

**The Complete Tragedies
of William Shakespeare**
Illustrated
**Hamlet; Macbeth; King Lear;
Othello; Romeo and Juliet**

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HAMLET

Dramatis Personae

Claudius, King of Denmark.

Marcellus, Officer.

Hamlet, son to the former, and nephew to the present king.

Polonius, Lord Chamberlain.

Horatio, friend to Hamlet.

Laertes, son to Polonius.

Voltemand, courtier.

Cornelius, courtier.

Rosencrantz, courtier.

Guildenstern, courtier.

Osric, courtier.

A Gentleman, courtier.

A Priest.

Marcellus, officer.

Bernardo, officer.

Francisco, a soldier.

Reynaldo, servant to Polonius.

Players.

Two Clowns, gravediggers.

Fortinbras, Prince of Norway.



A Norwegian Captain.

English Ambassadors.

Getrude, Queen of Denmark, mother to Hamlet.

Ophelia, daughter to Polonius.

Ghost of Hamlet's Father.

Lords, ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers,
Attendants.

SCENE.- Elsinore.

Act I

Scene I

Elsinore. A platform before the castle.

Francisco at his post. Enter to him Bernardo.

Bernardo

Who's there?

Francisco

Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

Bernardo

Long live the king!

Francisco

Bernardo?

Bernardo

He.

Francisco

You come most carefully upon your hour.

Bernardo

'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

Francisco

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

Bernardo

Have you had quiet guard?

Francisco

Not a mouse stirring.

Bernardo

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

Francisco

I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who's there?

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

Horatio

Friends to this ground.

Marcellus

And liegemen to the Dane.

Francisco

Give you good night.

Marcellus

O, farewell, honest soldier:
Who hath relieved you?

Francisco

Bernardo has my place.
Give you good night.

Exit.

Marcellus

Holla! Bernardo!

Bernardo

Say,
What, is Horatio there?

Horatio

A piece of him.

Bernardo

Welcome, Horatio: welcome, good Marcellus.

Marcellus

What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

Bernardo

I have seen nothing.

Marcellus

Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us:
Therefore I have entreated him along
With us to watch the minutes of this night;
That if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

Horatio

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

Bernardo

Sit down awhile;
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story

What we have two nights seen.

Horatio

Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Bernardo

Last night of all,
When yond same star that's westward from the
pole
Had made his course to illumine that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one, —

Enter Ghost.

Marcellus

Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!

Bernardo

In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

Marcellus

Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

Bernardo

Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

Horatio

Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

Bernardo

It would be spoke to.

Marcellus

Question it, Horatio.

Horatio

What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee,
speak!

Marcellus

It is offended.

Bernardo

See, it stalks away!

Horatio

Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

Exit Ghost.

Marcellus

'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Bernardo

How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:
Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you on't?

Horatio

Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

Marcellus

Is it not like the king?

Horatio

As thou art to thyself:
Such was the very armour he had on
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.

Marcellus

Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.



Horatio

In what particular thought to work I know not;
But in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Marcellus

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,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore
task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week;
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:
Who is't that can inform me?

Horatio

That can I;
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,
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,
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant
Hamlet —
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
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror:
Against the which, a moiety competent
Was gaged by our king; which had return'd
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
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,
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute,
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 —
But to recover of us, by strong hand
And terms compulsory, those foresaid lands
So by his father lost: and this, I take it,
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.

Bernardo

I think it be no other but e'en so:
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.

Horatio

A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
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:
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:
And even the like precursor 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. —
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,
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:

Cock crows

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,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
Speak of it: stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.

Marcellus

Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

Horatio

Do, if it will not stand.

Bernardo

'Tis here!

Horatio

'Tis here!

Marcellus

'Tis gone!

Exit Ghost

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Bernardo

It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

Horatio

And then it started like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
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,
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.

Marcellus

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:
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir 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.

Horatio

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 eastward hill:
Break we our watch up; and by my advice,
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?

Marcellus

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 King Claudius, Queen Gertrude,
Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes, Voltimand, Cornelius,
Lords, and Attendants.



King Claudius

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole
kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy, —
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole, —
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
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,
Colleagu'd 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 bonds of law,
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, —
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
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
To business with the king, more than the scope
Of these delated articles allow.
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

Cornelius Voltimand

In that and all things will we show our duty.

King Claudius

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,
And loose 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,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

Laertes

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

King Claudius

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

Lord Polonius

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:
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King Claudius

Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,

And thy best graces spend it at thy will!
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son, —

Hamlet [*Aside*]

A little more than kin, and less than kind.

King Claudius

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Hamlet

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

Queen Gertrude

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

Hamlet

Ay, madam, it is common.

Queen Gertrude

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

Hamlet

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

King Claudius

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,
Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father:
But, you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term
To do obsequious sorrow: but to persever
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,
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
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,
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,
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
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire:
And we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen Gertrude

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

Hamlet

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.



King Claudius

Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet

Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the king's rouse the heavens all bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

Exeunt all but Hamlet.

Hamlet

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! God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in
nature
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
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month —
Let me not think on't-Frailty, thy name is

woman! —

A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears:-why she, even she —
O, God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer-married with my
uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules: within a month:
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!
It is not nor it cannot come to good:
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo.

Horatio

Hail to your lordship!

Hamlet

I am glad to see you well:
Horatio, — or I do forget myself.

Horatio

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

Hamlet

Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you:
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?
Marcellus?

Marcellus

My good lord —

Hamlet

I am very glad to see you. Good even, sir.
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Horatio

A truant disposition, good my lord.

Hamlet

I would not hear your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
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.

Horatio

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

Hamlet

I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

Horatio

Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

Hamlet

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

Horatio

Where, my lord?

Hamlet

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Horatio

I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

Hamlet

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

Horatio

My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Hamlet

Saw? who?

Horatio

My lord, the king your father.

Hamlet

The king my father!

Horatio

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

Hamlet

For God's love, let me hear.

Horatio

Two nights together had these gentlemen,
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 point exactly, cap-a-pe,
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,
distilled
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,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes: I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.

Hamlet

But where was this?

Marcellus

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

Hamlet

Did you not speak to it?

Horatio

My lord, I did;
But answer made it none: yet once methought
It lifted up its head and did address
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.

Hamlet

'Tis very strange.

Horatio

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.

Hamlet

Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?

Marcellus Bernardo

We do, my lord.

Hamlet

Arm'd, say you?

Marcellus Bernardo

Arm'd, my lord.

Hamlet

From top to toe?

Marcellus Bernardo

My lord, from head to foot.

Hamlet

Then saw you not his face?

Horatio

O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.

Hamlet

What, look'd he frowningly?

Horatio

A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

Hamlet

Pale or red?

Horatio

Nay, very pale.

Hamlet

And fix'd his eyes upon you?

Horatio

Most constantly.

Hamlet

I would I had been there.

Horatio

It would have much amazed you.

Hamlet

Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?

Horatio

While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

Marcellus Bernardo

Longer, longer.

Horatio

Not when I saw't.

Hamlet

His beard was grizzled-no?

Horatio

It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.

Hamlet

I will watch to-night;

Perchance 'twill walk again.

Horatio

I warrant it will.

Hamlet

If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape
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,
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.

Hamlet

Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

Exeunt all but Hamlet.

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: would the night were
come!

Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's
eyes.

Exit.

Scene III

A room in Polonius' house.
Enter Laertes and Ophelia.

Laertes

My necessaries are embark'd: farewell:
And, sister, as the winds give benefit
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Ophelia

Do you doubt that?

Laertes

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,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute; No
more.



Ophelia

No more but so?

Laertes

Think it no more;
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes,
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,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
For he himself is subject to his birth:
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends
The safety and health of this whole state;
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves
you,
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.
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.

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,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon:
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes:
The canker galls the infants of the spring,
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,
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.

Ophelia

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

Laertes

O, fear me not.
I stay too long: but here my father comes.

Enter Polonius

A double blessing is a double grace,
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Lord Polonius

Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with
thee!

And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy
judgment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,

And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine ownself be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!

Laertes

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Lord Polonius

The time invites you; go; your servants tend.

Laertes

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

Ophelia

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

Laertes

Farewell.

Exit.

Lord Polonius

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

Ophelia

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

Lord Polonius

Marry, well bethought:

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and
bounteous:

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
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.
What is between you? give me up the truth.

Ophelia

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

Lord Polonius

Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

Ophelia

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



Lord Polonius

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.

Ophelia

My lord, he hath importuned me with love
In honourable fashion.

Lord Polonius

Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

Ophelia

And hath given countenance to his, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Lord Polonius

Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
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
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
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,
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 leisure,
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you: come your ways.

Ophelia

I shall obey, my lord.

Exeunt.

Scene IV

The platform.

Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.

Hamlet

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

Horatio

It is a nipping and an eager air.

Hamlet

What hour now?

Horatio

I think it lacks of twelve.

Hamlet

No, it is struck.

Horatio

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?

Hamlet

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.

Horatio

Is it a custom?

Hamlet

Ay, marry, is't:

But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduced 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,
Oft 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.

Horatio

Look, my lord, it comes!

Enter Ghost.

Hamlet

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 comest 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 canonized bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
Hath oped 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 horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

Ghost beckons Hamlet.

Horatio

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

Marcellus

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

Horatio

No, by no means.

Hamlet

It will not speak; then I will follow it.

Horatio

Do not, my lord.

Hamlet

Why, what should be the fear?

I do not set my life in 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.

Horatio

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.

Hamlet

It waves me still.
Go on; I'll follow thee.

Marcellus

You shall not go, my lord.

Hamlet

Hold off your hands.

Horatio

Be ruled; you shall not go.

Hamlet

My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.
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.

Horatio

He waxes desperate with imagination.

Marcellus

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

Horatio

Have after. To what issue will this come?

Marcellus

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Horatio

Heaven will direct it.

Marcellus

Nay, let's follow him.

Exeunt.

Scene V

Another part of the platform.

Enter Ghost and Hamlet.

Hamlet

Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.

Ghost

Mark me.

Hamlet

I will.

Ghost

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

Hamlet

Alas, poor ghost!

Ghost

Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

Hamlet

Speak; I am bound to hear.

Ghost

So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

Hamlet

What?

Ghost

I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. 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 on 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 —

Hamlet

O God!

Ghost

Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

Hamlet

Murder!

Ghost

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

Hamlet

Haste me to know't, 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 roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,

A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

Hamlet

O my prophetic soul! My uncle!

Ghost

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous
gifts, —

O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
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
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!

But virtue, as it never will be moved,
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,
And prey on garbage.
But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;

Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment; whose effect
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 doth posset
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.

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,
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head:
O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursuest 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!
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:
Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.

Exit.

Hamlet

O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?
And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my
heart;
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee!
Ay, thou poor ghost, 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;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
My tables, — meet it is I set it down,
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least I'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.

Marcellus Horatio [*Within*]

My lord, my lord, —

Marcellus [*Within*]

Lord Hamlet, —

Horatio [*Within*]

Heaven secure him!

Hamlet

So be it!

Horatio [*Within*]

Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!

Hamlet

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

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

Marcellus

How is't, my noble lord?

Horatio

What news, my lord?

Hamlet

O, wonderful!

Horatio

Good my lord, tell it.

Hamlet

No; you'll reveal it.

Horatio

Not I, my lord, by heaven.

Marcellus

Nor I, my lord.

Hamlet

How say you, then; would heart of man once
think it?

But you'll be secret?

Horatio Marcellus

Ay, by heaven, my lord.

Hamlet

There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark
But he's an arrant knave.

Horatio

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

Hamlet

Why, right; you are i' the right;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part:
You, as your business and desire shall point you;
For every man has business and desire,
Such as it is; and for mine own poor part,
Look you, I'll go pray.

Horatio

These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

Hamlet

I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;
Yes, 'faith heartily.

Horatio

There's no offence, my lord.

Hamlet

Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,
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,
As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

Horatio

What is't, my lord? we will.

Hamlet

Never make known what you have seen to-night.

Horatio Marcellus

My lord, we will not.

Hamlet

Nay, but swear't.

Horatio

In faith,
My lord, not I.

Marcellus

Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Hamlet

Upon my sword.

Marcellus

We have sworn, my lord, already.

Hamlet

Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost [*Beneath*]

Swear.

Hamlet

Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there,
truepenny?

Come on—you hear this fellow in the cellarage —
Consent to swear.

Horatio

Propose the oath, my lord.

Hamlet

Never to speak of this that you have seen,
Swear by my sword.

Ghost [*Beneath*]

Swear.

Hamlet

Hic et ubique? then we'll shift our ground.
Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword:
Never to speak of this that you have heard,
Swear by my sword.

Ghost [*Beneath*]

Swear.

Hamlet

Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth so
fast?
A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good
friends.

Horatio

O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

Hamlet

And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth,
Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come;
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,
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
With arms encumber'd thus, or this headshake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, an if we
would,'
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.

Ghost [*Beneath*]

Swear.

Hamlet

Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!

They swear.

So, gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you:
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
May do, to express his love and friending to you,
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;

And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
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.

Lord Polonius

Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

Reynaldo

I will, my lord.

Lord Polonius

You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquire
Of his behavior.

Reynaldo

My lord, I did intend it.

Lord Polonius

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,
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:
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?

Reynaldo

Ay, very well, my lord.

Lord Polonius

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

Reynaldo

As gaming, my lord.

Lord Polonius

Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,
Drabbing: you may go so far.

Reynaldo

My lord, that would dishonour him.

Lord Polonius

'Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge
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,
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,
Of general assault.

Reynaldo

But, my good lord, —

Lord Polonius

Wherefore should you do this?

Reynaldo

Ay, my lord,
I would know that.

Lord Polonius

Marry, sir, here's my drift;
And I believe, it is a fetch of wit:
You laying these slight sullies on my son,
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working,
Mark you,
Your party in converse, him you would sound,
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured
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.

Reynaldo

Very good, my lord.

Lord Polonius

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?

Reynaldo

At 'closes in the consequence,' at 'friend or so,'

and 'gentleman.'

Lord Polonius

At 'closes in the consequence,' ay, marry;
He closes thus: 'I know the gentleman;
I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,
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,'
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,
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?

Reynaldo

My lord, I have.

Lord Polonius

God be wi' you; fare you well.



Reynaldo

Good my lord!

Lord Polonius

Observe his inclination in yourself.

Reynaldo

I shall, my lord.

Lord Polonius

And let him ply his music.

Reynaldo

Well, my lord.

Lord Polonius

Farewell!

Exit Reynaldo.

Enter Ophelia.

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

Ophelia

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

Lord Polonius

With what, i' the name of God?

Ophelia

My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;
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.

Lord Polonius

Mad for thy love?

Ophelia

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

Lord Polonius

What said he?

Ophelia

He took me by the wrist and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And, 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

And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being: that done, he lets me go:
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 helps,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

Lord Polonius

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
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.
What, have you given him any hard words of
late?

Ophelia

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

Lord Polonius

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 wreck 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.

Exeunt.

Scene II

A room in the castle.

Enter King Claudius, Queen Gertrude,
Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and Attendants.

King Claudius

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 call it,
Sith 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 sith so neighbour'd to his youth and havior,
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,
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

Queen Gertrude

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.

Rosencrantz

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

Guildenstern

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

King Claudius

Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

Queen Gertrude

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.

Guildenstern

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

Queen Gertrude

Ay, amen!

Exeunt Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and some
Attendants.

Enter Polonius.

Lord Polonius

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

King Claudius

Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Lord Polonius

Have I, my lord? I assure 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 used to do, that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

King Claudius

O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

Lord Polonius

Give first admittance to the ambassadors;
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

King Claudius

Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

Exit Polonius.

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

Queen Gertrude

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

King Claudius

Well, we shall sift him.

Re-enter Polonius, with Voltimand and
Cornelius.

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

Voltimand

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 grieved,
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,

Giving a paper.

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 Claudius

It likes us well;
And at our more consider'd time well 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.

Lord Polonius

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 Gertrude

More matter, with less art.

Lord Polonius

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.

Reads.

'To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,' —

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

Reads.

'In her excellent white bosom, these, c.'

Queen Gertrude

Came this from Hamlet to her?

Lord Polonius

Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.

Reads.

'Doubt thou the stars are fire;

Doubt that the sun doth move;

Doubt truth to be a liar;

But never doubt I love.

'O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers;

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 Claudius

But how hath she
Received his love?

Lord Polonius

What do you think of me?

King Claudius

As of a man faithful and honourable.

Lord Polonius

I would fain prove so. But what might you think,
When I had seen this hot love on the wing —
As I perceived 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:
'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 mourn for.

King Claudius

Do you think 'tis this?

Queen Gertrude

It may be, very likely.

Lord Polonius

Hath there been such a time—I'd fain know that —
That I have positively said 'Tis so,'
When it proved otherwise?

King Claudius

Not that I know.

Lord Polonius [*Pointing to his head and shoulder*]

Take this from this, if this be otherwise:
If circumstances lead me, I will find

Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

King Claudius

How may we try it further?

Lord Polonius

You know, sometimes he walks four hours
together
Here in the lobby.

Queen Gertrude

So he does indeed.

Lord Polonius

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 fall'n thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.

King Claudius

We will try it.

Queen Gertrude

But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes
reading.

Lord Polonius

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

Exeunt King Claudius, Queen Gertrude, and
Attendants.

Enter Hamlet, reading.

O, give me leave:
How does my good Lord Hamlet?

Hamlet

Well, God-a-mercy.

Lord Polonius

Do you know me, my lord?

Hamlet

Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

Lord Polonius

Not I, my lord.

Hamlet

Then I would you were so honest a man.

Lord Polonius

Honest, my lord!

Hamlet

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

Lord Polonius

That's very true, my lord.

Hamlet

For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a
god kissing carrion, — Have you a daughter?

Lord Polonius

I have, my lord.

Hamlet

Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a blessing: but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to 't.

Lord Polonius [*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 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?

Hamlet

Words, words, words.

Lord Polonius

What is the matter, my lord?

Hamlet

Between who?

Lord Polonius

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

Hamlet

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 potently believe,
yet

I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for
yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if like a crab
you could go backward.

Lord Polonius [*Aside*]

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

Hamlet

Into my grave.

Lord Polonius

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.

Hamlet

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

Lord Polonius

Fare you well, my lord.

Hamlet

These tedious old fools!

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Lord Polonius

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

Rosencrantz [*To Polonius*]

God save you, sir!

Exit Polonius.

Guildenstern

My honoured lord!

Rosencrantz

My most dear lord!

Hamlet

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

Rosencrantz

As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guildenstern

Happy, in that we are not over-happy;
On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Hamlet

Nor the soles of her shoe?

Rosencrantz

Neither, my lord.

Hamlet

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

Guildenstern

'Faith, her privates we.

Hamlet

In the secret parts of fortune? O, most true; she
is a strumpet. What's the news?

Rosencrantz

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

Hamlet

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?

Guildenstern

Prison, my lord!

Hamlet

Denmark's a prison.

Rosencrantz

Then is the world one.

Hamlet

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

Rosencrantz

We think not so, my lord.

Hamlet

Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing
either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to

me
it is a prison.

Rosencrantz

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

Hamlet

O God, I could be bounded in a nut shell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

Guildenstern

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

Hamlet

A dream itself is but a shadow.

Rosencrantz

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

Hamlet

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.

Rosencrantz Guildenstern

We'll wait upon you.

Hamlet

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?

Rosencrantz

To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

Hamlet

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,
deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

Guildenstern

What should we say, my lord?

Hamlet

Why, any thing, 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.

Rosencrantz

To what end, my lord?

Hamlet

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?

Rosencrantz [*Aside to Guildenstern*]

What say you?

Hamlet [*Aside*]

Nay, then, I have an eye of you.-If you

love me, hold not off.

Guildestern

My lord, we were sent for.

Hamlet

I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation
prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the
king

and queen moult 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 firmament, this majestic roof
fretted

with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to
me than 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 and moving how
express and admirable! in action how like an
angel!

in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the
world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me,

what is this quintessence of dust? man delights
not
me: no, nor woman neither, though by your
smiling
you seem to say so.

Rosencrantz

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

Hamlet

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

Rosencrantz

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

Hamlet

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 humourous man shall end his part
in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose

lungs are tickled o' the sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't. What players are they?

Rosencrantz

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

Hamlet

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

Rosencrantz

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

Hamlet

Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? are they so followed?

Rosencrantz

No, indeed, are they not.

Hamlet

How comes it? do they grow rusty?

Rosencrantz

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.

Hamlet

What, are they children? who maintains '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?

Rosencrantz

'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.

Hamlet

Is't possible?

Guildestern

O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Hamlet

Do the boys carry it away?

Rosencrantz

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

Hamlet

It is not very strange; for mine uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an 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.

Guildenstern

There are the players.

Hamlet

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.

Guildenstern

In what, my dear lord?

Hamlet

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

Enter Polonius.

Lord Polonius

Well be with you, gentlemen!

Hamlet

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.

Rosencrantz

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

Hamlet

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

Lord Polonius

My lord, I have news to tell you.

Hamlet

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

Lord Polonius

The actors are come hither, my lord.

Hamlet

Buz, buz!

Lord Polonius

Upon mine honour, —

Hamlet

Then came each actor on his ass, —

Lord Polonius

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

Hamlet

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



Lord Polonius

What a treasure had he, my lord?

Hamlet

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

Lord Polonius [*Aside*]

Still on my daughter.

Hamlet

Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

Lord Polonius

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

Hamlet

Nay, that follows not.

Lord Polonius

What follows, then, my lord?

Hamlet

Why,
'As by lot, God wot,'

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 abridgement 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 valenced 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 to heaven than when I saw you last, by the
altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like
apiece 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 any thing we see:
we'll have a straight: come, give us a taste
of your quality; come, a passionate.

First Player

What, my lord?

Hamlet

I heard thee speak me a 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 in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Aeneas' 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,' —
it is not so:—it begins with Pyrrhus: —

'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion
smear'd

With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
Now is he total gules; horribly trick'd

With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and damned light
To their lord's murder: 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.

Lord Polonius

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

First Player

'Anon he finds him
Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
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 unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword,
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, 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.
But, as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
The bold winds less and the orb below
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
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 forged for proof eterne
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;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of
heaven,
As low as to the fiends!'

Lord Polonius

This is too long.

Hamlet

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.

First Player

'But who, O, who had seen the mobled queen-'

Hamlet

'The mobled queen?'

Lord Polonius

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

First Player

'Run barefoot up and down, threatening 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;
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have
pronounced:

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,
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,
And passion in the gods.'

Lord Polonius

Look, whether he has not turned his colour and has
tears in's eyes. Pray you, no more.

Hamlet

'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 abstract and brief chronicles of the
time: after your death you were better have a bad
epitaph than their ill report while you live.

Lord Polonius

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

Hamlet

God's bodykins, 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.

Lord Polonius

Come, sirs.

Hamlet

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?

First Player

Ay, my lord.

Hamlet

We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

First Player

Ay, my lord.

Hamlet

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

Exit First Player.

My good friends, I'll leave you till night: you are

welcome to Elsinore.

Rosencrantz

Good my lord!

Hamlet

Ay, so, God be wi' ye;

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage 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!

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

A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
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?
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
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!

O, vengeance!

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
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!

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
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
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
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
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 Claudius, Queen Gertrude,
Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.

King Claudius

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?

Rosencrantz

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

Guildenstern

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

Queen Gertrude

Did he receive you well?

Rosencrantz

Most like a gentleman.

Guildenstern

But with much forcing of his disposition.

Rosencrantz

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



Queen Gertrude

Did you assay him?
To any pastime?

Rosencrantz

Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
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
This night to play before him.

Lord Polonius

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

King Claudius

With all my heart; and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclined.
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Rosencrantz

We shall, my lord.

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

King Claudius

Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia:
Her father and myself, lawful espials,
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge,
And gather by him, as he is behaved,
If 't be the affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

Queen Gertrude

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.

Ophelia

Madam, I wish it may.

Exit Queen Gertrude.

Lord Polonius

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 proved—that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

King Claudius [*Aside*]

O, 'tis too true!
How smart a lash that 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 burthen!

Lord Polonius

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

Exeunt King Claudius and Polonius.

Enter Hamlet.

Hamlet

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The 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
contumely,
The pangs of despised 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!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.



Ophelia

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

Hamlet

I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

Ophelia

My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

Hamlet

No, not I;
I never gave you aught.

Ophelia

My honour'd lord, you know right well you did;
And, with them, words of so sweet breath
composed
As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,
Take these again; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

Hamlet

Ha, ha! are you honest?

Ophelia

My lord?

Hamlet

Are you fair?

Ophelia

What means your lordship?

Hamlet

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

Ophelia

Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce
than
with honesty?

Hamlet

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 you once.

Ophelia

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Hamlet

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

Ophelia

I was the more deceived.

Hamlet

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

Ophelia

At home, my lord.

Hamlet

Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play
the
fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

Ophelia

O, help him, you sweet heavens!

Hamlet

If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for
thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as
snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to
a
nunnery, go: 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.

Ophelia

O heavenly powers, restore him!