

# HAMLET

## PRINCE OF DENMARK

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark.  
HAMLET, Son to the late, and Nephew to the present King.  
FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway.  
HORATIO, Friend to Hamlet.  
POLONIUS, Lord Chamberlain.  
LAERTES, his Son.  
VOLTIMAND,  
CORNELIUS,  
ROSENCRANTZ,  
GUILDENSTERN,  
OSRIC,  
A Gentleman,  
A Priest.

MARCELLUS, } Officers.  
BERNARDO, }  
FRANCISCO, a Soldier.  
REYNALDO, Servant to Polonius.  
A Captain.  
English Ambassadors.  
Players. Two Clowns, Grave-diggers.

GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark and Mother to Hamlet.  
OPHELIA, Daughter to Polonius.

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and Attendants.

Ghost of Hamlet's Father.

SCENE.—*Elsinore.*

### ACT I

SCENE I.—*Elsinore. A Platform before the Castle.*

FRANCISCO at his post. Enter to him BERNARDO.

Ber. Who's there?  
Fran. Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.  
Ber. Long live the king!  
Fran. Bernardo?  
Ber. He.  
Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.  
Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.  
Fran. For this relief much thanks; 'tis bitter cold,  
And I am sick at heart.  
Ber. Have you had quiet guard?  
Fran. Not a mouse stirring.  
Ber. Well, good-night.  
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,  
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.  
Fran. I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who's there?

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Hor. Friends to this ground.  
Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.  
Fran. Give you good-night.  
Mar. O! farewell, honest soldier: 16  
Who hath relief'd you?  
Fran. Bernardo has my place.  
Give you good-night. [Exit.  
Mar. Holla! Bernardo!  
Ber. Say,

What! is Horatio there?

Hor. A piece of him.  
Ber. Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus. 20  
Mar. What! has this thing appear'd again to-night?  
Ber. I have seen nothing.  
Mar. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,  
And will not let belief take hold of him 24  
Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us:  
Therefore I have entreated him along  
With us to watch the minutes of this night;  
That if again this apparition come, 28  
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.  
Hor. Tush, tush! 'twill not appear.  
Ber. Sit down awhile,  
And let us once again assail your ears,  
That are so fortified against our story, 32  
What we two nights have seen.  
Hor. Well, sit we down,  
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.  
Ber. Last night of all,  
When yond same star that's westward from 36  
the pole  
Had made his course to illume that part of  
heaven  
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,  
The bell then beating one,—  
Mar. Peace! break thee off; look, where it 40  
comes again!

Enter Ghost.

Ber. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.  
Mar. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.  
Ber. Looks it not like the king? mark it,  
Horatio.

### ACT I, SCENE I]

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### HAMLET

Hor. Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder. 44  
Ber. It would be spoke to.  
Mar. Question it, Horatio.  
Hor. What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,  
Together with that fair and war-like form  
In which the majesty of buried Denmark 48  
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!  
Mar. It is offended.  
Ber. See! it stalks away.  
Hor. Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak! [Exit Ghost.  
Mar. 'Tis gone, and will not answer. 52  
Ber. How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:  
Is not this something more than fantasy?  
What think you on't?  
Hor. Before my God, I might not this believe  
Without the sensible and true avouch  
Of mine own eyes.  
Mar. Is it not like the king?  
Hor. As thou art to thyself:  
Such was the very armour he had on 60  
When he the ambitious Norway combated;  
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,  
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.  
'Tis strange. 64  
Mar. Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,  
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.  
Hor. In what particular thought to work I know not;  
But in the gross and scope of my opinion, 68  
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.  
Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,  
Why this same strict and most observant watch  
So nightly toils the subject of the land; 72  
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,  
And foreign mart for implements of war;  
Why this impress of shipwrights, whose sore  
task  
Does not divide the Sunday from the week; 76  
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste  
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:  
Who is't that can inform me?  
Hor. That can I;  
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king, 80  
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,  
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,  
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,  
Dar'd to the combat; in which our valiant  
Hamlet— 84  
For so this side of our known world esteem'd  
him—  
Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd compact,  
Well ratified by law and heraldry,  
Did forfeit with his life all those his lands 88  
Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror;  
Against the which, a moiety competent  
Was gaged by our king; which had return'd

To the inheritance of Fortinbras, 92  
Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same covenant,  
And carriage of the article design'd,  
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,  
Of unimproved mettle hot and full, 96  
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there  
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolutes,  
For food and diet, to some enterprise  
That hath a stomach in't; which is no other—  
As it doth well appear unto our state— 101  
But to recover of us, by strong hand  
And terms compulsative, those foresaid lands  
So by his father lost. And this, I take it, 104  
Is the main motive of our preparations,  
The source of this our watch and the chief head  
Of this post-haste and romage in the land.  
Ber. I think it be no other but e'en so; 108  
Well may it sort that this portentous figure  
Comes armed through our watch, so like the king  
That was and is the question of these wars.  
Hor. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye. 112  
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,  
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted  
dead  
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets; 116  
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,  
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star  
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands  
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse; 120  
And even the like precurse of fierce events,  
As harbingers preceding still the fates  
And prologue to the omen coming on,  
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
Unto our climatures and countrymen. 125  
But, soft! behold! lo! where it comes again.

Re-enter Ghost.

I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!  
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice, 128  
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: 132  
If thou art privy to thy country's fate,  
Which happily foreknowing may avoid,  
O! speak;  
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life  
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth, 136  
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,  
Speak of it: stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus. [Cock crows. 139  
Mar. Shall I strike at it with my partisan?  
Hor. Do, if it will not stand.  
Ber. 'Tis here!  
Hor. 'Tis here! [Exit Ghost.  
Mar. 'Tis gone!  
We do it wrong, being so majestic,  
To offer it the show of violence; 144  
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,  
And our vain blows malicious mockery.  
Ber. It was about to speak when the cock crew.



*Hor.* And then it started like a guilty thing  
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard, 149  
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,  
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat  
Awake the god of day; and at his warning, 152  
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,  
The extravagant and erring spirit hies  
To his confine; and of the truth herein  
This present object made probation. 156

*Mar.* It faded on the crowing of the cock.  
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes  
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,  
The bird of dawning singeth all night long; 160  
And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad;  
The nights are wholesome; then no planets  
strike,

No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,  
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time. 164

*Hor.* So have I heard and do in part believe it.  
But, look, the morn in russet mantle clad,  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill;  
Break we our watch up; and by my advice 168  
Let us impart what we have seen to-night  
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,  
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.  
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,  
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty? 173

*Mar.* Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning  
know  
Where we shall find him most conveniently.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—A Room of State in the Castle.

*Enter the KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, POLONIUS,  
LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and  
Attendants.*

*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, 4  
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature  
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,  
Together with remembrance of ourselves.  
Therefore, our sometime sister, now our queen,  
The imperial jointress of this war-like state, 9  
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,  
With one auspicious and one dropping eye,  
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,

In equal scale weighing delight and dole, 12  
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd  
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
With this affair along: for all, our thanks. 16  
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,  
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,  
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death  
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame, 20  
Collegued with the dream of his advantage,  
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,  
Importing the surrender of those lands  
Lost by his father, with all bands of law, 24  
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.  
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting.

Thus much the business is: we have here writ  
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras, 28  
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears  
Of this his nephew's purpose, to suppress  
His further gait herein; in that the levies,  
The lists and full proportions, are all made 32  
Out of his subject; and we here dispatch  
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,  
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,  
Giving to you no further personal power 36  
To business with the king more than the scope  
Of these delated articles allow.

Farewell and let your haste commend your duty.  
*Cor.* In that and all things will we show our  
*Vol.* duty. 40

*King.* We doubt it nothing: heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.*]

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?  
You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?  
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane, 44  
And lose your voice; what wouldst thou beg,  
Laertes,

That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?  
The head is not more native to the heart,  
The hand more instrumental to the mouth, 48  
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.  
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

*Laer.* Dread my lord,  
Your leave and favour to return to France;  
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark, 52

To show my duty in your coronation,  
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,  
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward  
France

And bow them to your gracious leave and  
pardon. 56

*King.* Have you your father's leave? What  
says Polonius?

*Pol.* He hath, my lord, wrung from me my  
slow leave

By laboursome petition, and at last  
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent: 60  
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,— 64  
*Ham.* [Aside.] A little more than kin, and  
less than kind.

*King.* How is it that the clouds still hang on  
you?

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

*Queen.* Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour  
off,

And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

Do not for ever with thy vailed lids  
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:

Thou know'st 'tis common; all that live must  
die, 72

Passing through nature to eternity.  
*Ham.* Ay, madam, it is common.

*Queen.* If it be,  
Why seems it so particular with thee?

*Ham.* Seems, madam! Nay, it is; I know not  
'seems.' 76

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath, 80  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,  
Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,  
That can denote me truly; these indeed seem,  
For they are actions that a man might play: 84  
But I have that within which passeth 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: 88  
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 92  
In obstinate condolement is a course  
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief:

It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,  
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient, 96

An understanding simple and unschool'd:  
For what we know must be and is as common

As any the most vulgar thing to sense,  
Why should we in our peevish opposition 100

Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,  
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,

To reason most absurd, whose common theme  
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried, 104

From the first corse till he that died to-day,  
'This must be so'. We pray you, throw to earth

This unprevailing woe, and think of us  
As of a father; for let the world take note, 108

You are the most immediate to our throne;  
And with no less nobility of love

Than that which dearest father bears his son  
Do I impart toward you. For your intent 112

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, 116

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.

*Ham.* I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

*King.* Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:  
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;

This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet  
Sits smiling to my heart; in grace whereof, 124

No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,  
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,

And the king's rouse the heavens shall bruit  
again,

Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away. 128  
[*Exeunt all except HAMLET.*]

*Ham.* O! that this too too solid flesh would  
melt,

Thaw and resolve itself into a dew;  
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd

His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O  
God! 132

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world.

Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in  
nature 136

Possess it merely. That it should come to this!  
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not  
two:

So excellent a king; that was, to this,  
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother 140

That he might not beitem 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 144

By what it fed on; and yet, within a month,  
Let me not think on't: Frailty, thy name is

woman!  
A little month; or ere those shoes were old

With which she follow'd my poor father's body,  
Like Niobe, all tears; why she, even she,— 149

O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,  
Would have mourn'd longer,—married with

mine uncle,  
My father's brother, but no more like my father

Than I to Hercules: within a month, 153  
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,

She married. O! most wicked speed, to post  
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets. 157

It is not nor it cannot come to good;  
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue!

*Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.*

*Hor.* Hail to your lordship!

*Ham.* I am glad to see you well: 160  
Horatio, or I do forget myself.

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

*Ham.* Sir, my good friend; I'll change that  
name with you.

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?  
Marcellus? 165

*Mar.* My good lord,—

*Ham.* I am very glad to see you. [To BERNARDO.]  
Good even, sir.

But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?  
*Hor.* A truant disposition, good my lord. 169

*Ham.* I would not hear your enemy say so,  
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,

To make it trustful of your own report 172  
Against yourself; I know you are no truant.

But what is your affair in Elsinore?  
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

*Hor.* My lord, I came to see your father's  
funeral. 176

*Ham.* I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-  
student;

I think it was to see my mother's wedding.  
*Hor.* Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

*Ham.* Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral  
bak'd meats 180

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.  
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

Ere I had ever seen that day, Horatio!  
My father, methinks I see my father. 184

*Hor.* O! where, my lord?

*Ham.* In my mind's eye, Horatio.

*Hor.* I saw him once; he was a goodly king.



*Ham.* He was a man, take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again. 188

*Hor.* My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

*Ham.* Saw who?

*Hor.* My lord, the king your father.

*Ham.* The king, my father!

*Hor.* Season your admiration for a while 192  
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,  
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,  
This marvel to you.

*Ham.* For God's love, let me hear.

*Hor.* Two nights together had these gentlemen, 196

Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,  
In the dead vast and middle of the night,  
Been thus encounter'd: a figure like your father,  
Armed at points exactly, cap-a-pe, 200  
Appears before them, and with solemn march  
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd  
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,  
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distant 204

Almost to jelly with the act of fear,  
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me  
In dreadful secrecy impart they did,  
And I with them the third night kept the watch;  
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time, 209  
Form of the thing, each word made true and good  
The apparition comes. I knew your father;  
These hands are not more like.

*Ham.* But where was this?

*Mar.* My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd. 213

*Ham.* Did you not speak to it?

*Hor.* My lord, I did;  
But answer made it none; yet once methought  
It lifted up its head and did address 216  
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;  
But even then the morning cock crew loud,  
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away  
And vanish'd from our sight.

*Ham.* 'Tis very strange. 220

*Hor.* As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true;  
And we did think it writ down in our duty  
To let you know of it.

*Ham.* Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me. 224

Hold you the watch to-night?

*Mar.* We do, my lord.

*Ham.* Arm'd, say you?

*Mar.* Arm'd, my lord.

*Ham.* From top to toe?

*Mar.* My lord, from head to foot.

*Ham.* Then saw you not his face? 228

*Hor.* O yes! my lord; he wore his beaver up.

*Ham.* What! look'd he frowningly?

*Hor.* A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

*Ham.* Pale or red? 232

*Hor.* Nay, very pale.

*Ham.* And fix'd his eyes upon you?

*Hor.* Most constantly.

*Ham.* I would I had been there.

*Hor.* It would have much amaz'd you.

*Ham.* Very like, very like. Stay'd it long? 236

*Hor.* While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

*Mar.* Longer, longer.

*Hor.* Not when I saw it.

*Ham.* His beard was grizzled, no?

*Hor.* It was, as I have seen it in his life, 240

A sable silver'd.

*Ham.* I will watch to-night;

Perchance 'twill walk again.

*Hor.* I warrant it will.

*Ham.* If it assume my noble father's person,

I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape 244

And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,

If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,

Let it be tenable in your silence still;

And whatsoever else shall hap to-night, 248

Give it an understanding, but no tongue:

I will requite your loves. So, fare you well.

Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,

I'll visit you.

*All.* Our duty to your honour. 252

*Ham.* Your loves, as mine to you. Farewell.

[*Exeunt* HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and

BERNARDO.

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, 256

Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in* POLONIUS' *House.*

*Enter* LAERTES *and* OPHELIA.

*Laer.* My necessities are embark'd; farewell:

And, sister, as the winds give benefit

And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,

But let me hear from you.

*Oph.* Do you doubt that? 4

*Laer.* For Hamlet, and the trifling of his

favour,

Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,

A violet in the youth of primy nature,

Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting, 8

The perfume and suppliance of a minute;

No more.

*Oph.* No more but so?

*Laer.* Think it no more:

For nature, crescent, does not grow alone

In thews and bulk; but, as this temple waxes, 12

The inward service of the mind and soul

Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,

And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch

The virtue of his will; but you must fear, 16

His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own,

For he himself is subject to his birth;

He may not, as unvalu'd persons do,

Carve for himself, for on his choice depends 20

The safety and the health of the whole state;

And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd

Unto the voice and yielding of that body

Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves

you,

24

It fits your wisdom so far to believe it

As he in his particular act and place

May give his saying deed; which is no further

Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal. 28

Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,

If with too credent ear you list his songs,

Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open

To his unmaster'd importunity. 32

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister;

And keep you in the rear of your affection,

Out of the shot and danger of desire.

The chariest maid is prodigal enough 36

If she unmask her beauty to the moon;

Virtue herself 'scapes not calumnious strokes;

The canker galls the infants of the spring

Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd, 40

And in the morn and liquid dew of youth

Contagious blastments are most imminent.

Be wary then; best safety lies in fear:

Youth to itself rebels, though none else near. 44

*Oph.* I shall th' effect of this good lesson keep,

As watchman to my heart. But, good my

brother,

Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,

Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,

Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine, 49

Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,

And recks not his own rede.

*Laer.* O! fear me not.

I stay too long; but here my father comes. 52

*Enter* POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace;

Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

*Pol.* Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for

shame!

The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail, 56

And you are stay'd for. There, my blessing with

thee!

And these few precepts in thy memory

Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no

tongue,

Nor any unproportion'd thought his act. 60

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar;

The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,

Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;

But do not dull thy palm with entertainment 64

Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Be-

ware

Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,

Bear't that th' opposed may beware of thee.

Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice; 68

Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judg-

ment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,

But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;

For the apparel oft proclaims the man, 72

And they in France of the best rank and station

Are most select and generous, chief in that.

Neither a borrower, nor a lender be;

For loan oft loses both itself and friend, 76

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. 80

Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!

*Laer.* Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

*Pol.* The time invites you; go, your servants tend.

*Laer.* Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well

What I have said to you.

*Oph.* 'Tis in my memory lock'd,

And you yourself shall keep the key of it. 86

*Laer.* Farewell. [*Exit.*

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

*Oph.* So please you, something touching the

Lord Hamlet.

*Pol.* Marry, well bethought:

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late

Given private time to you; and you yourself 92

Have of your audience been most free and

bounteous.

If it be so,—as so 'tis put on me,

And that in way of caution,—I must tell you,

You do not understand yourself so clearly 96

As it behoves my daughter and your honour.

What is between you? give me up the truth.

*Oph.* He hath, my lord, of late made many

tenders

Of his affection to me. 100

*Pol.* Affection! pooh! you speak like a green

girl,

Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

*Oph.* I do not know, my lord, what I should

think. 104

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

baby,

That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,

Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more

dearly;

Or,—not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,

Running it thus,—you'll tender me a fool. 109

*Oph.* My lord, he hath importun'd me with

love

In honourable fashion.

*Pol.* Ay, fashion you may call it: go to, go to.

*Oph.* And hath given countenance to his

speech, my lord, 113

With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

*Pol.* Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do

know,

When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul 116

Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,

Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,

Even in their promise, as it is a-making,

You must not take for fire. From this time 120

Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;

Set your entreatments at a higher rate

Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,

Believe so much in him, that he is young, 124

And with a larger tether may he walk

Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,

Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers,

Not of that dye which their investments show,

But mere implorators of unholy suits, 129

Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,

The better to beguile. This is for all:

I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,

Have you so slander any moment's leisure, 133

As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.



Look to't, I charge you; come your ways.  
*Oph.* I shall obey, my lord. *[Exeunt.]*

## SCENE IV.—The Platform.

*Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.*

*Ham.* The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

*Hor.* It is a nipping and an eager air.

*Ham.* What hour now?

*Hor.* I think it lacks of twelve.

*Mar.* No, it is struck.

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

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

What does this mean, my lord?

*Ham.* The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,

Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;

And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,  
 The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out  
 The triumph of his pledge.

*Hor.* Is it a custom?

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

This heavy-headed revel east and west  
 Makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nations;  
 They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase

Soil our addition; and indeed it takes  
 From our achievements, though perform'd at height,

The pith and marrow of our attribute.  
 So, oft it chances in particular men,  
 That for some vicious mole of nature in them,

As, in their birth,—wherein they are not guilty,  
 Since nature cannot choose his origin,—  
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,

Of breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
 Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens  
 The form of plausible manners; that these men,

Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,  
 Their virtues else, be they as pure as grace,

As infinite as man may undergo,  
 Shall in the general censure take corruption  
 From that particular fault: the dram of eale  
 Doth all the noble substance of a doubt,

To his own scandal.

*Enter GHOST.*

*Hor.* Look, my lord, it comes.  
*Ham.* Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,  
 Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,

Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
 Thou com'st in such a questionable shape

That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,  
 King, father; royal Dane, O! answer me:

Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell  
 Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,  
 Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,

Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,  
 Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,  
 To cast thee up again. What may this mean,

That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel  
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,  
 Making night hideous; and we fools of nature

So horribly to shake our disposition  
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?

Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

*[The Ghost beckons HAMLET.]*

*Hor.* It beckons you to go away with it,  
 As if it some impartment did desire  
 To you alone.

*Mar.* Look, with what courteous action  
 It waves you to a more removed ground:  
 But do not go with it.

*Hor.* No, by no means.  
*Ham.* It will not speak; then, will I follow it.

*Hor.* Do not, my lord.

*Ham.* 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.

*Hor.* What if it tempt you toward the flood,  
 my lord,

Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff  
 That beetles o'er his base into the sea,  
 And there assume some other horrible form,

Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason  
 And draw you into madness? think of it;  
 The very place puts toys of desperation,  
 Without more motive, into every brain

That looks so many fathoms to the sea  
 And hears it roar beneath.

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

*Mar.* You shall not go, my lord.

*Ham.* Hold off your hands!

*Hor.* Be rul'd; you shall not go.

*Ham.* My fate cries out,  
 And makes each petty artery in this body  
 As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.

*[Ghost beckons.]*  
 Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen,

*[Breaking from them.]*  
 By heaven! I'll make a ghost of him that lets me:

I say, away! Go on, I'll follow thee.

*[Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET.]*

*Hor.* He waxes desperate with imagination.

*Mar.* Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

*Hor.* Have after. To what issue will this come?

*Mar.* Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

*Hor.* Heaven will direct it.

*Mar.* Nay, let's follow him.

*[Exeunt.]*

SCENE V.—Another Part of the Platform.

*Enter Ghost and HAMLET.*

*Ham.* Whither wilt thou lead me? speak;  
 I'll go no further.

*Ghost.* Mark me.

*Ham.* I will.

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

*Ham.* Alas! poor ghost.

*Ghost.* Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing

To what I shall unfold.

*Ham.* Speak; I am bound to hear.

*Ghost.* So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

*Ham.* What?

*Ghost.* I am thy father's spirit;  
 Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,  
 And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,

Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
 Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am

forbid

To tell the secrets of my prison-house,  
 I could a tale unfold whose lightest word  
 Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young

blood,

Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,

Thy knotted and combined locks to part,  
 And each particular hair to stand an end,  
 Like quills upon the fretful porpentine:

But this eternal blazon must not be  
 To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O list!

If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

*Ham.* O God!

*Ghost.* Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

*Ham.* Murder!

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

*Ham.* Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift

As meditation or the thoughts of love,  
 May sweep to my revenge.

*Ghost.* I find thee apt;

And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed  
 That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,

Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet,  
 hear:

'Tis given out that, sleeping in mine orchard,  
 A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark

Is by a forged process of my death  
 Rankly abus'd; but know, thou noble youth,  
 The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
 Now wears his crown.

*Ham.* O my prophetic soul!

My uncle!

*Ghost.* Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate

beast,

With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,—  
 O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power

44 So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust  
 The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.

O Hamlet! what a falling-off was there;  
 From me, whose love was of that dignity

48 That it went hand in hand even with the vow  
 I made to her in marriage; and to decline

Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor  
 To those of mine!

52 But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,  
 Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,  
 So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,  
 Will sate itself in a celestial bed,

56 And prey on garbage.

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

60 Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,  
 With juice of cursed hebona in a vial,  
 And in the porches of mine ears did pour  
 The leperous distilment; whose effect

64 Holds such an enmity with blood of man  
 That swift as quicksilver it courses through  
 The natural gates and alleys of the body,  
 And with a sudden vigour it doth posset

68 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,  
 The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine,  
 And a most instant tetter bark'd about,  
 Most Lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,  
 All my smooth body.

72 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand,  
 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd;  
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,  
 Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd,

76 No reckoning made, but sent to my account  
 With all my imperfections on my head:  
 O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!

80 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;  
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
 A couch for luxury and damned incest.

84 But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,  
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
 Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven,  
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,  
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!

88 The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,  
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire;  
 Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.

*[Exit.]*  
*Ham.* O all you host of heaven! O earth!

92 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!

96 Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat  
 In this distracted globe. Remember thee!

Yea, from the table of my memory  
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,  
 That youth and observation copied there;

100 And thy commandment all alone shall live  
 Within the book and volume of my brain,  
 Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!

104 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;

108 At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark:

*[Writing.]*



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

*Hor. [Within.]* My lord! my lord!

*Mar. [Within.]* Lord Hamlet!

*Hor. [Within.]* Heaven secure him!

*Mar. [Within.]* So be it!

*Hor. [Within.]* Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!

*Ham.* Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.

*Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.*

*Mar.* How is't, my noble lord?

*Hor.* What news, my lord? 117

*Ham.* O! wonderful.

*Hor.* Good my lord, tell it.

*Ham.* No; you will reveal it.

*Hor.* Not I, my lord, by heaven!

*Mar.* Nor I, my lord. 120

*Ham.* How say you, then; would heart of  
man once think it?  
But you'll be secret?

*Mar. } Ay, by heaven, my lord.*

*Hor. }  
Ham.* There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all  
Denmark,

But he's an arrant knave. 124

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

*Ham.* Why, right; you are i' the right;  
And so, without more circumstance at all,  
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part; 128  
You, as your business and desire shall point  
you,—

For every man hath business and desire,  
Such as it is,—and, for mine own poor part,  
Look you, I'll go pray. 132

*Hor.* These are but wild and whirling words,  
my lord.

*Ham.* I am sorry they offend you, heartily;  
Yes, faith, heartily.

*Hor.* There's no offence, my lord.

*Ham.* Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is,  
Horatio, 136

And much offence, too. Touching this vision  
here,

It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you;  
For your desire to know what is between us,  
O'ermaster't as you may. And now, good  
friends, 140

As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,

Give me one poor request.

*Hor.* What is't, my lord? we will.

*Ham.* Never make known what you have  
seen to-night. 144

*Hor. } My lord, we will not.*

*Ham. } Nay, but swear't.*

*Hor. } In faith,*

My lord, not I.

*Mar. } Nor I, my lord, in faith.*

*Ham.* Upon my sword.

*Mar.* We have sworn, my lord, already.

*Ham.* Indeed, upon my sword, indeed. 148

*Ghost. [Beneath.]* Swear.

*Ham.* Ah, ha, boy! sayst thou so? art thou  
there, true-penny?

Come on,—you hear this fellow in the cellar-  
age,—

Consent to swear.

*Hor.* Propose the oath, my lord. 152

*Ham.* Never to speak of this that you have  
seen,

Swear by my sword.

*Ghost. [Beneath.]* Swear.

*Ham.* Hic et ubique? then we'll shift our  
ground. 156

Come hither, gentlemen,  
And lay your hands again upon my sword:  
Never to speak of this that you have heard,

Swear by my sword. 160

*Ghost. [Beneath.]* Swear.

*Ham.* Well said, old mole! canst work i' the  
earth so fast?

A worthy pioner! once more remove, good  
friends.

*Hor.* O day and night, but this is wondrous  
strange! 164

*Ham.* 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; 168

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,

How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,

As I perchance hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic disposition on, 172

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

As, 'Well, well, we know', or, 'We could, an if

we would'; 176

Or, 'If we list to speak', or, 'There be, an if they

might';

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note

That you know aught of me: this not to do,

So grace and mercy at your most need help you,

Swear. 180

*Ghost. [Beneath.]* Swear. [They swear.]

*Ham.* Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! So, gentle-

men,

With all my love I do commend me to you:

And what so poor a man as Hamlet is 184

May do, to express his love and friending to you,

God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in to-

gether;

And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.

The time is out of joint; O cursed spite, 188

That ever I was born to set it right!

Nay, come, let's go together. [Exeunt.]

## ACT II

SCENE I.—A Room in POLONIUS' House.

*Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO.*

*Pol.* Give him this money and these notes,  
Reynaldo.

*Rey.* I will, my lord.

*Pol.* You shall do marvellous wisely, good  
Reynaldo,

Before you visit him, to make inquiry

Of his behaviour.

*Rey.* My lord, I did intend it.

*Pol.* Marry, well said, very well said. Look  
you, sir,

Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris;  
And how, and who, what means, and where they  
keep, 8

What company, at what expense; and finding  
By this encompassment and drift of question

That they do know my son, come you more  
nearer

Than your particular demands will touch it: 12  
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of  
him;

As thus, 'I know his father, and his friends,  
And, in part, him'; do you mark this, Reynaldo?

*Rey.* Ay, very well, my lord. 16

*Pol.* 'And, in part, him; but', you may say,  
'not well:

But if't be he I mean, he's very wild,  
Addicted so and so'; and there put on him

What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank  
As may dishonour him; take heed of that; 21

But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips  
As are companions noted and most known  
To youth and liberty.

*Rey.* As gaming, my lord? 24

*Pol.* Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quar-  
relling,

Drabbing; you may go so far.

*Rey.* My lord, that would dishonour him.

*Pol.* Faith, no; as you may season it in the  
charge. 28

You must not put another scandal on him,  
That he is open to incontinency;

That's not my meaning; but breathe his faults  
so quaintly

That they may seem the taints of liberty, 32  
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,  
A savageness in unclaimed blood,

Of general assault.

*Rey.* But, my good lord,—  
*Pol.* Wherefore should you do this?

*Rey.* Ay, my lord, 36  
I would know that.

*Pol.* Marry, sir, here's my drift;  
And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant:

You laying these slight sullies on my son,  
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working, 40

Mark you,  
Your party in converse, him you would sound,  
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes

The youth you breathe of guilty, be assur'd, 44  
He closes with you in this consequence;  
'Good sir', or so; or 'friend', or 'gentleman',

According to the phrase or the addition  
Of man and country.

*Rey.* Very good, my lord. 48  
*Pol.* And then, sir, does he this,—he does,—  
what was I about to say? By the mass I was

about to say something: where did I leave?

*Rey.* At 'closes in the consequence.' 52  
At 'friend or so', and 'gentleman'.

*Pol.* At 'closes in the consequence', ay, marry;  
He closes with you thus: 'I know the gentleman;

4 I saw him yesterday, or t' other day, 56  
Or then, or then; with such, or such; and, as  
you say,

There was a 'gaming; there o'ertook in's rouse;  
There falling out at tennis'; or perchance,

'I saw him enter such a house of sale', 60  
*Videlicet*, a brothel, or so forth.

See you now;  
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth;

And thus do we of wisdom and of reach, 64  
With windlasses, and with assays of bias,  
By indirections find directions out:

So by my former lecture and advice  
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

*Rey.* My lord, I have.

*Pol.* God be wi' you; fare you well. 69  
*Rey.* Good my lord!

*Pol.* Observe his inclination in yourself. 72  
*Rey.* I shall, my lord.

*Pol.* And let him ply his music.

*Rey.* Well, my lord.  
*Pol.* Farewell! [Exit REYNALDO.]

*Enter OPHELIA.*

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

*Oph.* Alas! my lord, I have been so affrighted.

*Pol.* With what, in the name of God? 76

*Oph.* My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,  
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd;

No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,  
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle; 80

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. 84

*Pol.* Mad for thy love?

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

*Pol.* What said he?

*Oph.* He took me by the wrist and held me  
hard,

Then goes he to the length of all his arm, 88  
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
He falls to such perusal of my face

As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;  
At last, a little shaking of mine arm, 92

And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound

That it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
And end his being. That done, he lets me go, 96

And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,  
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;

For out o' doors he went without their help,  
And to the last bended their light on me. 100

*Pol.* Come, go with me; I will go seek the  
king.

This is the very ecstasy of love,  
Whose violent property fordoes itself

And leads the will to desperate undertakings  
As oft as any passion under heaven 105  
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.

What! have you given him any hard words of  
late?  
*Oph.* No, my good lord: but, as you did com-  
mand, 108  
I did repel his letters and denied



His access to me.

*Pol.* That hath made him mad. I am sorry that with better heed and judgment I had not quoted him; I fear'd he did but trifle, And meant to wrack thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!

By heaven, it is as proper to our age To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions As it is common for the younger sort To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king: This must be known; which, being kept close, might move More grief to hide than hate to utter love. Come.

SCENE II.—A Room in the Castle.

Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and Attendants.

*King.* Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern! Moreover that we much did long to see you, The need we have to use you did provoke Our hasty sending. Something have you heard Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it, Since nor the 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 the understanding of himself, I cannot dream of: I entreat you both, That, being of so young days brought up with him, And since so neighbour'd to his youth and humour,

That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court Some little time; so by your companies To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather, So much as from occasion you may glean, That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

*Queen.* Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you;

And sure I am two men there are not living To whom he more adheres. If it will please you To show us so much gentry and good will As to expend your time with us awhile, For the supply and profit of our hope, Your visitation shall receive such thanks As fits a king's remembrance.

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

*Guil.* 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;

And I beseech you instantly to visit My too much changed son. Go, some of you, And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

*Guil.* Heavens make our presence, and our practices

Pleasant and helpful to him!

*Queen.* Ay, amen!  
[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and some Attendants.*]

Enter POLONIUS.

*Pol.* The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord, Are joyfully return'd.

*King.* Thou still hast been the father of good news.

*Pol.* Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,

I hold my duty, as I hold my soul, Both to my God and to my gracious king; And I do think—or else this brain of mine Hunts not the trail of policy so sure As it hath us'd to do—that I have found The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

*King.* O! speak of that; that do I long to hear.  
*Pol.* Give first admittance to the ambassadors;

My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.  
*King.* Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

[*Exit POLONIUS.*]  
He tells me, my sweet queen, that he hath found The head and source of all your son's distemper.

*Queen.* I doubt it is no other but the main; His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.  
*King.* Well, we shall sift him.

Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

Welcome, my good friends! Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

*Volt.* Most fair return of greetings, and desires.

Upon our first, he sent out to suppress His nephew's levies, which to him appear'd To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;

But, better look'd into, he truly found It was against your highness: whereat griev'd,

That so his sickness, age, and impotence Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys,

Receives rebuke from Norway, and, in fine, Makes vow before his uncle never more

To give the assay of arms against your majesty. Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,

Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee, And his commission to employ those soldiers,

So levied as before, against the Polack; With an entreaty, herein further shown,

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

*King.* It likes us well; and at our more consider'd time we'll read, Answer, and think upon this business:

Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour.

Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together:

Most welcome home.

[*Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.*]  
*Pol.* This business is well ended.

My liege, and madam, to expostulate What majesty should be, what duty is, Why day is day, night night, and time is time, Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time. Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit, And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,

I will be brief. Your noble son is mad: Mad call I it; for, to define true madness, What is't but to be nothing else but mad? But let that go.

*Queen.* More matter, with less art.  
*Pol.* Madam, I swear I use no art at all.

That he is mad, 'tis true; 'tis true 'tis pity; And pity 'tis 'tis true: a foolish figure;

But farewell it, for I will use no art. Mad let us grant him, then; and now remains That we find out the cause of this effect,

Or rather say, the cause of this defect, For this effect defective comes by cause;

Thus it remains, and the remainder thus. Perpend.

I have a daughter, have while she is mine; Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,

Hath given me this: now, gather, and surmise. To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia.—

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is a vile phrase; but you shall hear. Thus:

In her excellent white bosom, these, &c.—  
*Queen.* Came this from Hamlet to her?

*Pol.* Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.

Doubt thou the stars are fire;  
Doubt that the sun doth move;  
Doubt truth to be a liar;  
But never doubt I love.

O dear Ophelia! I am ill at these numbers: I have not art to reckon my groans; but that I love thee best, O most best! believe it. Adieu.

Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him,

Hamlet.

This in obedience hath my daughter shown me; And more above, hath his solicitings,

As they fell out by time, by means, and place, All given to mine ear.

*King.* But how hath she Receiv'd his love?

*Pol.* What do you think of me?  
*King.* As of a man faithful and honourable.

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

When I had seen this hot love on the wing,—As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that,

Before my daughter told me,—what might you, Or my dear majesty, your queen here, think,

If I had play'd the desk or table-book, Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,

Or look'd upon this love with idle sight; What might you think? No, I went round to work,

And my young mistress thus I did bespeak: I

'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star; This must not be': and then I precepts gave her, That she should lock herself from his resort, Admit no messengers, receive no tokens. Which done, she took the fruits of my advice; And he, repulsed,—a short tale to make,—Fell into a sadness, then into a fast, Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness, Thence to a lightness; and by this declension Into the madness wherein now he raves, And all we wail for.

*King.* Do you think 'tis this?  
*Queen.* It may be, very likely.

*Pol.* Hath there been such a time,—I'd fain know that,—

That I have positively said, 'Tis so', When it prov'd otherwise?

*King.* Not that I know.  
*Pol.* Take this from this, if this be otherwise:

[*Pointing to his head and shoulder.*]  
If circumstances lead me, I will find Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed Within the centre.

*King.* How may we try it further?  
*Pol.* You know sometimes he walks four hours together

Here in the lobby.  
*Queen.* So he does indeed.

*Pol.* At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him;

Be you and I behind an arras then; Mark the encounter; if he love her not, And be not from his reason fallen thereon, Let me be no assistant for a state,

But keep a farm, and carters. We will try it.  
*King.* But look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

*Pol.* Away! I do beseech you, both away. I'll board him presently.

[*Exeunt KING, QUEEN, and Attendants.*]  
Enter HAMLET, reading.

O! give me leave. How does my good Lord Hamlet?

*Ham.* Well, God a-mercy.  
*Pol.* Do you know me, my lord?

*Ham.* Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.  
*Pol.* Not I, my lord.

*Ham.* Then I would you were so honest a man.

*Pol.* Honest, my lord!  
*Ham.* Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

*Pol.* That's very true, my lord.  
*Ham.* For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion,—Have you a daughter?

*Pol.* I have, my lord.  
*Ham.* Let her not walk i' the sun; conception is a blessing; but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to't.

*Pol.* [Aside.] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter: yet he knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger: he is far