

gone, far gone: and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again. What do you read, my lord?

Ham. Words, words, words. 196

Pol. What is the matter, my lord?

Ham. Between who?

Pol. I mean the matter that you read, my lord. 200

Ham. Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potentially believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for you yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward. 210

Pol. [Aside.] Though this be madness, yet there is method in't. Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave? 214

Pol. Indeed, that is out o' the air. [Aside.] How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter. My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you. 222

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life.

Pol. Fare you well, my lord. [Going.]

Ham. These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Pol. You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is. 228

Ros. [To POLONIUS.] God save you, sir!

[Exit POLONIUS.]

Guil. Mine honoured lord!

Ros. My most dear lord!

Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both? 234

Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guil. Happy in that we are not over happy; On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe? 238

Ros. Neither, my lord.

Ham. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours? 241

Guil. Faith, her privates we.

Ham. In the secret parts of Fortune? O! most true; she is a strumpet. What news? 244

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

Ham. Then is doomsday near; but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Guil. Prison, my lord!

Ham. Denmark's a prison. 252

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst. 257

Ros. We think not so, my lord.

Ham. 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. 261

Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Ham. 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. 269

Guil. Which dreams, indeed, are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream. 273

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Ros. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow. 277

Ham. Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason. 285

Ros. } We'll wait upon you.

Guil. }
Ham. No such matter; I will not sort you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

Ros. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion. 285

Ham. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak. 292

Guil. What should we say, my lord?

Ham. Why anything, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know the good king and queen have sent for you. 297

Ros. To what end, my lord?

Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for or no! 305

Ros. [Aside to GUILDENSTERN.] What say you?

Ham. [Aside.] Nay, then, I have an eye of you. If you love me, hold not off. 309

Guil. My lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen mould no feather. I have of late,—but wherefore I know not,—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firma-

ment, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form, in 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 woman neither, though, by your smiling, you seem to say so. 331

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

Ham. Why did you laugh then, when I said, 'man delights not me'? 335

Ros. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you: we coted them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service. 340

Ham. He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't. What players are they? 349

Ros. Even those you were wont to take delight in, the tragedians of the city.

Ham. How chances it they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways. 354

Ros. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

Ham. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?

Ros. No, indeed they are not. 359

Ham. How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace; but there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for't: these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages,—so they call them,—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and dare scarce come thither. 368

Ham. What! are they children? who maintain 'em? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players,—as it is most like, if their means are no better,—their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession? 376

Ros. Faith, there has been much to-do on both sides: and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy: there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question. 381

Ham. Is it possible?

Guil. O! there has been much throwing about of brains. 384

Ham. Do the boys carry it away?

Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too. 387

Ham. It is not very strange; for my uncle is King of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out. [Flourish of trumpets within.]

Guil. There are the players. 395

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then; the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players—which, I tell you, must show fairly outward—should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome; but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived. 404

Guil. In what, my dear lord?

Ham. I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. Well be with you, gentlemen! 408

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern; and you too; at each ear a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts. 411

Ros. Happily he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child.

Ham. I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. You say right, sir; o' Monday morning; 'twas so indeed. 416

Pol. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

Pol. The actors are come hither, my lord. 421

Ham. Buzz, buzz!

Pol. Upon my honour,—

Ham. Then came each actor on his ass,—

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene indivisible, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

Ham. O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou! 432

Pol. What a treasure had he, my lord?

Ham. Why

One fair daughter and no more,
The which he loved passing well. 436

Pol. [Aside.] Still on my daughter.

Ham. Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

Pol. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well. 440

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Pol. What follows, then, my lord?

Ham. Why,

As by lot, God wot. 444

And then, you know,

It came to pass, as most like it was.—

The first row of the pious chanson will show you more; for look where my abridgment comes.

Enter four or five Players.

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad to see thee well: welcome, good friends. O, my old friend! Thy face is valanced since I saw thee last: comest thou to beard me in Denmark? What! my young lady and mistress! By'r lady, your ladyship is nearer heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at anything we see: we'll have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

First Play. What speech, my good lord?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general: but it was—as I received it, and others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line: let me see, let me see:—

The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,—
'tis not so, it begins with Pyrrhus:—
The rugged Pyrrhus, he, whose sable arm,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse, 485
Hath now this dread and black complexion
smear'd

With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
Now is he total gules; horribly trick'd 488
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and damned light
To their vile murders: roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks.

So proceed you. 496
Pol. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken; with good accent and good discretion.

First Play. Anon, he finds him
Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls, 500
Repugnant to command. Unequal match'd,
Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerv'd 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 508
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,

And like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing. 512

But, as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
The bold winds speechless and the orb below
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder 516
Doth rend the region; so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work:
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour, forg'd for proof eterne, 520
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.

Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power; 524
Break all the spokes and fellys from her wheel,
And bow the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends!

Pol. This is too long. 528
Ham. It shall to the barber's, with your beard. Prithee, say on: he's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps. Say on; come to Hecuba. 532

First Play. But who, O! who had seen the mobled queen—

Ham. 'The mobled queen'?—

Pol. That's good; 'mobled queen' is good.

First Play. Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames

With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head
Where late the diadem stood; and, for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up; 540
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd:

But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs, 545
The instant burst of clamour that she made—
Unless things mortal move them not at all—
Would have made milch the burning eyes of
heaven, 548

And passion in the gods.

Pol. Look! wh'er he has not turned his colour and has tears in's eyes. Prithee, no more. 551

Ham. 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest soon. Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time: after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

Pol. My lord, I will use them according to their desert. 560

Ham. God's bodikins, man, much better; use every man after his desert, and who should scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in. 565

Pol. Come, sirs.

Ham. Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow. [Exit POLONIUS, with all the Players but the First.] Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the Murder of Gonzago? 570

First Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. We'll ha't to-morrow 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?

First Play. Ay, my lord. 576

Ham. Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [Exit First Player.] [To ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.] My good friends, I'll leave you till night; you are welcome to Elsinore. 581

Ros. Good my lord!

[Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Ham. Ay, so, God bewi' ye! Now I am alone. O! what a rogue and peasant slave am I! 584 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 587 That from her working all his visage wann'd, Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect, A broken voice, and his whole function suiting With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing! For Hecuba! 592

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, 596

And cleave the general ear with horrid speech, Make mad the guilty and appal the free, Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed The very faculties of eyes and ears. 600

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, 604 Upon whose property and most dear life A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward? Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across? Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face? 608 Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat, As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?

Ha! Swounds, I should take it, for it cannot be 612 But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall To make oppression bitter, or ere this I should have fatted all the region kites With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain! Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain! 617

O! vengeance! Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave That I, the son of a dear father murder'd, 620 Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell, Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words, And fall a-cursing, like a very drab, A scullion! 624

Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain! I have heard,

That guilty creatures sitting at a play Have by the very cunning of the scene Been struck so to the soul that presently 628 They have proclaim'd 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 632 Before mine uncle; I'll observe his looks; I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench I know my course. The spirit that I have seen May be the devil; and the devil hath power 636 To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps Out of my weakness and my melancholy— As he is very potent with such spirits— Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds 640 More relative than this: the play's the thing Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. [Exit.]

ACT III

SCENE I.—A Room in the Castle.

Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. And can you, by no drift of circumstance,

Get from him why he puts on this confusion, Grating so harshly all his days of quiet With turbulent and dangerous lunacy? 4

Ros. He does confess he feels himself distracted;

But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guil. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,

But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof, 8

When we would bring him on to some confession Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well?

Ros. Most like a gentleman.

Guil. But with much forcing of his disposition. 12

Ros. Niggard of question, but of our demands

Most free in his reply.

Queen. Did you assay him To any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out that certain players 16

We o'er-raught on the way; of these we told him,

And there did seem in him a kind of joy To hear of it: they are about the court,

And, as I think, they have already order 20 This night to play before him.

Pol. 'Tis most true; And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties To hear and see the matter.

King. With all my heart; and it doth much content me 24

To hear him so inclin'd.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge, And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Ros. We shall, my lord.

[Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too; For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither, 29 That he, as 'twere by accident, may here Affront Ophelia.

Her father and myself, lawful espials, 32 Will so bestow ourselves, that, seeing, unseen,

We may of their encounter frankly judge,
And gather by him, as he is behav'd,
If 't be the affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

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; so shall I hope your
virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honours.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may.

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so
please you,
We will bestow ourselves. [To OPHELIA.] Read
on this book;

That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,
'Tis too much prov'd, that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

King. [Aside.] O! 'tis too true;
How smart a lash that speech doth give my
conscience!

The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word:
O heavy burden!

Pol. I hear him coming; let's withdraw, my
lord.

[Exit KING and POLONIUS.]

Enter HAMLET.
Ham. To be, or not to be: that is the ques-
tion:

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 heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. 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,

The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's con-
tumely,

The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the 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 undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action. Soft you now! 88
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

Oph. Good my lord,
How does your honour for this many a day?
Ham. I humbly thank you; well, well, well.
Oph. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

Ham. No, not I;
I never gave you aught.

Oph. My honour'd lord, you know right well
you did;

And, with them, words of so sweet breath
compos'd

As made the things more rich: their perfume
lost,

Take these again; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

Ham. Ha, ha! are you honest?
Oph. My lord!

Ham. Are you fair?
Oph. What means your lordship?

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

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better com-
merce than with honesty?

Ham. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will
sooner transform honesty from what it is to a
bawd than the force of honesty can translate
beauty into his likeness: this was sometime a
paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did
love thee once.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe
so.

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

Oph. I was the more deceived.

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

Oph. At home, my lord.

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

Oph. O! help him, you sweet heavens! 140
Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this
plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice,
as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny.

Get thee to a nunnery, go; farewell. 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.

Oph. O heavenly powers, restore him!
Ham. I have heard of your paintings too,
well enough; God hath given you one face, and
you make yourselves another: you jig, you
amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's crea-
tures, 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 marriages; those
that are married already, all but one, shall live;
the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

Oph. O! what a noble mind is here o'er-
thrown:
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue,
sword;

The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched, 164
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown
youth

Blasted with ecstasy: O! woe is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

[Re-enter KING and POLONIUS.]

King. Love! his affections do not that way
tend;

Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a
little,

Was not like madness. There's something in
his soul

O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;
And, I do doubt, the hatch and the disclose

Will be some danger; which for to prevent, 176
I have in quick determination

Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England,
For the demand of our neglected tribute:

Haply the seas and countries different 180
With variable objects shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart,

Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

Pol. It shall do well: but yet do I believe 185
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia!

You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;
We heard it all. My lord, do as you please; 189

But, if you hold it fit, after the play,
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him

To show his griefs: let her be round with him; 192
And I'll be plac'd, so please you, in the ear

Of all their conference. If she find him not,
To England send him, or confine him where

Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so: 196
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.—A Hall in the Castle.

Enter HAMLET and certain Players.

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pro-
nounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but
if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I
had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. 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
passion, you must acquire and beget a temper-
ance, that may give it smoothness. O! it offends
me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-
pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very
rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who
for the most part are capable of nothing but
inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would
have such a fellow whipped for o'er-doing
Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you,
avoid it.

First Play. I warrant your honour.

Ham. 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 overdone 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
make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the
judicious grieve; the censure of which one must
in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of
others. O! there be players that I have seen
play, and heard others praise, and that highly,
not to speak it profanely, that, neither having
the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian,
pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed
that I have thought some of nature's journey-
men had made men and not made them well,
they imitated humanity so abominably.

First Play. I hope we have reformed that
indifferently with us.

Ham. O! reform it altogether. 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
mean time some necessary question of the play
be then to be considered; that's villanous, and
shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that
uses it. Go, make you ready. [Exit Players.]

*Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and
GUILDENSTERN.*

How now, my lord! will the king hear this piece
of work?

Pol. And the queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the players make haste.

[Exit POLONIUS.]
Will you two help to hasten them?

Ros. We will, my lord. 56
Guil. [Exit ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Ham. What, ho! Horatio!

Enter HORATIO.

Hor. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal. 60

Hor. O! my dear lord,—

Ham. Nay, do not think I flatter;
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor
be flatter'd? 64

No; let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou
hear?

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish, her election 69
Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards 72
Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and bless'd are
those

Whose blood and judgment are so well com-
mingled

That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that
man 76

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. 80

There is a play to-night 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 84
Observe mine uncle; if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul 88

As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.

Hor. Well, my lord: 92
If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Ham. They are coming to the play; I must
be idle:
Get you a place. 96

Danish march. A Flourish. Enter KING, QUEEN,
POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDEN-
STERN, and Others.

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Ham. Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's
dish: I eat the air, promise-crammed; you can-
not feed capons so. 100

King. I have nothing with this answer, Ham-
let; these words are not mine.

Ham. No, nor mine now. [To POLONIUS.]
My lord, you played once i' the university, you
say? 105

Pol. That did I, my lord, and was accounted
a good actor.

Ham. And what did you enact? 108

Pol. I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed
i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me.

Ham. It was a brute part of him to kill so
capital a calf there. Be the players ready? 112

Ros. Ay, my lord; they stay upon your
patience.

Queen. Come hither, my good Hamlet, sit by
me. 116

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

Pol. [To the KING.] O ho! do you mark that?

Ham. Lady, shall I lie in your lap? 120
[Lying down at OPHELIA's feet.]

Oph. No, my lord.

Ham. I mean, my head upon your lap?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Do you think I meant country matters?

Oph. I think nothing, my lord. 125

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

Oph. What is, my lord? 128

Ham. Nothing.

Oph. You are merry, my lord.

Ham. Who, I?

Oph. Ay, my lord. 132

Ham. 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. 136

Oph. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham. So long? Nay, then, let the devil wear
black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens!
die two months ago, and not forgotten yet?
Then there's hope a great man's memory may
outlive his life half a year; but, by 'r lady, he
must build churches then, or else shall he suffer
not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose
epitaph is, 'For, O! for, O! the hobby-horse is
forgot'. 146

Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters.

Enter a King and a Queen, very lovingly; the
Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels,
and makes show of protestation unto him.

He takes her up, and declines his head upon
her neck; lays him down upon a bank of
flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him.

Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown,
kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears,
and exit. The Queen returns, finds the King
dead, and makes passionate action. The

Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes
in again, seeming to lament with her. The
dead body is carried away. The Poisoner
wooces the Queen with gifts; she seems loath
and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts
his love. [Exeunt.]

Oph. What means this, my lord?

Ham. Marry, this is miching mallecho; it
means mischief. 149

Oph. Belike this show imports the argument
of the play.

Enter Prologue.

Ham. We shall know by this fellow: the
players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all. 153

Oph. Will he tell us what this show meant?

Ham. Ay, or any show that you'll show
him; be not you ashamed to show, he'll not
shame to tell you what it means. 157

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

Pro. For us and for our tragedy, 160
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.

Ham. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a
ring? 164

Oph. 'Tis brief, my lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter two Players, King and Queen.

P. King. Full thirty times hath Phæbus' cart
gone round 167

Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground,
And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,

Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands. 172

P. Queen. So many journeys may the sun and
moon

Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But, woe is me! you are so sick of late, 175

So far from cheer and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must;

For women's fear and love holds quantity,
In neither aught, or in extremity. 180

Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;
And as my love is siz'd, my fear is so.

Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows
there. 184

P. King. Faith, I must leave thee, love, and
shortly too;

My operant powers their functions leave to do:
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, below'd; and haply one as kind 188

For husband shalt thou—

P. Queen. O! confound the rest;
Such love must needs be treason in my breast:

In second husband let me be accurst;
None wed the second but who kill'd the first. 192

Ham. [Aside.] Wormwood, wormwood.

P. Queen. The instances that second marriage
move,

Are base respects of thrift, but none of love;
A second time I kill my husband dead, 196

When second husband kisses me in bed.

P. King. I do believe you think what now you
speak;

But what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory, 200

Of violent birth, but poor validity;
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree,
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.

Most necessary 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt;

What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.

The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy; 208

ff

Where joy most revels grief doth most lament,
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.

This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange,
That even our love should with our fortunes
change; 213

For 'tis a question left us yet to prove
Whe'r love lead fortune or else fortune love.

The great man down, you mark his favourite
flies; 216

The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend,

For who not needs shall never lack a friend;
And who in want a hollow friend doth try 220

Directly seasons him his enemy.

But, orderly to end where I begun,
Our wills and fates do so contrary run

That our devices still are overthrown, 224
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:

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

P. Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor
heaven light! 228

Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
To desperation turn my trust and hope!

An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy 232

Meet what I would have well, and it destroy!
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,

If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

Ham. If she should break it now! 236

P. King. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me
here awhile;

My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. [Sleeps.]

P. Queen. Sleep rock thy brain;
And never come mischance between us twain! [Exit.]

Ham. Madam, how like you this play? 241

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, me-
thinks.

Ham. O! but she'll keep her word. 244

King. Have you heard the argument? Is
there no offence in't?

Ham. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest;
no offence i' the world. 248

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropi-
cally. This play is the image of a murder

done in Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name;
his wife, Baptista. You shall see anon; 'tis a
knavish piece of work; but what of that? your
majesty and we that have free souls, it touches
us not: let the galled jade wince, our withers are
unwrung. 257

Enter Player as Lucianus.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

Oph. You are a good chorus, my lord.

Ham. I could interpret between you and
your love, if I could see the puppets dallying. 261

Oph. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

Ham. It would cost you a groaning to take
off my edge. 264

Oph. Still better, and worse.

Ham. So you must take your husbands.
Begin, murderer; pox, leave thy damnable
ff

faces, and begin. Come; the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

Luc. 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, 274
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[Pours the poison into the Sleeper's ears.]
Ham. He poisons him i' the garden for's estate. His name's Gonzago; the story is extant, and writ in very choice Italian. You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife. 280

Oph. The king rises.

Ham. What! frightened with false fire?

Queen. How fares my lord?

Pol. Give o'er the play. 284

King. Give me some light: away!

All. Lights, lights, lights!

[Exeunt all except HAMLET and HORATIO.]

Ham. Why, let the stricken deer go weep, The hart ungalled play; For some must watch, while some must sleep: 288

So runs the world away.

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers, if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me, with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

Hor. Half a share.

Ham. A whole one, I. 296

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,

This realm dismantled was

Of Jove himself; and now reigns here

A very, very—pajock. 300

Hor. You might have rimed.

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

Hor. Very well, my lord. 304

Ham. Upon the talk of the poisoning?

Hor. I did very well note him.

Ham. Ah, ha! Come, some music! come, the recorders! 308

For if the king like not the comedy, Why then, belike he likes it not, perdy. Come, some music!

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Guil. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you. 313

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

Guil. The king, sir,—

Ham. Ay, sir, what of him? 316

Guil. Is in his retirement marvellous discontented.

Ham. With drink, sir?

Guil. No, my lord, rather with choler. 320

Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler. 324

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

Ham. I am tame, sir; pronounce. 328

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

Ham. You are welcome. 331

Guil. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment; if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business. 337

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What, my lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased; but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: my mother, you say,— 344

Ros. Then, thus she says: your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Ham. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart. 349

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

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

Ros. My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers. 356

Ros. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do surely bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend. 360

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Ros. How can that be when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark? 364

Ham. Ay, sir, but 'While the grass grows',—the proverb is something musty.

Enter Players, with recorders.

O! the recorders: let me see one. To withdraw with you: why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

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

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe? 373

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me, I cannot. 376

Ham. I do beseech you.

Guil. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying; govern these ventages with your finger and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill. 385

Ham. 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, ex-

cellent 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? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

 396

Enter POLONIUS.

God bless you, sir!

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

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Ham. Methinks it is like a weasel.

Pol. It is backed like a weasel. 404

Ham. Or like a whale?

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then I will come to my mother by and by. [Aside.] They fool me to the top of my bent. [Aloud.] I will come by and by. 409

Pol. I will say so. [Exit.

Ham. By and by is easily said. Leave me, friends. [Exeunt all but HAMLET.

'Tis now the very witching time of night, 413
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 416
Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my

mother.
O heart! lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom;

Let me be cruel, not unnatural; 420
I will speak daggers to her, but use none;

My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites;
How in my words soever she be shent,

To give them seals never, my soul, consent! 424
[Exit.

SCENE III.—A Room in the Castle.

Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. I like him not, nor stands it safe with us To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you;

I your commission will forthwith dispatch, And he to England shall along with you. 4

The terms of our estate may not endure Hazard so dangerous as doth hourly grow

Out of his lunacies.

Guil. We will ourselves provide. Most holy and religious fear it is 8

To keep those many many bodies safe That live and feed upon your majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound With all the strength and armour of the mind

To keep itself from nyanance; but much more 13 That spirit upon whose weal depend and rest

The lives of many. The cease of majesty Dies not alone, but, like a gulf doth draw 16

What's near it with it; it is a massy wheel, Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,

To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which, when it

falls, 20 Each small annexment, petty consequence,

Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone

Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage; 24

For we will fetters put upon this fear,

Which now goes too free-footed.

Ros. }

Guil. }

We will haste us.

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet:

Behind the arras I'll convey myself 28

To hear the process; I'll warrant she'll tax him home;

And, as you said, and wisely was it said,

'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,

Since nature makes them partial, should o'er- 32

hear
The speech, of vantage. 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.

[Exit POLONIUS.]

O! my offence is rank, it smells to heaven; 36

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; 40

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, 44

Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens

To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves

mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?

And what's in prayer but this two-fold force, 48

To be forestalled, ere we come to fall,

Or pardon'd, 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'? 52

That cannot be; since I am still possess'd

Of those effects for which I did the murder,

My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.

May one be pardon'd and retain the offence? 56

In the corrupted currents of this world

Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,

And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself

Buys out the law; but 'tis not so above; 60

There is no shuffling, there the action lies

In his true nature, and we ourselves compell'd

Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults

To give in evidence. What then? what rests?

Try what repentance can: what can it not? 65

Yet what can it, when one can not repent?

O wretched state! O bosom black as death!

O limed soul, that struggling to be free 68

Art more engaged! Help, angels! make assay;

Bow, stubborn knees; and heart with strings of

steel

Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe.

All may be well. [Retires and kneels.]