

With the brave beast; so far he topp'd my thought,  
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,  
Come short of what he did.

*Laer.* A Norman was't?  
*King.* A Norman.

*Laer.* Upon my life, Lamord.

*King.* The very same.

*Laer.* I know him well; he is the brooch indeed

And gem of all the nation.

*King.* He made confession of you,

And gave you such a masterly report

For art and exercise in your defence,

And for your rapier most especially,

That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed

If one could match you; the scrimers of their

nation,

He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,

If you oppos'd them. Sir, this report of his

Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy

That he could nothing do but wish and beg

Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.

Now, out of this,—

*Laer.* What out of this, my lord?

*King.* Laertes, was your father dear to you?

Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,

A face without a heart?

*Laer.* Why ask you this?

*King.* Not that I think you did not love your

father,

But that I know love is begun by time,

And that I see, in passages of proof,

Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.

There lives within the very flame of love

A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it,

And nothing is at a like goodness still,

For goodness, growing to a plurisy,

Dies in his own too-much. That we would do,

We should do when we would, for this 'would'

changes,

And hath abatements and delays as many

As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;

And then this 'should' is like a spendthrift sigh,

That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o' the

ulcer;

Hamlet comes back; what would you undertake

To show yourself your father's son in deed

More than in words?

*Laer.* To cut his throat i' the church.

*King.* No place, indeed, should murder sanc-

tuarize;

Revenge should have no bounds. But, good

Laertes,

Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.

Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home;

We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,

And set a double varnish on the fame

The Frenchman gave you, bring you, in fine,

together,

And wager on your heads: he, being remiss,

Most generous and free from all contriving,

Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease

Or with a little shuffling, you may choose

A sword unbated, and, in a pass of practice

Requite him for your father.

*Laer.*

I will do't;

And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.

I bought an unction of a mountebank,

So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,

Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,

Collected from all simples that have virtue

Under the moon, can save the thing from death

That is but scratch'd withal; I'll touch my point

With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,

It may be death.

*King.* Let's further think of this;

Weigh what convenience both of time and

means

May fit us to our shape. If this should fail,

And that our drift look through our bad per-

formance

'Twere better not assay'd; therefore this project

Should have a back or second, that might hold,

If this should blast in proof. Soft! let me see;

We'll make a solemn wager on your cunning:

I ha't:

When in your motion you are hot and dry,—

As make your bouts more violent to that end,—

And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepar'd

him

A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,

If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,

Our purpose may hold there. But stay! what

noise?

*Enter QUEEN.*

How now, sweet queen!

*Queen.* One woe doth tread upon another's

heel,

So fast they follow: your sister's drown'd,

Laertes.

*Laer.* Drown'd! O, where?

*Queen.* There is a willow grows aslant a

brook,

That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;

There with fantastic garlands did she come,

Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long

purples,

That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,

But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call

them:

There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds

Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke,

When down her weedy trophies and herself

Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread

wide,

And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up;

Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,

As one incapable of her own distress,

Or like a creature native and indu'd

Unto that element; but long it could not be

Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,

Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay

To muddy death.

*Laer.* Alas! then, she is drown'd?

*Queen.* Drown'd, drown'd.

*Laer.* Too much of water hast thou, poor

Ophelia,

And therefore I forbid my tears; but yet

It is our trick, nature her custom holds,

Let shame say what it will; when these are gone

The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord!

I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,

But that this folly douts it. *[Exit.]*

*King.* Let's follow, Gertrude.

How much I had to do to calm his rage!

Now fear I this will give it start again;

Therefore let's follow. *[Exeunt.]*

## ACT V

## SCENE I.—A Churchyard.

*Enter two Clowns, with spades and mattock.*

*First Clo.* Is she to be buried in Christian

burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

*Sec. Clo.* I tell thee she is; and therefore

make her grave straight: the crowner hath sat

on her, and finds it Christian burial.

*First Clo.* How can that be, unless she

drown'd herself in her own defence?

*Sec. Clo.* Why, 'tis found so.

*First Clo.* It must be *se offendendo*; it can-

not be else. For here lies the point: if I drown

myself wittingly it argues an act; and an act

hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to

perform: argal, she drown'd herself wittingly.

*Sec. Clo.* Nay, but hear you, Goodman delver—

*First Clo.* Give me leave. Here lies the

water; good: here stands the man; good: if the

man go to this water, and drown himself, it is,

will he, nill he, he goes; mark you that? but if

the water come to him, and drown him, he

drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty

of his own death shortens not his own life.

*Sec. Clo.* But is this law?

*First Clo.* Ay, marry, is't; crowner's quest

law.

*Sec. Clo.* Will you ha' the truth on't? If this

had not been a gentlewoman she should have

been buried out o' Christian burial.

*First Clo.* Why, there thou sayest; and the

more pity that great folk should have counte-

nance in this world to drown or hang them-

selves more than their even Christian. Come,

my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but

gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they

hold up Adam's profession.

*Sec. Clo.* Was he a gentleman?

*First Clo.* A' was the first that ever bore arms.

*Sec. Clo.* Why, he had none.

*First Clo.* What! art a heathen? How dost

thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture

says, Adam digg'd; could he dig without arms?

I'll put another question to thee; if thou an-

swerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

*Sec. Clo.* Go to.

*First Clo.* What is he that builds stronger

than either the mason, the shipwright, or the

carpenter?

*Sec. Clo.* The gallows-maker; for that frame

outlives a thousand tenants.

*First Clo.* I like thy wit well, in good faith;

the gallows does well, but how does it well? it

does well to those that do ill; now thou dost ill

to say the gallows is built stronger than the

church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee.

To't again; come.

*Sec. Clo.* Who builds stronger than a mason,

a shipwright, or a carpenter?

*First Clo.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

*Sec. Clo.* Marry, now I can tell.

*First Clo.* To't.

*Sec. Clo.* Mass, I cannot tell.

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO at a distance.*

*First Clo.* Cudgel thy brains no more about

it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with

beating; and, when you are asked this question

next, say, 'a grave-maker': the houses that he

makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to

Yaughan; fetch me a stoup of liquor.

*[Exit Second Clown.]*

*First Clown digs, and sings.*

In youth, when I did love, did love,

Methought it was very sweet,

To contract, O! the time, for-a my behave,

O! methought there was nothing meet.

*Ham.* Has this fellow no feeling of his busi-

ness, that he sings at grave-making?

*Hor.* Custom hath made it in him a property

of easiness.

*Ham.* 'Tis e'en so; the hand of little employ-

ment hath the daintier sense.

*First Clo.*

But age, with his stealing steps,

Hath claw'd me in his clutch,

And hath shipped me intil the land,

As if I had never been such.

*[Throws up a skull.]*

*Ham.* That skull had a tongue in it, and

could sing once; how the knave jowls it to the

ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did

the first murder! This might be the pate of a

politician, which this ass now o'er-offices, one

that would circumvent God, might it not?

*Hor.* It might, my lord.

*Ham.* Or of a courtier, which could say,

'Good morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou,

good lord?' This might be my Lord Such-a-

one, that praised my Lord Such-a-one's horse,

when he meant to beg it, might it not?

*Hor.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* Why, e'en so, and now my Lady

Worm's; chapless, and knocked about the maz-

zard with a sexton's spade. Here's fine revo-

lution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these

bones cost no more the breeding but to play at

loggats with 'em? mine ache to think on't.

*First Clo.*

A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,

For and a shrouding sheet;

O! a pit of clay for to be made

For such a guest is meet.

*[Throws up another skull.]*

*Ham.* There's another; why may not that be

the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities

now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his

tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now

to knock him about the sconce with a dirty

shovel, and will not tell him of his action of

battery? Hum! This fellow might be in 's time

a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his re-



cognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries; is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyance of his lands will hardly lie in this box, and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

*Hor.* Not a jot more, my lord.

*Ham.* Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

*Hor.* Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

*Ham.* They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sir?

*First Clo.* Mine, sir,

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

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

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

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

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

*Ham.* What man dost thou dig it for?

*First Clo.* For no man, sir.

*Ham.* What woman, then?

*First Clo.* For none, neither.

*Ham.* Who is to be buried in't?

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

*Ham.* How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

*First Clo.* Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that day that our last King Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

*Ham.* How long is that since?

*First Clo.* Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that; it was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he that is mad, and sent into England.

*Ham.* Ay, marry; why was he sent into England?

*First Clo.* Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, 'tis no great matter there.

*Ham.* Why?

*First Clo.* 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

*Ham.* How came he mad?

*First Clo.* Very strangely, they say.

*Ham.* How strangely?

*First Clo.* Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

*Ham.* Upon what ground?

*First Clo.* Why, here in Denmark; I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

*Ham.* How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

*First Clo.* Faith, if he be not rotten before he die,—as we have many pocky corsers now—a days, that will scarce hold the laying in,—he will last you some eight year or nine year; a tanner will last you nine year.

*Ham.* Why he more than another?

*First Clo.* Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade that he will keep out water a great while, and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now; this skull hath lain you i' the earth three-and-twenty years.

*Ham.* Whose was it?

*First Clo.* A whoreson mad fellow's it was; whose do you think it was?

*Ham.* Nay, I know not.

*First Clo.* A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! a' poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

*Ham.* This!

*First Clo.* E'en that.

*Ham.* Let me see.—[*Takes the skull.*]—Alas! poor Yorick. I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy; he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chapfallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

*Hor.* What's that, my lord?

*Ham.* Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

*Hor.* E'en so.

*Ham.* And smelt so? pah!

[*Puts down the skull.*]

*Hor.* E'en so, my lord.

*Ham.* To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

*Hor.* 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

*Ham.* No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it; as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam, and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,  
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away;

O! that that earth, which kept the world in  
awe,

Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw.  
But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the king.

*Enter Priests, &c., in procession: the Corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following; KING, QUEEN, their Trains, &c.*

The queen, the courtiers: who is that they follow?

And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken  
The corse they follow did with desperate hand  
Fordo its own life; 'twas of some estate.

Couch we awhile, and mark.

[*Retiring with HORATIO.*]

*Laer.* What ceremony else?

*Ham.* That is Laertes,

A very noble youth: mark.

*Laer.* What ceremony else?

*First Priest.* Her obsequies have been as far  
enlarg'd

As we have warrantise: her death was doubtful,

And, but that great command o'ersways the  
order,

She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd  
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,

Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on  
her;

Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,  
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home  
Of bell and burial.

*Laer.* Must there no more be done?

*First Priest.* No more be done:  
We should profane the service of the dead,  
To sing a requiem, and such rest to her  
As to peace-parted souls.

*Laer.* Lay her i' the earth;

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,

A ministering angel shall my sister be,  
When thou liest howling.

*Ham.* What! the fair Ophelia?

*Queen.* Sweets to the sweet; farewell!

[*Scattering flowers.*]

I hop'd thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's  
wife;

I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet  
maid,

And not have strew'd thy grave.

*Laer.* O! treble woe  
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head  
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense  
Depriv'd thee of. Hold off the earth awhile,

Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.  
[*Leaps into the grave.*]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,

To o'er-top old Pelion or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus.

*Ham.* [*Advancing.*] What is he whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sor-

row  
Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them  
stand

Like wonder-wounded hearers? this is I,  
Hamlet the Dane.

*Laer.* The devil take thy soul!

[*Grapples with him.*]

*Ham.* Thou pray'st not well.

I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;  
For though I am not splenetic and rash

Yet have I in me something dangerous,  
Which let thy wisdom fear. Away thy hand!

*King.* Pluck them asunder.

*Queen.* Hamlet! Hamlet!

*All.* Gentlemen,—  
*Hor.* Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*]

*Ham.* Why, I will fight with him upon this  
theme

Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

*Queen.* O my son! what theme?

*Ham.* I lov'd Ophelia: forty thousand bro-  
thers

Could not, with all their quantity of love,  
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

*King.* O! he is mad, Laertes.

*Queen.* For love of God, forbear him.

*Ham.* 'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do:  
Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't  
tear thyself?

Woo't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile?  
I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?

To outface me with leaping in her grave?  
Be buried quick with her, and so will I:

And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw  
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,  
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,

Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,  
I'll rant as well as thou.

*Queen.* This is mere madness:  
And thus a while the fit will work on him;

Anon, as patient as the female dove,  
When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,  
His silence will sit drooping.

*Ham.* Hear you, sir;  
What is the reason that you use me thus?

I lov'd you ever: but it is no matter;  
Let Hercules himself do what he may,  
The cat will mew and dog will have his day.

[*Exit.*]

*King.* I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon  
him.

[*Exit HORATIO.*]

[*To LAERTES.*] Strengthen your patience in our  
last night's speech;

We'll put the matter to the present push.  
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.  
This grave shall have a living monument:  
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;

Till then, in patience our proceeding be.  
[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.—A Hall in the Castle.

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.*

*Ham.* So much for this, sir: now shall you  
see the other;

You do remember all the circumstance?

*Hor.* Remember it, my lord?

*Ham.* Sir, in my heart there was a kind of  
fighting

That would not let me sleep; methought I lay  
Worsted than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,—  
And prais'd be rashness for it, let us know,



Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well  
When our deep plots do pall; and that should  
teach us

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

*Hor.* That is most certain.

*Ham.* Up from my cabin,  
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark  
Grop'd I to find out them, had my desire,  
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew  
To mine own room again; making so bold—  
My fears forgetting manners—to unseal  
Their grand commission; where I found,  
Horatio,

O royal knavery! an exact command,  
Larded with many several sorts of reasons  
Importing Denmark's health, and England's  
too,

With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,  
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,  
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,  
My head should be struck off.

*Hor.* Is't possible?

*Ham.* Here's the commission: read it at more  
leisure.

But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed?

*Hor.* I beseech you.

*Ham.* Being thus be-netted round with vil-  
lanies,—

Ere I could make a prologue to my brains  
They had begun the play,—I sat me down,  
Devis'd a new commission, wrote it fair;  
I once did hold it, as our statists do,  
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much  
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now  
It did me yeoman's service. Wilt thou know  
The effect of what I wrote?

*Hor.* Ay, good my lord.

*Ham.* An earnest conjuration from the king,  
As England was his faithful tributary,  
As love between them like the palm should  
flourish,

As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,  
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,  
And many such-like 'As'es of great charge,  
That, on the view and knowing of these con-  
tents,

Without debatement further, more or less,  
He should the bearers put to sudden death,  
Not shriving-time allow'd.

*Hor.* How was this seal'd?

*Ham.* Why, even in that was heaven ordi-  
nant.

I had my father's signet in my purse,  
Which was the model of that Danish seal;  
Folded the writ up in form of the other,  
Subscrib'd it, gave't th' impression, plac'd it  
safely,  
The changeling never known. Now, the next  
day

Was our sea-fight, and what to this was sequent  
Thou know'st already.

*Hor.* So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go  
to't.

*Ham.* Why, man, they did make love to this  
employment;

They are not near my conscience; their defeat  
Does by their own insinuation grow.  
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes  
Between the pass and fell-incensed points  
Of mighty opposites.

*Hor.* Why, what a king is this!

*Ham.* Does it not, thinks't thee, stand me  
now upon—  
He that hath kill'd my king and whor'd my  
mother,

Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,  
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,  
And with such cozenage—is't not perfect con-  
science

To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be  
damn'd

To let this canker of our nature come

In further evil?

*Hor.* It must be shortly known to him from  
England

What is the issue of the business there.

*Ham.* It will be short: the interim is mine;  
And a man's life's no more than to say 'One.'

But I am very sorry, good Horatio,  
That to Laertes I forgot myself;

For, by the image of my cause, I see  
The portraiture of his: I'll count his favours:

But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me  
Into a towering passion.

*Hor.* Peace! who comes here? 80

*Enter OSRIC.*

*Os.* Your lordship is right welcome back to  
Denmark.

*Ham.* I humbly thank you, sir. [*Aside to*  
*HORATIO.*] Dost know this water-fly? 84

*Hor.* [*Aside to HAMLET.*] No, my good lord.

*Ham.* [*Aside to HORATIO.*] Thy state is the  
more gracious; for 'tis a vice to know him. He  
hath much land, and fertile: let a beast be lord  
of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's  
mess: 'tis a chough; but, as I say, spacious in  
the possession of dirt. 91

*Os.* Sweet lord, if your lordship were at  
leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his  
majesty.

*Ham.* I will receive it, sir, with all diligence  
of spirit. Your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for  
the head. 97

*Os.* I thank your lordship, 'tis very hot.

*Ham.* No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the  
wind is northerly. 100

*Os.* It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

*Ham.* But yet methinks it is very sultry and  
hot for my complexion. 103

*Os.* Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry,  
as 'twere, I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his  
majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid  
a great wager on your head. Sir, this is the  
matter,— 108

*Ham.* I beseech you, remember—

[*HAMLET moves him to put on his hat.*]

*Os.* Nay, good my lord; for mine ease, in  
good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court  
Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full  
of most excellent differences, of very soft society

and great showing; indeed, to speak feelingly of  
him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you  
shall find in him the continent of what part a  
gentleman would see. 117

*Ham.* Sir, his defilement suffers no perdition  
in you; though, I know, to divide him invento-  
rially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and  
yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail.  
But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be  
a soul of great article; and his infusion of such  
dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of  
him, his semblable is his mirror; and who else  
would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

*Os.* Your lordship speaks most infallibly of  
him. 128

*Ham.* The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap  
the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

*Os.* Sir?

*Hor.* Is't not possible to understand in an-  
other tongue? You will do't, sir, really. 133

*Ham.* What imports the nomination of this  
gentleman?

*Os.* Of Laertes?

*Hor.* His purse is empty already; all's  
golden words are spent.

*Ham.* Of him, sir.

*Os.* I know you are not ignorant— 140

*Ham.* I would you did, sir; in faith, if you  
did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir.

*Os.* You are not ignorant of what excellence  
Laertes is— 144

*Ham.* I dare not confess that, lest I should  
compare with him in excellence; but, to know a  
man well, were to know himself. 147

*Os.* I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the  
imputation laid on him by them, in his meed  
he's unfellowed.

*Ham.* What's his weapon?

*Os.* Rapier and dagger. 152

*Ham.* That's two of his weapons; but, well.

*Os.* The king, sir, hath wagered with him six  
Barbary horses; against the which he has im-  
poned, as I take it, six French rapiers and  
poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers,  
and so: three of the carriages, in faith, are very  
dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most  
delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit. 160

*Ham.* What call you the carriages?

*Hor.* I knew you must be edified by the mar-  
ging, ere you had done.

*Os.* The carriages, sir, are the hangers. 164

*Ham.* The phrase would be more german to  
the matter, if we could carry cannon by our  
sides; I would it might be hangers till then.  
But, on; six Barbary horses against six French  
swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited  
carriages; that's the French bet against the  
Danish. Why is this 'imposed,' as you call it?

*Os.* The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen  
passes between yourself and him, he shall not  
exceed you three hits; he hath laid on twelve  
for nine, and it would come to immediate trial,  
if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer. 176

*Ham.* How if I answer no?

*Os.* I mean, my lord, the opposition of your  
person in trial.

*Ham.* Sir, I will walk here in the hall; if it  
please his majesty, 'tis the breathing time of day  
with me; let the foils be brought, the gentleman  
willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win  
for him an I can; if not, I will gain nothing but  
my shame and the odd hits. 185

*Os.* Shall I re-deliver you so?

*Ham.* To this effect, sir; after what flourish  
your nature will. 188

*Os.* I commend my duty to your lordship.

*Ham.* Yours, yours. [*Exit OSRIC.*] He does  
well to commend it himself; there are no  
tongues else for's turn. 192

*Hor.* This lapwing runs away with the shell  
on his head.

*Ham.* He did comply with his dug before he  
sucked it. Thus has he—and many more of the  
same bevy, that I know the drossy age dotes  
on—only got the tune of the time and outward  
habit of encounter, a kind of yesty collection  
which carries them through and through the  
most fond and winnowed opinions; and do but  
blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out. 202

*Enter a Lord.*

*Lord.* My lord, his majesty commended him  
to you by young Osric, who brings back to him,  
that you attend him in the hall; he sends to  
know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes,  
or that you will take longer time. 207

*Ham.* I am constant to my purposes; they  
follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks,  
mine is ready; now, or whensoever, provided I  
be so able as now.

*Lord.* The king, and queen, and all are com-  
ing down. 213

*Ham.* In happy time.

*Lord.* The queen desires you to use some  
gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall  
to play. 217

*Ham.* She well instructs me. [*Exit Lord.*]

*Hor.* You will lose this wager, my lord.  
*Ham.* I do not think so; since he went into  
France, I have been in continual practice; I  
shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not  
think how ill all's here about my heart; but it  
is no matter. 224

*Hor.* Nay, good my lord,—

*Ham.* It is but foolery; but it is such a kind  
of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a  
woman. 228

*Hor.* If your mind dislike any thing, obey it;  
I will forestal their repair hither, and say you  
are not fit. 231

*Ham.* Not a whit, we defy augury; there's a  
special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it  
be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it  
will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come:  
the readiness is all. Since no man has aught  
of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?  
Let be. 238

*Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and*  
*Attendants with foils, &c.*

*King.* Come, Hamlet, come, and take this  
hand from me.



[The KING puts the hand of LAERTES into that of HAMLET.]

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir; I've done you wrong;

But pardon't, as you are a gentleman. This presence knows, And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd With sore distraction. What I have done, 244 That might your nature, honour and exception Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness. Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away, 248 And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes, Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it. Who does it then? His madness. If 't be so, Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd; 252 His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy. Sir, in this audience, Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil Free me so far in your most generous thoughts, That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house, 257 And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature, Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most To my revenge; but in my terms of honour 260 I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation, Till by some elder masters, of known honour, I have a voice and precedent of peace, To keep my name ungor'd. But till that time, I do receive your offer'd love like love, 265 And will not wrong it.

Ham. I embrace it freely; And will this brother's wager frankly play. Give us the foils. Come on.

Laer. Come, one for me. 268 Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night, Stick fiery off indeed.

Laer. You mock me, sir. 272 Ham. No, by this hand. King. Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet, You know the wager?

Ham. Very well, my lord; Your Grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

King. I do not fear it; I have seen you both; But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds. Laer. This is too heavy; let me see another. Ham. This likes me well. These foils have all a length?

Osr. Ay, my good lord. 280 [They prepare to play.] King. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.

If Hamlet give the first or second hit, Or quit in answer of the third exchange, Let all the battlements their ordnance fire; 284 The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath; And in the cup an union shall he throw, Richer than that which four successive kings In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups; 288

And let the kettle to the trumpet speak, The trumpet to the cannoneer without, The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,

'Now the king drinks to Hamlet!' Come, begin; And you, the judges, bear a wary eye. 293

Ham. Come on, sir. Laer. Come, my lord. [They play.]

Ham. One. Laer. No. Ham. Judgment.

Osr. A hit, a very palpable hit. Laer. Well; again.

King. Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine; 296

Here's to thy health. Give him the cup. [Trumpets sound; and cannon shot off within.]

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

Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confess. 300 King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath. Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows; The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

Ham. Good madam! King. Gertrude, do not drink. 304

Queen. I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.

King. [Aside.] It is the poison'd cup! it is too late.

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

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face. 308 Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now.

King. I do not think't. Laer. [Aside.] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes. You but dally;

I pray you pass with your best violence. 312 I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

Laer. Say you so? come on. [They play.] Osr. Nothing, neither way.

Laer. Have at you now. [LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES.]

King. Part them! they are incens'd. Ham. Nay, come, again. [The QUEEN falls.]

Osr. Look to the queen there, ho! Hor. They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

Osr. How is it, Laertes? Laer. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric; 320

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery. Ham. How does the queen?

King. She swoonds to see them bleed. Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Hamlet! 323

The drink, the drink; I am poison'd. [Dies.] Ham. O villainy! Ho! let the door be lock'd: Treachery! seek it out. [LAERTES falls.]

Laer. It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain;

No medicine in the world can do thee good; 328 In thee there is not half an hour of life; The treacherous instrument is in thy hand, Unbated and envenom'd. The foul practice Hath turn'd itself on me; lo! here I lie, 332

Never to rise again. Thy mother's poison'd. I can no more. The king, the king's to blame.

Ham. The point envenom'd too!— Then, venom, to thy work. [Stabs the KING.]

All. Treason! treason! 337 King. O! yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane, Drink off this potion;—is thy union here? 340 Follow my mother. [KING dies.]

Laer. He is justly serv'd: It is a poison temper'd by himself.

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

Ham. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee. 346

I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu! You that look pale and tremble at this chance, That are but mutes or audience to this act, 349

Had I but time,—as this fell sergeant, death, Is strict in his arrest,—O! I could tell you— But let it be. Horatio, I am dead; 352

Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright To the unsatisfied.

Hor. Never believe it; I am more an antique Roman than a Dane: Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As thou'rt a man, 356 Give me the cup; let go; by heaven, I'll have't. O God! Horatio, what a wounded name, Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me.

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart, 360 Absent thee from felicity awhile, And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain, To tell my story.

[March afar off, and shot within. What war-like noise is this?]

Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland, 364

To the ambassadors of England gives This war-like volley.

Ham. O! I die, Horatio; The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit: I cannot live to hear the news from England, 368

But I do prophesy the election lights On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice; So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less, Which have solicited—The rest is silence. [Dies.]

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart. Good-night, sweet prince, And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest! 373 Why does the drum come hither?

[March within.]

Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors, and Others.

Fort. Where is this sight? Hor. What is it ye would see? 376

If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search. Fort. This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death!

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell, That thou so many princes at a shot 380

So bloodily hast struck? First Amb. The sight is dismal; And our affairs from England come too late: The ears are senseless that should give us hearing.

To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd, 384 That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead. Where should we have our thanks?

Hor. Not from his mouth, Had it the ability of life to thank you: 387 He never gave commandment for their death. But since, so jump upon this bloody question, You from the Polack wars, and you from England,

Are here arriv'd, give order that these bodies High on a stage be placed to the view; 392

And let me speak to the yet unknowing world How these things came about: so shall you hear

Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts, Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters; 396

Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause, And, in this upshot, purposes mistook Fall'n on the inventors' heads; all this can I Truly deliver.

Fort. Let us haste to hear it, 400 And call the noblest to the audience. For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune; I have some rights of memory in this kingdom, Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me. 404

Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak, And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more:

But let this same be presently perform'd, Even while men's minds are wild, lest more mischance 408

On plots and errors happen. Fort. Let four captains Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage; For he was likely, had he been put on, To have prov'd most royally: and, for his passage, 412

The soldiers' music and the rites of war Speak loudly for him.

Take up the bodies: such a sight as this Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss. 417

Go, bid the soldiers shoot. [A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the bodies; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off.]