknowing may avoid,  
O, speak! Stay and speak!  
Stop it, Marcellus.

MARCELLUS:

'Tis here.

BARNARDO:

'Tis here.

*Ghost exits.*

MARCELLUS:

'Tis gone.

BARNARDO:

It was about to speak when the cock crew.

MARCELLUS:

And then it started,  
Like a guilty thing upon a fearful summons.

HORATIO:

But look, the morn in russet mantle clad  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill.  
Break we our watch up, and by my advice  
Let us impart what we have seen tonight  
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,  
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

MARCELLUS:

Let's do't, I pray.

*They exit.*

**SCENE TWO**

*Enter Claudius, King of Denmark, Gertrude the Queen, the Council, Polonius, and his son Laertes and daughter Ophelia, with others.*

KING:

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
 The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
 To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom  
 To be contracted in one brow of woe,  
 Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature  
 That we with wisest sorrow think on him  
 Together with remembrance of ourselves.  
 Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,  
 Th' imperial jointress to this warlike state,  
 Have we, as 'twere, with a defeated joy,  
 With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
 Taken to wife.  
 For all, our thanks.  
 And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?  
 You told us of some suit. What is't, Laertes?

LAERTES:

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

KING:

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

POLONIUS:

He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave  
 By laborsome petition.  
 I do beseech you give him leave to go.

KING:

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

HAMLET:

A little more than kin and less than kind.

KING:

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET:

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

QUEEN:

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,  
 And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.  
 Do not forever with thy veiled lids  
 Seek for thy noble father in the dust.  
 Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,  
 Passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET:

Ay, madam, it is common.

QUEEN:

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

HAMLET:

Seems, madam? Nay, it is. I know not seems.  
 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
 Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
 Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,  
 That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,  
 For they are actions that a man might play;  
 But I have that within which passes show,  
 These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING:

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,  
 To give these mourning duties to your father.  
 But you must know your father lost a father,  
 That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound  
 In filial obligation for some term  
 To do obsequious sorrow. But to persevere  
 In obstinate condolment is a course  
 Of impious stubbornness. 'Tis unmanly grief.  
 Fie, 'tis a fault to nature, whose common theme  
 Is death of fathers.

QUEEN:

My lord.



KING:

We pray you, throw to earth  
 This unprevailing woe and think of us  
 As of a father.  
 For your intent  
 In going back to school in Wittenberg,  
 It is most retrograde to our desire,  
 And we beseech you, bend you to remain  
 Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,  
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

QUEEN:

Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet.  
 I pray thee, stay with us. Go not to Wittenberg.

HAMLET:

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

KING:

Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.  
 Madam, come.  
 This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet  
 Sits smiling to my heart, in grace whereof  
 No jocund health that Denmark drinks today  
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,  
 And the King's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,  
 Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away.

*All but Hamlet exit.*

HAMLET:

O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt,  
 Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,  
 Or that the Everlasting had not fixed  
 His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God, God,  
 How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable  
 Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
 Fie on't, ah fie! That it should come to this:  
 But two months dead--nay, not so much, not two.  
 So excellent a king, that was to this  
 Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother  
 That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and Earth,  
 Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him  
 As if increase of appetite had grown  
 By what it fed on. And yet, within a month  
 (Let me not think on't; frailty, thy name is woman!),  
 A little month--why she, even she

(O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason  
 Would have mourned longer!), married with my uncle,  
 My father's brother, but no more like my father  
 Than I to Hercules. Within a month,  
 She married. O, most wicked speed, to post  
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!  
 It is not, nor it cannot come to good.  
 But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

*Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo.*

HORATIO:  
 Hail to your Lordship.

HAMLET:  
 Horatio, or I do forget myself!

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

HAMLET:  
 Sir, my good friend. Marcellus?

MARCELLUS:  
 My good lord.

HAMLET:  
 But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?  
 What is your affair in Elsinore?

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

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

HORATIO:  
 Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.

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

HORATIO:  
Where, my lord?

HAMLET:  
In my mind's eye, Horatio.

HORATIO:  
I saw him once. He was a goodly king.

HAMLET:  
He was a man. Take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again.

HORATIO:  
My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAMLET:  
Saw who?

HORATIO:  
My lord, the King your father.

HAMLET:  
The King my father?

HORATIO:  
Two nights together had these gentlemen,  
Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch,  
In the dead waste and middle of the night  
Been thus encountered: a figure like your father  
Appears before them and with solemn march  
Goes slow and stately by them. This to me  
In dreadful secrecy impart they did,  
And I with them the third night kept the watch,  
Where, as they had delivered,  
The apparition comes. I knew your father;  
These hands are not more like.

HAMLET:  
But where was this?

MARCELLUS:  
My lord, upon the platform where we watch.

HAMLET:  
'Tis very strange.

HORATIO:

As I do live, my honored lord, 'tis true.

HAMLET:

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

MARCELLUS, BARNARDO:

We do, my lord.

HAMLET:

Armed, say you?

MARCELLUS:

Armed, my lord.

HAMLET:

From top to toe?

BARNARDO:

My lord, from head to foot.

HAMLET:

I will watch tonight.  
If it assume my noble father's person,  
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape  
And bid me hold my peace. So fare you well.  
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,  
I'll visit you.

MARCELLUS, BARNARDO:

Our duty to your Honor.

HAMLET:

Your loves, as mine to you. Horatio, farewell.

*All but Hamlet exit.*

HAMLET:

My father's spirit, in arms! All is not well.  
I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come!  
Till then, sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will rise,  
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

*He exits.*

**SCENE THREE**

*Enter Laertes and Ophelia*

LAERTES:

My necessaries are embarked. Farewell.  
And, sister, do not sleep,  
But let me hear from you.

OPHELIA:

Do you doubt that?

LAERTES:

Ophelia.  
For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favor,  
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,  
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,  
No more.

OPHELIA:

No more but so?

LAERTES:

Think it no more.  
Perhaps he loves you now, but you must fear,  
His greatness weighed, his will is not his own,  
For he himself is subject to his birth.  
He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends  
The safety and the health of this whole state.  
Then weigh what loss your honor may sustain  
If with too credent ear you list his songs  
Or lose your heart or your chaste treasure open  
To his unmastered importunity.  
Fear it, Ophelia; fear it, my dear sister.

OPHELIA:

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

LAERTES:

O, fear me not.

*Enter Polonius.*

POLONIUS:

Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!  
 The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,  
 And you are stayed for. There, my blessing with thee.  
 And these few precepts in thy memory  
 Look thou character. Here. [*Hands him a book*]  
 Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
 Nor any unproportioned thought his act.  
 Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
 Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel.  
 Beware of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,  
 Bear't that th'opposed may beware of thee.  
 Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice.  
 Take each man's censure but reserve thy judgement.  
 Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
 But not expressed in fancy (rich, not gaudy),  
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man,  
 Neither a borrower nor a lender be,  
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
 This above all: to thine own self be true,  
 And it must follow, as the night the day,  
 Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
 Farewell. My blessing season this in thee.

LAERTES:

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POLONIUS:

The time invites you. Go, your servants tend.

LAERTES:

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

OPHELIA:

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

LAERTES:

Farewell.

*He exits.*

POLONIUS:

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

OPHELIA:

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

POLONIUS:

Marry, well bethought.

'Tis told me he hath very oft of late  
Given private time to you, and you yourself  
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous.  
What is between you? Give me up the truth.

OPHELIA:

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

POLONIUS:

Affection, pah!

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

OPHELIA:

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

POLONIUS:

Marry, I will teach you. Think yourself a baby.  
Tender yourself more dearly,  
Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,  
Running it thus) you'll tender me a fool.

OPHELIA:

My lord--

POLONIUS:

From this time  
Be something scanted of your maiden presence.  
For Lord Hamlet, in few, Ophelia,  
Do not believe his vows. This is for all:

OPHELIA:

My lord.

POLONIUS:

I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth  
Have you so slander any moment leisure  
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.  
Look to't, I charge you. Come your ways.

OPHELIA:

I shall obey, my lord.

*They exit.*

**SCENE FOUR**

*Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.*

HAMLET:  
The air bites shrewdly.

MARCELLUS:  
Huh?

HAMLET:  
It is very cold.

MARCELLUS:  
Huh.

HORATIO:  
It is a nipping and an eager air.

HAMLET:  
What hour now?

HORATIO:  
I think it lacks of twelve.  
What does this mean, my lord?

HAMLET:  
The King doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,  
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,  
The kettledrum and trumpet thus bray out  
The triumph of his pledge.

HORATIO:  
Is it a custom?

HAMLET:  
Ay, marry, is't,  
But, to my mind, though I am native here  
And to the manner born, it is a custom  
More honored in the breach than the observance.

*Enter Ghost.*

HORATIO:  
Look, my lord, it comes.

HAMLET:  
Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!



Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,  
 Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
 Thou com'st in such a questionable shape  
 That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,  
 King, Father, Royal Dane. O, answer me!

HORATIO:

It waves you to a more removed ground.

MARCELLUS:

But do not go with it.

HORATIO:

No, by no means.

HAMLET:

It will not speak. Then I will follow it.

HORATIO:

Do not, my lord.

HAMLET:

Why, what should be the fear?

I do not set my life at a pin's fee.  
 And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
 Being a thing immortal as itself?  
 It waves me forth again. I'll follow it.

MARCELLUS:

You shall not go, my lord.

HAMLET:

Hold off your hands.

HORATIO:

Be ruled. You shall not go.

HAMLET:

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

*Ghost and Hamlet exit.*

HORATIO:

To what issue will this come?

MARCELLUS:

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HORATIO:

Nay, let's follow him.

*They exit.*

**SCENE FIVE**

*Enter Ghost and Hamlet.*

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

GHOST:  
Mark me.

HAMLET:  
Speak. I am bound to hear.

GHOST:  
So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAMLET:  
What?

GHOST:  
I am thy father's spirit,  
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night  
And for the day confined to fast in fires  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burnt and purged away.  
List, list, O list!  
If thou didst ever thy dear father love --

HAMLET:  
O God!

GHOST:  
Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET:  
Murder?

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

HAMLET:  
Haste me to know't.

GHOST:  
Now, Hamlet, hear.  
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,  
A serpent stung me. But know, thou noble youth,

The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown.

HAMLET:

O, my prophetic soul! My uncle!

GHOST:

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
Won to his shameful lust  
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.  
O Hamlet, what a falling off was there!  
But soft, methinks I scent the morning air.  
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,  
My custom always of the afternoon,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,  
With juice of cursed hebona in a vial  
And in the porches of my ears did pour  
The leprous distilment. whose effect  
Holds such an enmity with blood of man  
That with a sudden vigor it doth rot  
The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine!

HAMLET:

O horrible, O horrible, most horrible!

GHOST:

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand  
Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched.  
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.  
But, howsoever thou pursuet this act,  
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven.  
Fare thee well at once.  
Adieu, adieu. Hamlet. Remember me.

*He exits.*

HAMLET:

O all you host of heaven! O Earth! What else?  
And shall I couple hell? O fie! Hold, hold, my heart,  
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,  
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee?  
Ay, thou poor ghost, whiles memory holds a seat  
In this distracted globe. Remember thee?  
Yes, by heaven!  
O most pernicious woman!  
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!  
My tables--meet it is I set it down

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

*Enter Horatio and Marcellus.*

HORATIO:  
My lord, my lord!

MARCELLUS:  
Lord Hamlet.

HAMLET:  
So be it.

MARCELLUS:  
How is't, my noble lord?

HORATIO:  
What news, my lord?

HAMLET:  
O, wonderful!

HORATIO:  
Good my lord, tell it.

HAMLET:  
No, you will reveal it.

HORATIO:  
Not I, my lord, by heaven.

MARCELLUS:  
Nor I, my lord.

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

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

HAMLET:  
Why, right, you are in the right.

And so, without more circumstance at all,  
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part.

HORATIO:

These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

HAMLET:

Touching this vision here,  
It is an honest ghost--that let me tell you.  
And now, good friends,  
Never make known what you have seen tonight.

HORATIO, MARCELLUS:

My lord, we will not.

HAMLET:

Nay, but swear't.

HORATIO:

In faith, my lord, not I.

MARCELLUS:

Nor I, my lord, in faith.

HAMLET:

Upon my sword.

GHOST [*off*]:

Swear.

HAMLET:

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

GHOST [*off*]:

Swear.

HAMLET:

Hic et ubique?  
Come hither, gentlemen. Swear by my sword  
Never to speak of this that you have heard.

GHOST [*off*]:

Swear by his sword.

HAMLET:

Well said, old mole!

HORATIO:

O day and night, but this is wondrous strange.

HAMLET:

And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.  
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come.  
How strange or odd some'er I bear myself  
(As I perchance hereafter shall think meet  
To put an antic disposition on)  
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,  
With arms encumbered thus, or this headshake,  
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,  
As well, well, we know, or we could an if we would,  
Or such ambiguous giving-out, to note  
That you know aught of me--this not to do, swear.

GHOST [*off*]:

Swear.

HAMLET:

Rest, rest, perturbed spirit.--So, gentlemen,  
Let us go in together.

*All but Hamlet exit.*

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

*He exits.*

**SCENE SIX**

*Enter Polonius and Ophelia*

POLONIUS:

How now, Ophelia, what's the matter?

OPHELIA:

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

POLONIUS:

With what, i'th' name of God?

OPHELIA:

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

POLONIUS:

Mad for thy love?

OPHELIA:

My lord, I do not know.

POLONIUS:

What said he?

OPHELIA:

He took me by the wrist and held me hard.  
 Then goes he to the length of all his arm,  
 And, falls to such perusal of my face  
 As he would draw it. Long stayed he so.  
 At last, a little shaking of mine arm,  
 And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
 He raised a sigh so piteous and profound  
 As it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
 And end his being. That done, he lets me go.

POLONIUS:

This is the very ecstasy of love.  
 What, have you given him any hard words of late?

OPHELIA:

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



POLONIUS:

That hath made him mad.

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

Come.

*They exit.*

**SCENE SEVEN**

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

KING'S MAN:

Your majesties ... They are here my liege and lady.

KING:

Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.  
 Something have you heard  
 Of Hamlet's transformation--so I call it,  
 Sith nor th'exterior nor the inward man  
 Resembles that it was. What it should be,  
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him  
 So much from th'understanding of himself  
 I cannot dream of. I entreat you both  
 That, being of so young days brought up with him  
 You draw him on to pleasures, and you gather  
 So much as from occasion you may glean,  
 Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus  
 That, opened, lies within our remedy.

QUEEN:

Good gentles both, he hath much talked of you,  
 And sure I am two friends there are not living  
 To whom he more adheres.

ROSENCRANTZ:

Both your Majesties  
 Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,  
 Put your dread pleasures more into command  
 Than to entreaty.

GUILDENSTERN:

But we both obey,  
 And here give up ourselves in the full bent.  
 To lay our service freely at your feet,  
 To be commanded.

KING:

Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

QUEEN:

Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz.

ROSENCRANTZ:

People always mix us up.

QUEEN:

And I beseech you instantly to visit  
My too much changed son.

GUILDENSTERN:

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

QUEEN:

Ay, amen!

*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit. Enter Polonius.*

POLONIUS:

My liege, and madam, I do think that I have found  
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

KING:

Thou still hath been the father of good news!  
O, speak of that! That do I long to hear.

QUEEN:

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

POLONIUS:

To expostulate  
What majesty should be, what duty is,  
Why day is day, night night, and time is time  
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.  
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,  
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,  
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad.

KING:

What?

QUEEN:

Mad?

POLONIUS:

Mad call I it, for, to define true madness,  
What is't but to be nothing else but mad?  
But let that go.

QUEEN:

More matter with less art.

POLONIUS:

Madam, I swear I use no art at all.  
That he's mad, 'tis true; 'tis true 'tis pity,  
And pity 'tis 'tis true--a foolish figure  
But farewell it, for I will use no art.  
Perpend. Ophelia: come hither.

OPHELIA:

My lord.

POLONIUS:

I have a daughter (have while she is mine)  
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,  
Hath given me this.  
*[Reads a letter] To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most  
beautified Ophelia--*  
That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; beautified is a vile  
phrase. But you shall hear. Thus:  
*[Reads] In her excellent white bosom, etc.*

QUEEN:

Came this from Hamlet to her?

POLONIUS:

Good madam, stay awhile. I will be faithful. *[Reads]*  
*Doubt thou the stars are fire,  
Doubt that the sun doth move,  
Doubt truth to be a liar,  
But never doubt I love.*  
*O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers, but that I love  
thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.  
Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to  
him, Hamlet.*

KING:

But how hath she received his love?

POLONIUS:

What do you think of me?

KING:

As of a man faithful and honorable.

POLONIUS:

I would fain prove so. But what might you think,  
When I had seen this hot love on the wing, what might you,  
Or my dear Majesty your queen here, think,  
If I had looked upon this love with idle sight?  
What might you think? No, I went round to work.

I prescripts gave her,  
 That she should lock herself from his resort;  
 Which done, she took the fruits of my advice,  
 And he, repelled (a short tale to make),  
 Fell into a sadness, thence into a weakness,  
 Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,  
 Into the madness wherein now he raves  
 And all we mourn for.

KING:  
 Do you think 'tis this?

QUEEN:  
 It may be, very like.

KING:  
 How may we try it further?

POLONIUS:  
 I have closely sent for Hamlet hither,  
 That he, as 'twere by accident may here  
 Affront Ophelia.  
 Be you and I behind an arras now.  
 Mark the encounter. If he love her not,  
 And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,  
 Let me be no assistant for a state  
 But keep a farm and carters.

KING:  
 We will try it. Sweet Gertrude, leave us now.

QUEEN:  
 I shall obey you.  
 And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish  
 That your good beauties be the happy cause  
 Of Hamlet's wildness.

OPHELIA:  
 Madam, I wish it so.

*Queen exits.*

POLONIUS:  
 Ophelia, walk you here. Read on this book,  
 That show of such an exercise may color  
 Your loneliness.  
 I hear him coming. Let's withdraw, my lord.

*They withdraw. Enter Hamlet.*

HAMLET:

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

OPHELIA:

My lord.

HAMLET:

Nymph, in thy orisons  
 Be all my sins remembered.

OPHELIA:

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

HAMLET:  
I humbly thank you, well.

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

HAMLET:  
No, not I. I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA:  
My honored lord, you know right well you did,  
And with them words of so sweet breath composed  
As made the things more rich. Their perfume lost,  
Take these again. There, my lord.

HAMLET:  
I did love you once.

OPHELIA:  
Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAMLET:  
You should not have believed me. I loved you not.

OPHELIA:  
I was the more deceived.

HAMLET:  
Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?  
I am myself indifferent honest but yet I could accuse me of such  
things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very  
proud, revengeful, ambitious. What should such fellows as I do  
crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves all;  
believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your  
father?

OPHELIA:  
He... At home, my lord.

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

OPHELIA:  
O!

HAMLET:

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

OPHELIA:

Heavenly powers, restore him!

HAMLET:

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

*He exits.*

OPHELIA:

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!  
 The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,  
 The glass of fashion and the mold of form,  
 Th'observed of all observers, quite, quite down!  
 And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,  
 Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,  
 Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.  
 O, woe is me  
 T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

KING: [*advancing with Polonius*]

Love? His affections do not that way tend;  
 Nor what he spake was not like madness.

POLONIUS:

Yet I do believe  
 The origin and commencement of his grief  
 Sprung from neglected love.--

KING:

But look where sadly the poor wretch comes.

POLONIUS:

Away, I do beseech you. I'll board him presently.



KING:

I shall do so.

Madness in great ones must not unwatched go.

*King exits.*

POLONIUS:

How now, Ophelia?

You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said. We heard it all.

*Ophelia exits. Enter Hamlet.*

POLONIUS:

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

HAMLET:

Well, God-a-mercy.

POLONIUS:

Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET:

Excellent well. You are a fishmonger.

POLONIUS:

Not I, my lord.

HAMLET:

Then I would you were so honest a man.

POLONIUS:

Honest, my lord?

HAMLET:

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

Have you a daughter?

POLONIUS:

I have, my lord.

HAMLET:

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

POLONIUS:

Still harping on my daughter. What do you read, my lord?

HAMLET:  
Words, words, words.

POLONIUS:  
What is the matter, my lord?

HAMLET:  
Between who?

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

HAMLET:  
Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here that old men have gray beards, that their faces are wrinkled, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit; all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir, shall grow old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

POLONIUS:  
Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.--Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

HAMLET:  
Into my grave?

POLONIUS:  
Indeed, that's out of the air.--How pregnant sometimes his replies are!--My lord, I will take my leave of you.

HAMLET:  
You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal. Except my life, except my life, except my life.

POLONIUS:  
Fare you well, my lord.

HAMLET:  
These tedious old fools.  
*Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

ROSENCRANTZ:  
God save you, sir.

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

*POLONIUS exits.*

GUILDENSTERN:  
My honored lord.

ROSENCRANTZ:  
My most dear lord.

HAMLET:  
My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good friends, how do you both?

ROSENCRANTZ:  
As the indifferent children of the earth.

GUILDENSTERN:  
Happy in that we are not overhappy. On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

HAMLET:  
What news? What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN:  
Prison, my lord?

HAMLET:  
Denmark's a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ:  
We think not so, my lord.

HAMLET:  
Why, then, 'tis none to you, for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. To me, it is a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ:  
Why, then, your ambition makes it one. 'Tis too narrow for your mind.

HAMLET:  
O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

ROSENCRANTZ:  
To visit you, my lord, no other occasion.

HAMLET:

Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come; nay, speak. I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ:

To what end, my lord?

HAMLET:

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

ROSENCRANTZ:

What say you?

HAMLET:

Nay, then. If you love me, hold not off.

GUILDENSTERN:

My lord, we were sent for.

HAMLET:

I will tell you why. I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercise, and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the Earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof, fretted with golden fire--why, it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable; in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god: the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals, and yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me, no, nor women neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

ROSENCRANTZ:

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

HAMLET:

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

ROSENCRANTZ:

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

HAMLET:  
He that plays the king shall be welcome.

GUILDENSTERN:  
There are the players.

HAMLET:  
Gentles both, you are welcome to Elsinore. But my uncle-father  
and aunt-mother are deceived.

GUILDENSTERN:  
In what, my dear lord?

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

*Enter Polonius.*

POLONIUS:  
The actors are come hither, my lord. Upon my honor, the best  
actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history,  
pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-  
historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene  
individable, or poem unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor  
Plautus too light. These are the only men.

HAMLET:  
O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

POLONIUS:  
What a treasure had he, my lord?

HAMLET:  
*One fair daughter, and no more,  
The which he loved passing well.*

POLONIUS:  
Still on my daughter.

*Enter the Players.*

HAMLET:  
But look where my abridgment comes.  
You are welcome, masters; welcome all--O my old friend!

PLAYER KING:  
Your lordship.

HAMLET:

I am glad to see thee well. What, my young lady and mistress!

PLAYER QUEEN:

My lord.

HAMLET:

Masters, you are all welcome.

PLAYER PROLOGUE, PLAYER LUCIANUS:

My lord.

HAMLET:

Come, give us a taste of your quality. Come, a passionate speech.

PLAYER KING:

What speech, my good lord?

HAMLET:

I heard thee speak me a speech once. 'Twas Aeneas' tale to Dido, and thereabout of it especially when he speaks of Priam's slaughter. Let me see, let me see:

*The rugged Pyrrhus, like th'Hyrceanian beast—*  
'tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus:  
*The rugged Pyrrhus ...*

PLAYER KING:

His complexion smeared ...

HAMLET:

*His complexion smeared*  
*With heraldry most dismal. Head to foot,*  
*Now is he total gules, horridly tricked*  
*With blood of..*

PLAYER KING:

Fathers.

HAMLET:

*Fathers, mothers, daughters, sons.*  
*Roasted in wrath and fire,*  
*And thus o'ersized with coagulate gore,*  
*The hellish Pyrrhus*  
*Old grandsire Priam seeks.*  
So, proceed you.

POLONIUS:

'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion.

HAMLET:

Proceed.

PLAYER KING:

*Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide;  
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword  
Th'unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,  
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top  
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash  
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear. For lo, his sword,  
Which was declining on the milky head  
Of reverend Priam, seemed i'th'air to stick.  
So as a painted tyrant Pyrrhus stood  
And, like a neutral to his will and matter,  
Did nothing. But after Pyrrhus' pause,  
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work,  
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall  
On Mars's armor, forged for proof eterne,  
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
Now falls on Priam.  
Out, out, thou strumpet Fortune!*

POLONIUS:

This is too long.

HAMLET:

Prithee say on. He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps. Say on; come to Hecuba.

PLAYER KING:

*But who, ah woe, had seen the mobled queen--*

HAMLET:

The mobled queen?

POLONIUS:

That's good. Mobled queen is good.

PLAYER KING:

*But who had seen the mobled queen  
Run barefoot up and down,  
O, if the gods themselves did see her then  
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport  
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,*

*The instant burst of clamor that she made--  
Unless things mortal move them not at all--  
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven  
And passion in the gods.*

POLONIUS:

Look whe'er he has not turned his color and has tears in's eyes.  
Prithee, no more.

HAMLET:

'Tis well. I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon.--Good  
my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear,  
let them be well used, for they are the abstract and brief  
chronicles of the time.

POLONIUS:

Come, sirs.

HAMLET:

Follow him, good players. We'll hear a play tomorrow.

*Players exit with Polonius, except Player King.*

--Dost thou hear me, old friend? Can you play The Murder of  
Gonzago?

PLAYER KING:

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET:

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

PLAYER KING:

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET:

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

*Player King exits.*

HAMLET:

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

ROSENCRANTZ:

Good my lord.



HAMLET:  
Ay, so, goodbye to you.

*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit.*

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!  
Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
That from her working all his visage wanned,  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
With forms to his conceit--and all for nothing!  
For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,  
That he should weep for her? What would he do  
Had he the motive and the cue for passion  
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears  
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,  
Make mad the guilty and appall the free,  
Confound the ignorant and amaze indeed  
The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,  
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak  
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,  
And can say nothing--no, not for a king!  
Am I a coward?  
Who calls me villain? Breaks my pate across?  
Tweaks me by the nose? Gives me the lie i'th' throat  
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?  
Ha! 'Swounds, I should take it! For it cannot be  
But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall  
To make oppression bitter.

Bloody, bawdy villain!  
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!  
O vengeance!

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave.  
That I, the son of a dear father murdered,  
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words  
Fie upon't! Foh!  
About, my brains! Hum, I have heard  
That guilty creatures sitting at a play  
Have, by the very cunning of the scene,  
Been struck so to the soul that presently  
They have proclaimed their malefactions;

For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ.

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

*Enter Ghost.*

GHOST:  
Remember me!

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

*[Ghost screams]*

**END OF PART ONE**

**PART TWO****SCENE EIGHT***PLAYER KING:*

Cut off even in the blossom of my sin!  
 Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled;  
 No reckoning made--

*HAMLET:*

Thank you. Thank you. 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.

*PLAYER KING:*

I warrant your Honor.

*HAMLET:*

Once more.

*PLAYER KING:*

Cut off even in the blossom--

*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 purpose of playing,  
 whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold, as  
 'twere, the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her 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.

*PLAYER KING:*

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

*HAMLET:*

O, reform it altogether.

*PLAYER LUCIANUS:*

Reform it.

HAMLET:

And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them, for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the meantime some necessary question of the play be then to be considered. That's villainous and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it.

PLAYER KING:

The fool that uses it.

HAMLET:

Go make you ready.

*Players exit.*

What ho, Horatio!

HORATIO:

Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAMLET:

Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man  
As e'er my conversation coped withal.  
Dost thou hear?  
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice  
And could of men distinguish,  
She hath sealed thee for herself. Give me that man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
As I do thee.--Something too much of this.--  
There is a play tonight before the King.  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
Which I have told thee of my father's death.  
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,  
Even with the very comment of thy soul  
Observe my uncle. Give him heedful note.

HORATIO:

I will, my lord.

HAMLET:

They are coming to the play. I must be idle.

*Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern,  
and other Lords attendant*

KING:  
How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAMLET:  
Excellent, i' faith, of the chameleon's dish. I eat the air,  
promise-crammed.

ROSENCRANTZ:  
Promise-crammed.

GUILDENSTERN:  
My lord.

KING:  
I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet. These words are not  
mine.

HAMLET:  
No, nor mine now.

QUEEN:  
Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAMLET:  
No, good mother. Ophelia's metal more attractive.

POLONIUS:  
Your majesty. Do you mark that?

KING:  
Hmm.

HAMLET:  
Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

OPHELIA:  
No, my lord.

HAMLET:  
I mean, my head upon your lap?

OPHELIA:  
Ay, my lord.

HAMLET:  
Do you think I meant country matters?

OPHELIA:

You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET:

O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry?  
For look you how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died  
within's two hours.

OPHELIA:

Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

HAMLET:

So long? O heavens, die two months ago, and not forgotten yet?  
Be the players ready?

POLONIUS:

Ay, my lord. They stay upon your patience.

*Enter Player Prologue.*

PLAYER PROLOGUE:

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

*He exits.*

HAMLET:

Is this a prologue or the posy of a ring?

OPHELIA:

'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET:

As woman's love.

*Enter the Player King and Queen.*

PLAYER KING:

*Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round  
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground,  
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands  
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.*

PLAYER QUEEN:

*But woe is me! You are so sick of late,  
So far from cheer and from your former state,  
That much my mind misgives.*

PLAYER KING:

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

PLAYER QUEEN:

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

HAMLET:

That's wormwood!

PLAYER QUEEN:

*A second time I kill my husband dead  
When second husband kisses me in bed.*

PLAYER KING:

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

PLAYER QUEEN:

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

*Player Queen exits.*

HAMLET:

Madam, how like you this play?

QUEEN:

The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

KING:

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

HAMLET:

No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest. No offense i'th'world.

KING:

What do you call the play?

HAMLET:

The Mousetrap. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna. 'Tis a knavish piece of work, but what of that? Your Majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not.

POLONIUS:

I hate old plays in modern dress.

*Enter Player Lucianus.*

HAMLET:

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king. Begin, murderer. Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

PLAYER LUCIANUS:

*Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing,  
Confederate season, else no creature seeing,  
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,  
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,  
Thy natural magic and dire property  
On wholesome life usurp immediately. [He pours poison into  
Player King's ear]*

HAMLET:

He poisons him i'th' garden for his estate. His name's Gonzago. You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

OPHELIA:

The King rises.

POLONIUS:

Give o'er the play.

KING:

Give me some light. Away!

POLONIUS:

Lights, lights, lights!

*All but Hamlet and Horatio exit.*

HAMLET:

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



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

HORATIO:  
Very well, my lord.

HAMLET:  
Upon the talk of the poisoning?

HORATIO:  
I did very well note him.

HAMLET:  
Ah ha! Come, some music! Come, the instruments!

*Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

GUILDENSTERN:  
The King, sir--

HAMLET:  
Ay, what of him?

GUILDENSTERN:  
Is in his retirement marvelous distempered.

HAMLET:  
With drink?

GUILDENSTERN:  
The Queen your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath  
sent us to you.

HAMLET:  
You are welcome.

GUILDENSTERN:  
Nay, good my lord, if it shall please you to make me a wholesome  
answer, I will do your mother's commandment.

HAMLET:  
I cannot.

ROSENCRANTZ:  
What, my lord?

HAMLET:

Make you a wholesome answer. My wit's diseased. My mother, you say--

ROSENCRANTZ:

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

HAMLET:

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

ROSENCRANTZ:

Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper?

HAMLET:

Sir, I lack advancement.

ROSENCRANTZ:

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

HAMLET:

Will you play upon this pipe?

GUILDENSTERN:

My lord, I cannot.

HAMLET:

I pray you.

GUILDENSTERN:

I know no touch of it, my lord.

HAMLET:

Govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

GUILDENSTERN:

But I have not the skill.

HAMLET:

Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me, you would seem to know my stops, you would pluck out the heart of my mystery, you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe?

*Enter Polonius.*

POLONIUS:  
My lord.

HAMLET:  
God bless you, sir.

POLONIUS:  
The Queen would speak with you, and presently.

HAMLET:  
Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

POLONIUS:  
By th'Mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.

HAMLET:  
Methinks it is like a weasel.

POLONIUS:  
It is backed like a weasel.

HAMLET:  
Or like a whale.

POLONIUS:  
Very like a whale.

HAMLET:  
Then I will come to my mother by and by.--They fool me to the top of my bent.--I will come by and by.

POLONIUS:  
I will say so.

HAMLET:  
By and by is easily said. Leave me, friends.

*All but Hamlet exit.*

'Tis now the very witching time of night,  
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out  
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood  
And do such bitter business as the day  
Would quake to look on. Soft, now to my mother.  
I will speak daggers to her, but use none.

*He exits.*

**SCENE NINE**

*Enter King, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.*

KING:

I like him not, nor stands it safe with us  
To let his madness range.  
There's something in his soul  
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,  
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose  
Will be some danger. Which for to prevent,  
He shall with speed to England  
For the demand of our neglected tribute.  
Haply the seas, and countries different,  
With variable objects, shall expel  
This something-settled matter in his heart.  
Therefore prepare you, good my friends.  
I your commission will forthwith dispatch,  
And you to England shall along with him.

GUILDENSTERN:

We will ourselves provide.

ROSENCRANTZ:

We will haste us.

*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit. Enter Polonius.*

POLONIUS:

My lord, he's going to his mother's closet.  
Behind the arras I'll convey myself  
To hear the process. I'll warrant she'll tax him home;  
Fare you well, my liege.  
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed  
And tell you what I know.

KING:

Thanks, dear my lord.

*Polonius exits.*

O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven;  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,  
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,  
Though inclination be as sharp as will.  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,  
And, like a man to double business bound,  
I stand in pause where I shall first begin

And both neglect. What if this cursed hand  
 Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?  
 Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens  
 To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy  
 But to confront the visage of offense?  
 And what's in prayer but this twofold force,  
 To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
 Or pardoned being down? Then I'll look up.  
 My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer  
 Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder?  
 That cannot be, since I am still possessed  
 Of those effects for which I did the murder:  
 My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.  
 What then? What rests?  
 Try what repentance can. What can it not?  
 Yet what can it, when one cannot repent?  
 O wretched state! O bosom black as death!  
 O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,  
 Art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay.  
 Bow, stubborn knees, and heart with strings of steel  
 Be soft as sinews of the newborn babe.  
 All may be well.

*Enter Hamlet.*

HAMLET:  
 Now might I do it pat, now he is a-praying,  
 And now I'll do't.--And so he goes to heaven,  
 And so am I revenged. That would be scanned:  
 A villain kills my father, and for that,  
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send  
 To heaven.  
 Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge.  
 He took my father grossly, full of bread,  
 With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;  
 And am I then revenged  
 To take him in the purging of his soul,  
 When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?  
 No. When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,  
 Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed,  
 At gaming, swearing, or about some act  
 That has no relish of salvation in't;  
 Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,  
 And that his soul may be as damned and black  
 As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays.  
 This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

*Hamlet exits.*

KING:

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

*He exits.*

**SCENE TEN**

*Enter Queen and Polonius.*

POLONIUS:

He will come straight. Look you lay home to him.  
I'll silence me behind this arras here.  
Pray you, be round with him.

QUEEN:

I'll warrant you. Fear me not.

HAMLET:

Mother, mother, mother!

QUEEN:

Withdraw, I hear him coming. [*Polonius hides behind the arras*]

*Enter Hamlet.*

HAMLET:

Now, mother, what's the matter?

QUEEN:

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET:

Mother, you have my father much offended.

QUEEN:

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET:

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

QUEEN:

Why, how now, Hamlet?

HAMLET:

What's the matter now?

QUEEN:

Have you forgot me?

HAMLET:

No, by the rood, not so.  
You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife,  
And (would it were not so) you are my mother.

QUEEN:

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

HAMLET:

Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge.  
You go not till I set you up a glass  
Where you may see the inmost part of you.

QUEEN:

What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?  
Help, ho!

POLONIUS:

What ho! Help!

HAMLET:

How now, a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead. [*He stabs Polonius through the arras.*]

POLONIUS:

O, I am slain!

QUEEN:

O me, what hast thou done?

HAMLET:

Nay, I know not. Is it the King?

QUEEN:

O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAMLET:

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

QUEEN:

As kill a king?

HAMLET:

Ay, lady, it was my word.—O God.  
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell.  
I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune.  
Leave wringing of your hands. Peace, sit you down,  
And let me wring your heart.

QUEEN:

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



HAMLET:

Such an act  
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,  
Calls virtue hypocrite, makes marriage vows  
As false as dicers' oaths--

QUEEN:

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

HAMLET:

Look here upon this picture and on this,  
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
See what a grace was seated on this brow,  
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,  
An eye like Mars' to threaten and command,  
This was your husband. Look you now what follows.  
Here is your husband, like a mildewed ear  
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?  
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed  
And batten on this moor? Ha! Have you eyes?

QUEEN:

O Hamlet, speak no more!  
Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul,

HAMLET:

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

QUEEN:

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

HAMLET:

A murderer and a villain,  
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule--

QUEEN:

No more!

HAMLET:

A king of shreds and patches--

*Enter Ghost.*

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

QUEEN:  
Alas, he's mad.

HAMLET:  
Do you not come your tardy son to chide,

GHOST:  
Do not forget. This visitation  
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.  
But look, amazement on thy mother sits.  
O, step between her and her fighting soul.  
Speak to her, Hamlet.

HAMLET:  
How is it with you, lady?

QUEEN:  
Alas, how is't with you,  
That you do bend your eye on vacancy  
And with th'incorporal air do hold discourse?  
Whereon do you look?

HAMLET:  
On him, on him! Look you how pale he glares.

QUEEN:  
To whom do you speak this?

HAMLET:  
Do you see nothing there?

QUEEN:  
Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

HAMLET:  
Nor did you nothing hear?

QUEEN:  
No, nothing but ourselves.

HAMLET:  
Why, look you there, look how it steals away!  
My father, in his habit as he lived!

*Ghost exits.*

QUEEN:

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

HAMLET:

Ecstasy? It is not madness that I have uttered.  
Mother, for love of grace,  
Confess yourself to heaven,  
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come.

QUEEN:

O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain!  
As I have a soul, I swear by heaven,  
I never knew of this most horrid murder.  
What shall I do?

HAMLET:

Go not to my uncle's bed.  
Assume a virtue if you have it not.  
And, when you are desirous to be blest,  
I'll blessing beg of you.  
I must to England, you know that.

QUEEN:

Alack,

I had forgot! 'Tis so concluded on.

HAMLET:

Let it work,  
For 'tis the sport to have the engineer  
Hoist with his own petard.  
Good night. For this same lord  
I do repent.  
I will bestow him and will answer well  
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.  
I must be cruel only to be kind.  
This bad begins, and worse remains behind.  
Mother, good night indeed.  
I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room.  
This counselor  
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,  
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.--  
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.--  
Good night, mother.

*Exit Hamlet with Polonius's body. Enter King*

KING:  
Where is your son?

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

KING:  
What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

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

KING:  

O heavy deed!

It had been so with us, had we been there.  
Where has he gone?

QUEEN:  
To draw apart the body he hath killed,  
He weeps for what is done.

KING:  
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch  
But we will ship him hence.--Ho, Guildenstern!

*Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN:  
Ay, my lord.

KING:  
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,  
And from his mother's closet hath he dragged him.  
Go seek him out.

*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit.*

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends  
And let them know both what we mean to do  
And what's untimely done. O, come away!  
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

*They exit.*

**SCENE ELEVEN**

*Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN:  
Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

HAMLET:  
Safely stowed.

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

HAMLET:  
Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

GUILDENSTERN:  
My lord, you must tell us where the body is and go with us to the King.

HAMLET:  
The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body.  
The King is a thing--

GUILDENSTERN:  
A thing, my lord?

HAMLET:  
Of nothing. Bring me to him.  
Hide fox, and all after.

*Enter King.*

KING:  
Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAMLET:  
At supper.

KING:  
At supper where?

HAMLET:  
Not where he eats, but where he is eaten. A certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. We fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. That's the end.

KING:  
Alas, alas!

HAMLET:  
A man may fish with the worm that hath eaten of a king and eat  
of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

KING:  
What dost thou mean by this?

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

KING:  
Where is Polonius?

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

KING:  
Go, seek him there.

ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTEN:  
My lord.

HAMLET:  
He will stay till you come.

*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit.*

KING:  
Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety  
(Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve  
For that which thou hast done) must send thee hence  
With fiery quickness. Therefore prepare thyself.  
The ship is ready, and everything is bent  
For England.

HAMLET:  
For England?

KING:  
Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET:

Jolly good.

KING:

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

HAMLET:

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

KING:

Thy loving father, Hamlet.

HAMLET:

My mother. Father and mother is man and wife, man and wife is one flesh, and so, my mother. [*He kisses Claudius*] Come, for England.

*Hamlet exits.*

KING:

And England, if my love thou hold'st at aught  
Thou mayst not coldly set  
Our sovereign process, which imports at full  
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England,  
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,  
And thou must cure me. Till I know 'tis done,  
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

*He exits.*

**SCENE TWELVE**

*Enter Queen.*

QUEEN:

I will not speak with her.

COURTIER:

She is importunate, indeed distract.  
She speaks much of her father, things in doubt  
That carry but half sense.

QUEEN:

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

*Enter Ophelia.*

OPHELIA:

Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN:

How now, Ophelia?

OPHELIA:

*How should I your true love know  
From another one?*

QUEEN:

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPHELIA:

Say you? Nay, pray you, mark.  
*He is dead and gone, lady,  
He is dead and gone;  
At his head a grass-green turf,  
At his heels a stone.*

Oh, ho!

QUEEN:

Nay, but Ophelia--

OPHELIA:

Pray you, mark.

*Enter King.*



OPHELIA:

*White his shroud as the mountain snow--*

KING:

Gertrude, how now?

QUEEN:

My lord, alas, look here.

OPHELIA:

*Larded all with sweet flowers;  
Which bewept to the ground did not go  
With true-love showers.*

KING:

How do you, pretty lady?

OPHELIA:

Well, God ild you. They say the owl was a baker's daughter.

KING:

Conceit upon her father.

OPHELIA:

Pray let's have no words of this.  
*Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day,  
All in the morning betime,  
And I a maid at your window,  
To be your Valentine.*

KING:

Pretty Ophelia--

OPHELIA:

*Quoth she Before you tumbled me,  
You promised me to wed.*

He answers:

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

KING:

How long hath she been thus?

OPHELIA:

We must be patient, but I cannot choose but weep to think they would lay him i'th' cold ground. My brother shall know of it. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.

*She exits.*

KING:

O Gertrude, Gertrude,  
 When sorrows come, they come not single spies,  
 But in battalions: first, her father slain;  
 Next, your son gone; the people muddied  
 In their thoughts and whispers o'er Polonius' death,  
 Poor Ophelia  
 Divided from herself and her fair judgment;  
 O, my dear Gertrude, this,  
 Like to a murd'ring piece, in many places  
 Gives me superfluous death.

*Enter a Gentleman.*

GENTLEMAN:

Save yourself, my lord.  
 Young Laertes, in a riotous head,  
 O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord,  
 They cry Choose we, Laertes shall be king!  
 Laertes shall be king! Laertes king!

QUEEN:

O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!

*Enter Laertes.*

LAERTES:

O, thou vile king, give me my father!

QUEEN:

Calmly, good Laertes.

LAERTES:

That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard,  
 Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot  
 Even here between the chaste unsmirched brow  
 Of my true mother.

KING:

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

QUEEN:

Laertes.

KING:

Let him go, Gertrude. Do not fear our person.  
 There's such divinity doth hedge a King

That treason can but peep to what it would,  
Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,  
Why thou art thus incensed.

LAERTES:

Where is my father?

KING:

Dead.

LAERTES:

How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with.  
I dare damnation, only I'll be revenged  
Most throughly for my father.

KING:

That I am guiltless of your father's death  
And am most sensibly in grief for it,  
It shall as level to your judgment 'pear  
As day does to your eye.

LAERTES:

How now, what noise is this?

*Enter Ophelia.*

OPEHLIA:

Brother? Brother.

LAERTES:

O rose of May,  
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!  
O heavens, is't possible a young maid's wits  
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?

OPHELIA:

*They bore him barefaced on the bier,  
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey non nonny,  
And in his grave rained many a tear.*  
Fare you well, my dove. There's rosemary, that's for  
remembrance. Pray you, love, remember.

LAERTES:

A document in madness.

OPHELIA:

There's rue for you, and here's some for me. I would give  
you some violets, but they withered all when my father died.

They say he made a good end.

*He is gone, he is gone,*

*And we cast away moan.*

*God 'a mercy on his soul.*

And of all Christians' souls, I pray God. God be wi' you.

*She exits.*

LAERTES:

Do you see this, O God?

KING:

Laertes, I must commune with your grief.

If by direct or by collateral hand

You find us touched, we will our kingdom give,

To you in satisfaction; but if not,

Be you content to lend your patience to us,

And we shall jointly labor with your soul

To give it due content.

I pray you, go with me.

*They exit.*

**SCENE THIRTEEN**

*Enter Horatio and Sailor.*

SAILOR:

If your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is, there's a letter for you, sir. It came from th'ambassador that was bound for England.

HORATIO:

*[Reads]* "Horatio, I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb... Repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldest fly death. He that thou knowest thine... Hamlet."

I must deliver these news to the Queen his mother.

QUEEN:

Horatio!

HORATIO:

Madam, your son is safe arrived in Denmark.  
He writes herein how he escaped the danger  
And subtle treason that the King had plotted.

QUEEN:

Well I perceive there's treason in his kingly looks  
That seemed to sugar o'er his villainy.  
But I will soothe and please him for a time,  
For murderous minds are always jealous.

HORATIO:

Madam, your son dispatched a second letter  
To tell the king he is returned alive.  
By now it is at court.

QUEEN:

But what became of Guildenstern and Rosencrantz?

HORATIO:

In the king's packet Hamlet made discovery  
Of the commission given to his schoolfellows.  
By chance he had his father's royal seal  
And he affixed it on an earnest conjuration  
To England's king that, straight upon delivery,  
He should the bearers put to sudden death.  
The doom appointed him was done on them.

QUEEN:

O good Horatio, commend me  
A mother's care to him. Bid him a while  
Be wary of his presence. Horatio I take my leave,  
With thousand mother's blessings to my son.

HORATIO:

Madam adieu.

*They exit.*

**SCENE FOURTEEN**

*Enter King and Laertes.*

KING:

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

LAERTES:

It well appears. But my revenge will come.

*Enter a Messenger.*

GENTLEMAN:

My lord, a letter from Hamlet.

KING:

From Hamlet? Laertes, you shall hear it.

*Messenger exits.*

*[Reads] "High and mighty, you shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. Tomorrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes, when I shall thereunto recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return. Hamlet."*

What should this mean? Naked.

And in a postscript here, he says alone.

LAERTES:

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

KING:

Laertes, will you be ruled by me?

LAERTES:

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

KING:

To thine own peace. Laertes, I will work him  
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,  
Under the which he shall not choose but fall.

LAERTES:

Can you could devise it so  
That I might be the organ?

KING:

Good Laertes,  
Hamlet, returned, shall know you are come home.  
From France comes of you masterly report  
For art and exercise in your defense.  
We'll bring you together  
And wager on your heads. He, being remiss,  
Will not peruse the foils, so that with ease,  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
A sword unblunted, and in a pass of practice  
Requite him for your father.

LAERTES:

I'll do't  
And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.  
I brought an unction of a mountebank,  
So mortal that, if it but scratch him slightly,  
It may be death.

KING:

When in your motion you are hot and dry  
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him  
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,  
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,  
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?

*Enter Queen.*

QUEEN:

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

LAERTES:

Drowned? O, where?

QUEEN:

There is a willow grows askant a brook  
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.  
There, with fantastic garlands did she come  
Of crowflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,  
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,  
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.  
There on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds  
Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliver broke,  
When down her weedy trophies and herself  
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,  
And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up,  
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,



As one incapable of her own distress  
Or like a creature native and endued  
Unto that element. But long it could not be  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
To muddy death.

LAERTES:  
Alas, then she is drowned.

QUEEN:  
Drowned, drowned.

LAERTES:  
Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,  
And therefore I forbid my tears. Adieu, my lord.  
I have a speech o' fire that fain would blaze,  
But that this folly drowns it.

*He exits.*

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

*They exit.*

**SCENE FIFTEEN**

*Enter Gravedigger digging a grave, Hamlet and Horatio behind.*

GRAVEDIGGER:

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

HAMLET:

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

HORATIO:

Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

GRAVEDIGGER:

*But age with his stealing steps  
Hath clawed me in his clutch, [He digs up a skull]  
And hath shipped me into the land,  
As if I had never been such.*

HAMLET:

That skull had a tongue in it and could sing once. How the knave jowls it to the ground as if 'twere Cain's jawbone, that did the first murder!

GRAVEDIGGER:

*A pickax and a spade, a spade,  
For and a shrouding sheet,  
O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet. [He digs up another skull]*

HAMLET:

There's another. Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Why does he suffer this mad knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel? I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

GRAVEDIGGER:

Mine, sir.

*O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.*

HAMLET:

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

GRAVEDIGGER:

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

HAMLET:

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

GRAVEDIGGER:

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

HAMLET:

What man dost thou dig it for?

GRAVEDIGGER:

For no man, sir.

HAMLET:

What woman then?

GRAVEDIGGER:

For none, neither.

HAMLET:

Who is to be buried in't?

GRAVEDIGGER:

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

HAMLET:

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

GRAVEDIGGER:

Of all the days i'th'year, I came to't that very day that young Hamlet was born--he that is mad, and sent into England.

HAMLET:

Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

GRAVEDIGGER:

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

HAMLET:

Why?

GRAVEDIGGER:

'Twill not be seen in him there. There the men are as mad as he.

HAMLET:  
How came he mad?

GRAVEDIGGER:  
Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

HAMLET:  
Upon what ground?

GRAVEDIGGER:  
Why, here in Denmark.

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

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

HAMLET:  
Whose was it?

GRAVEDIGGER:  
This same skull, sir, was, sir, Yorick's skull, the King's jester.

HAMLET:  
This?

GRAVEDIGGER:  
E'en that.

HAMLET:  
Let me see. Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio. A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? Your songs? Your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning? Quite chapfallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come. Make her laugh at that.

HORATIO:  
But soft, here comes the King, the Queen, the courtiers. Couch we a while, and mark.

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

LAERTES:  
What ceremony else?

DOCTOR:  
Her obsequies have been as far enlarged  
As we have warrant. Her death was doubtful.

LAERTES:  
Must there no more be done?

DOCTOR:  
No more be done.

LAERTES:  
Lay her i'th'earth,  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,  
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be  
When thou liest howling.

HAMLET:  
What, the fair Ophelia?

QUEEN:  
Sweets to the sweet, farewell! [*She scatters flowers*]  
I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;  
I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,  
And not have strewed thy grave.

LAERTES:  
Hold off the earth awhile,  
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.  
Ophelia!  
Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made  
T'o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus.

HAMLET:  
What is he whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis?  
This is I, Hamlet the Dane.

LAERTES:  
The devil take thy soul!

HAMLET:  
Thou pray'st not well.

KING:  
Pluck them asunder.

HORATIO:  
My lord!

HAMLET:  
Hold off thy hand.

QUEEN:  
Hamlet! Hamlet!

HORATIO:  
Good my lord, be quiet.

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

QUEEN:  
O my son, what theme?

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

KING:  
O, he is mad, Laertes!

QUEEN:  
For love of God, forbear him.

HAMLET:  
'Swounds, show me what thou't do.  
Woo't weep, woo't fight, woo't fast, woo't tear thyself,  
Woo't drink up eisel, eat a crocodile?  
I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?

LAERTES:  
You!

HAMLET:  
To outface me with leaping in her grave?  
Be buried quick with her, and so will I.  
But it is no matter.  
Let Hercules himself do what he may,  
The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.

*Hamlet exits. Horatio follows.*

KING:

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.  
Laertes, this grave shall have a living monument.  
An hour of quiet thereby shall we see.  
Till then in patience our proceeding be.

*They exit.*

**SCENE SIXTEEN**

*Enter Hamlet and Horatio.*

HAMLET:  
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will.

HORATIO:  
And Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.

HAMLET:  
Why, man, they did make love to this employment.  
They are not near my conscience.  
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes  
Between the pass and fell incensed points  
Of mighty opposites.

HORATIO:  
Why, what a king is this!

HAMLET:  
Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon  
To quit him with this arm?

HORATIO:  
It must be shortly known to him from England  
What is the issue of the business there.

HAMLET:  
It will be short. The interim's mine,  
And a man's life's no more than to say [*snaps*] one.

HORATIO:  
Peace, who comes here?

*Enter Osric, a courtier.*

OSRIC:  
Your Lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

HAMLET:  
I humbly thank you, friend.

OSRIC:  
Sweet lord, if your Lordship were at leisure, I should impart a  
thing to you from his Majesty.



HAMLET:

I will receive it with all diligence of spirit.

OSRIC:

Sir, here is the matter. His Majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes--believe me, an absolute gentleman.

HAMLET:

What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

OSRIC:

I know you are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is--I mean, sir, for his weapon. The King, sir, hath laid, sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits. It would come to immediate trial if your Lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

HAMLET:

I will win for him, if I can.

OSRIC:

I commend my duty to your Lordship.

HAMLET:

Yours. Yours.

*Osrice exits.*

HORATIO:

You will lose, my lord.

HAMLET:

I shall win at the odds; but thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart.

HORATIO:

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

HAMLET:

Not a whit. We defy augury. There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all. Since no man knows aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.

*Enter King, Queen, Osrice, Laertes, and all the state.*

KING:

Come, Hamlet, come and take Laertes' hand from me.

HAMLET:

Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong;  
But pardon't as you are a gentleman. What I have done  
That might your nature, honor, and exception  
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

LAERTES:

I do receive your offered love like love  
And will not wrong it.

HAMLET:

Give us the foils. Come on.

LAERTES:

Come, one for me.

KING:

Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,  
You know the wager?

HAMLET:

Very well, my lord.  
Your Grace has laid the odds o'th'weaker side.

KING:

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

LAERTES:

This is too heavy. Let me see another.

OSRIC:

Here, my lord.

LAERTES:

This.

HAMLET:

These foils have all a length?

OSRIC:

Ay, my good lord.

HAMLET:

This one likes me well.

KING:

If Hamlet give the first or second hit  
 Let all the battlements their ordnance fire.  
 The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath,  
 And in the cup an union shall he throw,  
 Richer than that which four successive kings  
 In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cup,  
 And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,  
 The trumpet to the cannoneer without,  
 The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,  
 Now the King drinks to Hamlet.  
 Come, begin.

HAMLET:

Come on, sir.

LAERTES:

Come, my lord.

OSRIC:

Begin!

*[They play. The men lay their swords together, then zing them apart. Three quick sword hits and a touch.]*

HAMLET:

One.

LAERTES:

No.

HAMLET:

Judgment!

OSRIC:

A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAERTES:

Well, again.

KING:

Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine.  
 Here's to thy health. *[He drinks, then drops a pearl in the cup]*  
 Give him the cup.

HAMLET:

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

OSRIC:  
Hup!

*[They play. The men lay their swords together, then zing them apart. More elaborate swordplay this time.]*

HAMLET:  
Another hit. What say you?

LAERTES:  
A touch, a touch. I do confess.

KING:  
Our son shall win.

QUEEN:  
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin; rub thy brows.  
Give me the cup there.  
The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

HAMLET:  
Good madam.

KING:  
Gertrude!  
Do not drink.

QUEEN:  
I will, my lord; I pray you pardon me.

KING:  
It is the poisoned cup. It is too late.

QUEEN:  
Hamlet, let me wipe thy face.

HAMLET:  
Good mother.  
Come, for the third, Laertes. You do but dally.

LAERTES:  
Say you so? Come on.

OSRIC:  
Hup!

*[They play. The men lay their swords together, then zing them apart. Very elaborate swordplay this time, and the men bind blades: a stand-off.]*

OSRIC:  
Nothing neither way.

LAERTES:  
Have at you now!

*[Laertes slaps his blade against Hamlet's neck, then pulls it quickly. He drops his sword to the ground. Hamlet picks it up.]*

HAMLET:  
Your sword.

LAERTES:  
My sword.

HAMLET:  
Nay, now it's mine.  
Come again.

KING:  
Part them. They are incensed.

OSRIC:  
Look to the Queen there, ho!

HAMLET:  
Laertes!

*[Laertes claps his hands together, catching the blade. Hamlet pulls the blade, which slices Laertes's hands.]*

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

OSRIC:  
How is't, Laertes?

LAERTES:  
I am justly killed with mine own treachery.

HAMLET:  
How does the Queen?

KING:

She swoons to see them bleed.

QUEEN:

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

*Queen dies.*

HAMLET:

O villainy! Ho! Treachery! Seek it out.

LAERTES:

It is here, Hamlet.

Hamlet, thou art slain.

In thee there is not half an hour's life.  
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,  
Unblunted and envenomed. The foul practice  
Hath turned itself on me. Thy mother's poisoned.  
I can no more. The King, the King's to blame.

HAMLET:

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

KING:

O yet defend me friends.

HAMLET:

Give me thy dagger!

OSRIC:

No, my lord!

*[Hamlet pitches the dagger through the air and it plants in the King's neck.]*

HAMLET:

Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane,  
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?  
Follow my mother.

*The King dies.*

LAERTES:

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

*Laertes dies.*

HAMLET:

I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu.  
 You that look pale and tremble at this chance,  
 That are but mutes or audience to this act,  
 Had I but time-- O, I could tell you--  
 But let it be.--Horatio, I am dead.  
 Thou livest; report me and my cause aright  
 To the unsatisfied.

HORATIO:

Never believe it.

I am more an antique Roman than a Dane.  
 In this cup there's yet some liquor left.

HAMLET:

As thou'rt a man,

Give me the cup. Let go! By heaven, I'll ha't.  
 O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,  
 Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!  
 If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,  
 Absent thee from felicity awhile  
 And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain  
 To tell my story. O, I die, Horatio!  
 The potent poison quite o'ercrows my spirit.  
 The rest is silence.

*Hamlet dies. Enter Ghost.*

HORATIO:

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,  
 And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

*[Ghost screams]*

**END OF PLAY**