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HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

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"TO BE OR NOT TO BE."

HAMLET

A TRAGEDY

By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The E. H. SOTHERN

ACTING VERSION



MCCLURE, PHILLIPS & CO

NEW YORK

M C M I

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DRAMATIS & PERSONÆ

[*The original cast of the play as presented by Mr SOTHERN & Miss HARNED, under the direction of DANIEL FROHMAN, at the Garden Theatre, New York, Monday evening, 17 September, M C M.*]

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark.....	Arthur R. Lawrence	
HAMLET, son of the late and nephew of the present king.....	E. H. Sothern	
OLONIUS, Lord Chamberlain.....	Edwin Varrey	
LAERTES, son of Polonius.....	Vincent Sternroyd	
HORATIO, friend of Hamlet.....	Henry Carvill	
OSRIC.....	} courtiers {	
ROSENCRANTZ.....		Richard Lambart
GULDENSTERN.....		Taylor Holmes
A PRIEST.....	E. F. Bostwick	
MARCELLUS.....	} officers {	
BERNARDO.....		Basil West
FRANCISCO, a soldier.....	George E. Bryant	
REYNALDO, servant of Polonius.....	Sydney C. Mather	
FIRST PLAYER.....	Daniel Jarrett	
SECOND PLAYER.....	E. Raymond	
FIRST GRAVEDIGGER.....	Leonard Outram	
SECOND GRAVEDIGGER.....	Arthur Scott	
GHOST of HAMLET'S FATHER.....	Rowland Buckstone	
FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway.....	John J. Collins	
GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark and mother of Hamlet.....	William Harris	
OPHELIA, daughter of Polonius.....	George E. Bryant	
PLAYER QUEEN.....	Charlotte Deane	
Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Messengers, Followers of Fortinbras, and other Attendants	Virginia Harned	
	Adelaide Keim	

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

ACT ONE

THE FIRST SCENE

[*The scene represents a platform before the castle of Elsinore, the royal seat of the Kings of Denmark. A bell tolls midnight. The curtain rises at the sixth stroke of the bell and discovers FRANCISCO walking on his post. BERNARDO enters at the tenth stroke of the bell.*]

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.

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

FRANCISCO.

I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who is 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 hath my place.
Give you good night. *(Exit.)*

MARCELLUS.

Holla! Bernardo!

BERNARDO.

What, is Horatio there ?
Say,

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.

ACT ONE ❧ THE FIRST SCENE

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 a while;
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.

HORATIO.

Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

H A M L E T ❧ A T R A G E D Y

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.

ACT ONE & THE FIRST SCENE

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:
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,
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant
Hamlet—

Did slay this Fortinbras; who by a seal'd compact,
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror.
Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute,
But to recover of us, by strong hand, those fore-
said lands
So by his father lost.

BERNARDO.

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

Re-enter GHOST.

HORATIO.

But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!
I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!

H A M L E T ❁ A T R A G E D Y

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

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

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak !

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 ! *(The cock crows.)*

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,

ACT ONE & THE FIRST SCENE

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.

MARCELLUS.

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 dare 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.

(Exeunt.)

THE SECOND SCENE

[*A room of state in the castle. To the strains of a Danish march, there enter the KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, LORDS, and ATTENDANTS.*]

KING.

THOUGH yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death

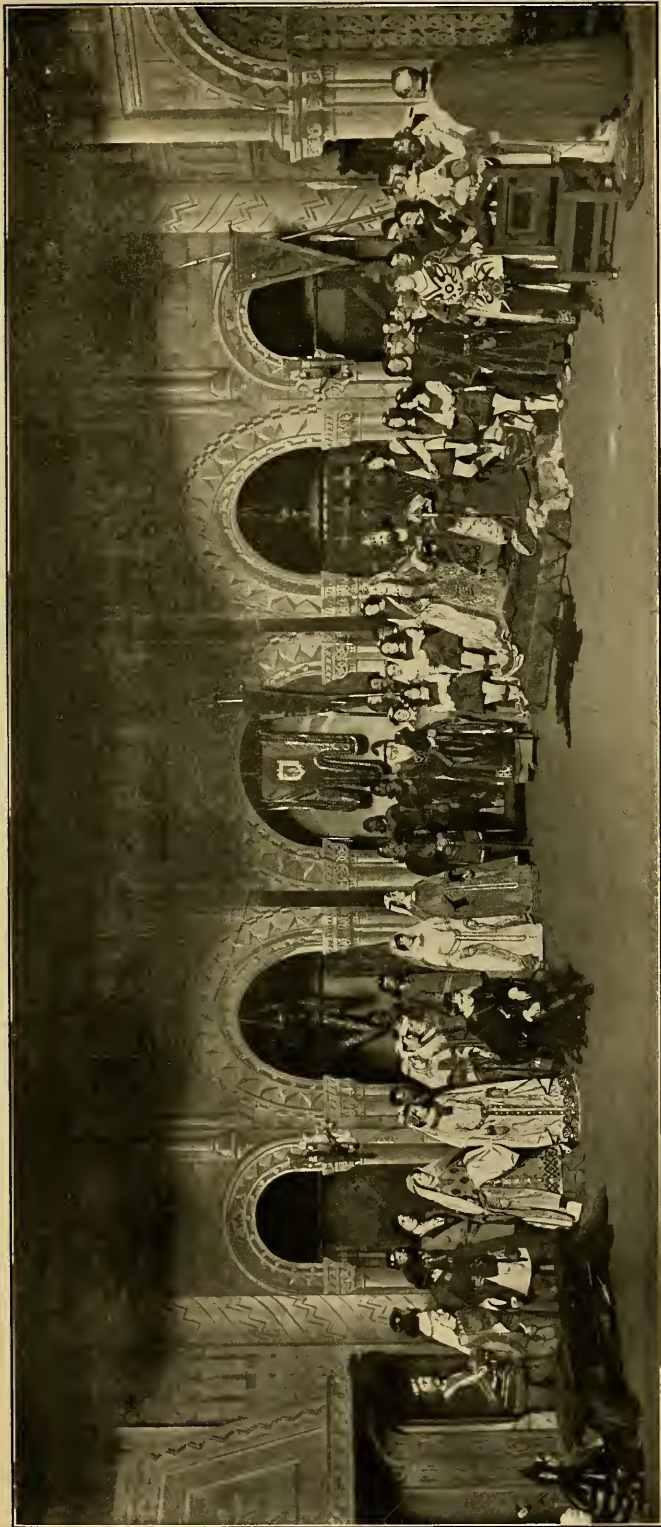
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?

LAERTES.

My dread lord,
Your leave and 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.

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



“ AND NOW MY COUSIN HAMLET AND MY SON.”

ACT ONE & SECOND SCENE

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.

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.

How is it that the clouds still hang on you ?

HAMLET.

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

QUEEN.

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

HAMLET.

Ay, madam, it is common.

QUEEN.

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

HAMLET.

Seems, madam ! nay, it is ; I know not "seems."
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected haviour 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.

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,
Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father:
But, you must know, your father lost a father,
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term
To do obsequious sorrow: but to persevere
In obstinate condolment is a course
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief:
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschool'd.
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,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin and our son.

QUEEN.

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

HAMLET.

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

KING.

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



"I SHALL IN ALL MY BEST OBEY YOU, MADAM."

ACT ONE SECOND SCENE

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 heaven shall bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

(Flourish. 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. *(Rising.)* 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;

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

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. (*To BERNARDO.*)
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 my ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report

ACT ONE SECOND SCENE

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.

O 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 & A TRAGEDY

HAMLET.

The king my father !

HORATIO.

Season your admiration for a while
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, dis-
till'd

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.

ACT ONE & SECOND SCENE

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 *and* BERNARDO.

We do, my lord.

HAMLET.

Arm'd, say you ?

MARCELLUS *and* BERNARDO.

Arm'd, my lord.

HAMLET.

From top to toe ?

MARCELLUS *and* BERNARDO.

My lord, from head to foot.

HAMLET.

Then saw you not his face ?

H A M L E T & A T R A G E D Y

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 *and* BERNARDO.

Longer, longer.

HORATIO.

Not when I saw 't.

HAMLET.

His beard was grizzled? no?

ACT ONE & SECOND SCENE

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.)*

THE THIRD SCENE

[*A room in the house of POLONIUS is shown. LAERTES and OPHELIA enter from the first door at the right of the stage.*]

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.
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends
The safety and health of this whole state.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs.
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.

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,
Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
And recks not his own rede.

ACT ONE. THE THIRD SCENE

LAERTES.

O, fear me not.

I stay too long: but here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS.

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
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no
tongue,

Nor any unproportion'd 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. Be-
ware

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 judg-
ment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy:
For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
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 own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

LAERTES.

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POLONIUS.

The time invites you; go, your servants tend.

LAERTES.

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

OPHELIA.

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

LAERTES.

Farewell. (*Exit.*)

POLONIUS.

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

OPHELIA.

So please you, something touching the Lord
Hamlet.

POLONIUS.

Marry, well bethought:
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you, and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and boun-
teous:

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.

ACT ONE. THE THIRD SCENE

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.

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 you'll tender me a fool.

OPHELIA.

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

POLONIUS.

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

OPHELIA.

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

POLONIUS.

Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows.

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.*)

THE FOURTH SCENE

[The action of this scene passes on the same platform that was shown in the first scene of this act. HAMLET and HORATIO appear from the first entrance on the right and approach MARCELLUS, who is on guard. HORATIO stops at the left of the platform, and looks out over the battlements.]

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.

MARCELLUS.

No, it is struck.

HORATIO.

Indeed ? I heard it not : it then draws near the
season

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

*(A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off
within.)*

What doth 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 ?

ACT ONE. FOURTH SCENE

HAMLET.

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

Enter GHOST.

HORATIO.

Look, my lord, it comes!

HAMLET.

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin 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.

H A M L E T ❁ A T R A G E D Y

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 at a pin's fee ;
And for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself ?
It waves me forth again : I'll follow it.

HORATIO.

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,
And there assume some other horrible form,
And draw you into madness ?

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

ACT ONE & FOURTH SCENE

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 let's me:

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

(Exeunt GHOST and HAMLET.)

MARCELLUS.

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

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HORATIO.

Heaven will direct it.

MARCELLUS.

Nay, let's follow him.

(Exeunt.)

THE FIFTH SCENE

[*A more remote part of the same platform to which the GHOST has led HAMLET.*]

HAMLET.

W^HITHER 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



"I AM THY FATHER'S SPIRIT."

ACT ONE. THE FIFTH SCENE

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.

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 A TRAGEDY

HAMLET.

O my prophetic soul!

My uncle!

GHOST.

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,—
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, 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;
So did it mine.

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,
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.

HAMLET.

O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!

GHOST.

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

ACT ONE. THE FIFTH SCENE

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, adieu! 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 vil-
lain;
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.

HORATIO and MARCELLUS. (Within.)

My lord, my lord!

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

MARCELLUS.

Lord Hamlet!

HORATIO.

Heaven secure him!

HAMLET.

So be it!

MARCELLUS.

Illo, ho, ho, my lord!

HAMLET.

Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, hild, come.

MARCELLUS.

How is't, my noble lord?

HORATIO.

What news, my lord?

HAMLET.

O, wonderful!

HORATIO.

Good my lord, tell it.

HAMLET.

No; you will reveal it.

HORATIO.

Not I, my lord, by heaven.

MARCELLUS.

Nor I, my lord.

HAMLET.

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

But you'll be secret?

HORATIO *and* MARCELLUS.

Ay, by heaven, my lord.

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ACT ONE THE FIFTH SCENE

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 hath business and desire,
Such as it is; and for my 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 ❁ A TRAGEDY

HAMLET.

Never make known what you have seen to-night.

HORATIO *and* 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, true-penny?

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.

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ACT ONE THE FIFTH SCENE

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 head-shake,
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,

H A M L E T & A T R A G E D Y

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 to-
gether ;

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 TWO

THE FIRST SCENE

[*The stage throughout this act is set to represent a room of state in the Castle.*]

Enter POLONIUS *and* REYNALDO

POLONIUS.

GIVE him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

REYNALDO.

I will, my lord.

POLONIUS.

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

REYNALDO.

My lord, I did intend it.

POLONIUS.

Observe his inclination in yourself.

REYNALDO.

I shall, my lord.

POLONIUS.

And let him ply his music.

REYNALDO.

Well, my 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!

POLONIUS.

With what, i' the name of God?

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

OPHELIA.

My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,
No hat upon his head,
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors, he comes before me.

POLONIUS.

Mad for thy love ?

OPHELIA.

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

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.

POLONIUS.

Come, go with me : I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love ;
Whose violent property fordoes itself

ACT TWO ❧ THE FIRST SCENE

And leads the will to desperate undertakings.

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 letters and denied
His access to me.

POLONIUS.

That hath made him mad.

I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted him.

Come, go we to the king :

This must be known ; which, being kept close,
might move

More grief to hide than hate to utter love.

Come.

(*Exeunt.*)

Flourish. Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and ATTENDANTS.

KING.

Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern !
Moreover that we much did long to see you,
The need we have to use you did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation.

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 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.

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

QUEEN.

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

Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

*(Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and
some ATTENDANTS.)*

Enter POLONIUS.

POLONIUS.

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.

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

POLONIUS.

My liege and madam,
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,” etc.

ACT TWO THE FIRST SCENE

QUEEN.

Came this from Hamlet to her ?

POLONIUS.

Good madam, stay a while ; 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 my young mistress thus I did bespeak :
“Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star ;
This must not be :” and then I prescripts 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.

Do you think this ?

QUEEN.

It may be, very like.

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

POLONIUS.

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

KING.

Not that I know.

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.

How may we try it further?

POLONIUS.

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

QUEEN.

So he does, indeed.

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.

We will try it.

QUEEN.

But look where sadly the poor wretch comes
reading.

POLONIUS.

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

(*Exeunt KING, QUEEN, and ATTENDANTS.*)

ACT TWO & THE FIRST SCENE

Enter HAMLET, reading.

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

HAMLET.

Well, God-a-mercy.

POLONIUS.

Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET.

Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

POLONIUS.

Not I, my lord.

HAMLET.

Then I would you were so honest a man.

POLONIUS.

Honest, my lord!

HAMLET.

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

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?

POLONIUS.

I have, my lord.

HAMLET.

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

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

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: 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.

POLONIUS.

What is the matter, my lord?

HAMLET.

Between who?

POLONIUS.

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

HAMLET.

Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have 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, shall grow old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

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.

POLONIUS.

Indeed, that's out of the air. (*Aside.*) How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness

ACT TWO & THE FIRST SCENE

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. (*Down L.*)

POLONIUS.

Fare you well, my lord.

HAMLET.

These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

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 you both? What's the news?

ROSENCRANTZ.

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

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

HAMLET.

Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true. What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN.

Prison, my lord?

HAMLET.

Denmark's a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ.

We think not so, my lord.

HAMLET.

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

ROSENCRANTZ.

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

HAMLET.

O God, I could be bounded in a 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.

ACT TWO * THE FIRST SCENE

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 *and* 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 ❁ A TRAGEDY

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.

GUILDENSTERN.

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

ACT TWO. THE FIRST SCENE

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. What players are they?

ROSENCRANTZ.

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

HAMLET.

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

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

(Flourish of trumpets within.)

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

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 outwards, 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.

Re-enter 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.

POLONIUS.

My lord, I have news to tell you.

ACT TWO THE FIRST SCENE

HAMLET.

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

POLONIUS.

The actors are come hither, my lord.

HAMLET.

Buz, buz!

POLONIUS.

Upon my honour,—

HAMLET.

Then came each actor on his ass,—

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!

POLONIUS.

What a treasure had he, my lord?

HAMLET.

Why,

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

POLONIUS. (*Aside.*)

Still on my daughter.

HAMLET.

Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

POLONIUS.

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

HAMLET.

Nay, that follows not.

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 abridgment comes.

Enter four or five PLAYERS.

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

FIRST PLAYER.

What speech, my good lord?

HAMLET.

I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once;

ACT TWO ❧ THE FIRST SCENE

for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general: but it was an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter: if it live in your memory, begin at this line:

“The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian beast,”—

It is not so: it begins with “Pyrrhus.” Let me see, let me see:

“The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks.”

So! Proceed you.

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.

But as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
The bold winds speechless and the orb below
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region, so after Pyrrhus' pause
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work;

H A M L E T ❁ A T R A G E D Y

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 !”

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 ?”

POLONIUS.

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

FIRST PLAYER.

“Run barefoot up and down, threatening the
flames ;

A clout upon that head

Where late the diadem stood ; and for a robe,

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 pro-
nounced :

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.”

ACT TWO ❁ THE FIRST SCENE

POLONIUS.

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

HAMLET.

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

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 shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

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? *(To ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)* My good friends, I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

ROSENCRANTZ.

Good my lord!

H A M L E T ❁ A T R A G E D Y

HAMLET.

Ay, so, God be wi' ye!

(Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.)

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 speech 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.)*

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 speech,

Make mad the guilty and appal the free,

Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed

ACT TWO ❁ THE FIRST SCENE

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!

S'wounds, 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 vil-
lain!

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! Hum, I
have heard

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have 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

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

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 THREE

THE FIRST SCENE

[*The scene is still the same as that on which the curtain fell at the end of Act II.—a room of state in the Castle. The KING, the QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN are disposed about the apartment.*]

KING.

AND can you, by no drift of circumstance,
Get from him why he puts on this confusion ?

ROSENCRANTZ.

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

QUEEN.

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.

POLONIUS.

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

KING.

With all my heart ; and it doth much content me
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.*)

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

KING.

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.

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.)

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.
(*To* KING.) I hear him coming: let's withdraw,
my lord. (*Exeunt* KING 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,



“THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY FROM WHOSE BOURN NO
TRAVELLER RETURNS.”

ACT THREE ❁ FIRST SCENE

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's con-
tumely,
The pangs of 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 pitch 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 ❁ A TRAGEDY

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

ACT THREE ❁ FIRST SCENE

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 heaven and earth? 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

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

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 !

HAMLET.

I have heard of your paintings too, well enough ; God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another : you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't ; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages : those that are married already, all but one, shall live ; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. (*Exit.*)

OPHELIA.

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown !
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue,
sword :

The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down !
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh ;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy : O, woe is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see !
(*Exit OPHELIA.*)

Re-enter KING and POLONIUS.

KING.

Love ! his affections do not that way tend ;
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,

ACT THREE ❁ FIRST SCENE

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

O'er which his melancholy sits on brood :—
He shall with speed to England,
For the demand of our neglected tribute :
Haply the seas and countries different
With variable objects shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart,
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

POLONIUS.

It shall do well : but yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love.
My lord, do as you please ;
But, if you hold it fit, after the play,
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief : let her be round with him ;
And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference. If she find him not,
To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

KING.

It shall be so :
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.
(*Exeunt.*)

Enter HAMLET and PLAYERS.

HAMLET.

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced
it to you, trippingly on the tongue : but if you
mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as
lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not
saw the air too much with your hand, thus ; but
use all gently : for in the very torrent, tempest,
and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you
must acquire and beget a temperance that may

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.

FIRST PLAYER.

I warrant your honour.

HAMLET.

Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

FIRST PLAYER.

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

ACT THREE FIRST SCENE

HAMLET.

O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them: for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready. (*Exeunt PLAYERS.*)

What ho! Horatio!

Enter HORATIO.

HORATIO.

Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAMLET.

Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

HORATIO.

O, my dear lord,—

HAMLET.

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

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

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for herself: for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;

HAMLET * A TRAGEDY

A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well com-
mingled

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

That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee. Something too much of this.
There is a play to-night before the king;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death:
I prithee, when thou seest that act a-foot,
Even with the very comment of thy soul
Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.
They are coming to the play: I must be idle:
Get you a place.

*Danish march. A flourish. Enter the KING, the
QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ,
GUILDENSTERN, and other LORDS attendant, with
the GUARD carrying torches.*

KING.

How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAMLET.

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

ACT THREE ❁ FIRST SCENE

KING.

I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine.

HAMLET.

No, nor mine now. (*To POLONIUS.*) My lord, you played once i' the university, you say?

POLONIUS.

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

HAMLET.

What did you enact?

POLONIUS.

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

HAMLET.

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

ROSENCRANTZ.

Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

QUEEN.

Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAMLET.

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

POLONIUS. (*To the KING.*)

O, ho! do you mark that?

HAMLET.

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

(*Lying down at OPHELIA's feet.*)

OPHELIA.

You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

HAMLET.

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

OPHELIA.

Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

HAMLET.

So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year: but, by 'r lady, he must build churches then. (*Hautboys play.*)

OPHELIA.

What means this play, my lord?

HAMLET.

Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

OPHELIA.

But what is the argument of the play?

Enter PROLOGUE.

HAMLET.

We shall know by this fellow.

PROLOGUE.

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

HAMLET.

Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

ACT THREE & FIRST SCENE

OPHELIA.

'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET.

As woman's love.

Enter two PLAYERS, KING and QUEEN.

PLAYER KING.

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

PLAYER QUEEN.

So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must.

PLAYER KING.

Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do:
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, beloved; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou—

PLAYER QUEEN.

O, confound the rest!

Such love must needs be treason in my breast:
In second husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

HAMLET. (*Aside.*)

Wormwood, wormwood.

PLAYER KING.

I do believe you think what now you speak,
But what we do determine oft we break.

H A M L E T ❁ A T R A G E D Y

What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
So think thou wilt no second husband wed,
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

PLAYER QUEEN.

Nor earth to me give food nor heaven light!
Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

PLAYER KING.

'Tis deeply sworn.

HAMLET.

If she should break it now!

PLAYER KING.

Sweet, leave me here a while;
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. (*Sleeps.*)

PLAYER QUEEN.

Sleep rock thy brain;
And never come mischance between us twain!
(*Exit.*)

HAMLET.

Madam, how like you this play?

QUEEN.

The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

HAMLET.

O, but she'll keep her word.

KING.

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

HAMLET.

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



“WHAT DO YOU CALL THE PLAY? THE MOUSE-TRAP.”

ACT THREE & FIRST SCENE

KING.

What do you call the play?

HAMLET.

The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista: you shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: but what o' that? your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not: let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

Enter LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

OPHELIA.

You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

HAMLET.

I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying. Begin, murderer; leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come: the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

LUCIANUS.

Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;

Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

(Pours the poison into the sleeper's ear.)

HAMLET.

He poisons him i' the garden for his estate. His name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and written in very choice Italian: you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

HAMLET *∞* A TRAGEDY

OPHELIA.

The king rises.

HAMLET.

What, frightened with false fire!

QUEEN.

How fares my lord?

POLONIUS.

Give o'er the play.

KING.

Give me some light. Away!

POLONIUS.

Lights, lights, lights!

(Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.)

HAMLET.

Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungalled play;

For some must watch, while some must sleep:

Thus runs the world away.

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

HORATIO.

Very well, my lord.

HAMLET.

Upon the talk of the poisoning?

HORATIO.

I did very well note him.

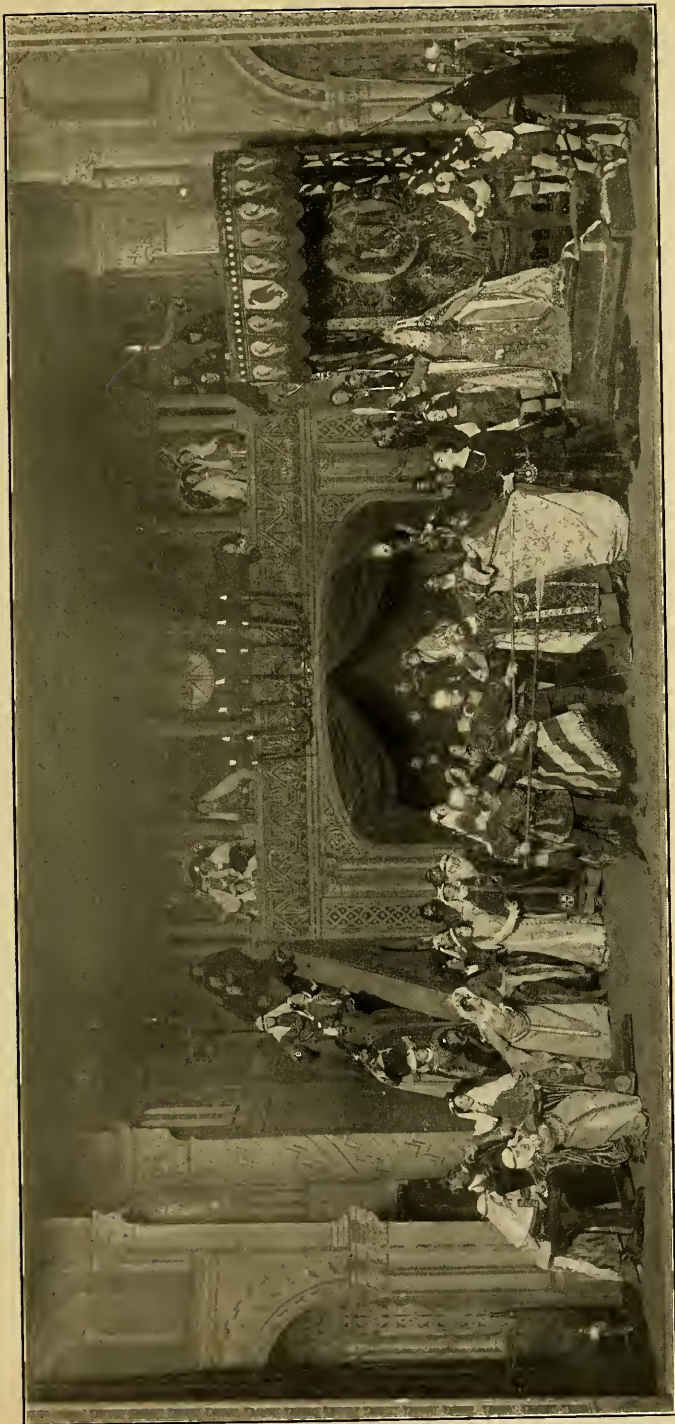
HAMLET.

Ah, ha! Come, some music! come, the re-
corders!

For if the king like not the comedy,

Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music!



“ YOU SHALL SEE ANON, HOW THE MURDERER GETS THE LOVE OF GONZAGO'S WIFE.”

ACT THREE ❁ FIRST SCENE

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN.

GUILDENSTERN.

Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

HAMLET.

Sir, a whole history.

GUILDENSTERN.

The king, sir,—

HAMLET.

Ay, sir, what of him?

GUILDENSTERN.

Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

HAMLET.

With drink, sir?

GUILDENSTERN.

No, my lord, rather with choler.

HAMLET.

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

GUILDENSTERN.

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

HAMLET.

I am tame, sir: pronounce.

GUILDENSTERN.

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

HAMLET.

You are welcome.

HAMLET A TRAGEDY

GUILDENSTERN.

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

HAMLET.

Sir, I cannot.

GUILDENSTERN.

What, my lord?

HAMLET.

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

ROSENCRANTZ.

Then thus she says; your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

HAMLET.

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

ROSENCRANTZ.

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

HAMLET.

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

ROSENCRANTZ.

My lord, you once did love me.

HAMLET.

So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

ACT THREE & FIRST SCENE

ROSENCRANTZ.

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

HAMLET.

Sir, I lack advancement.

ROSENCRANTZ.

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

HAMLET.

Ay, sir, but "while the grass grows,"—the proverb is something musty.

Re-enter PLAYERS with RECORDERS.

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

GUILDENSTERN.

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

HAMLET.

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

GUILDENSTERN.

My lord, I cannot.

HAMLET.

I pray you.

GUILDENSTERN.

Believe me, I cannot.

HAMLET.

I do beseech you.

GUILDENSTERN.

I know no touch of it, my lord.

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

HAMLET.

It is as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

GUILDENSTERN.

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

HAMLET.

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

Re-enter POLONIUS.

God bless you, sir!

POLONIUS.

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

HAMLET.

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

POLONIUS.

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

HAMLET.

Methinks it is like a weasel.

ACT THREE & FIRST SCENE

POLONIUS.

It is backed like a weasel.

HAMLET.

Or like a whale ?

POLONIUS.

Very like a whale.

HAMLET.

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

POLONIUS.

I will say so.

(*Exit* POLONIUS.)

HAMLET.

“By and by” is easily said. Leave me, friends.
(*Exeunt all but* HAMLET.)

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes
out
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot
blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my
mother.

O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom:
Let me be cruel, not unnatural:
I will speak daggers to her, but use none. (*Exit.*)

THE SECOND SCENE

[*The King, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN are discovered in conference together within the QUEEN'S closet.*]

KING.

I LIKE him not, nor stands it safe with us
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you;
I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
And he to England shall along with you.
Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage,
For we will fetters put about this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

We will haste us.

(*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*)

KING.

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will:
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
And like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves
mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? "Forgive me my foul
murder?"
That cannot be, since I am still possess'd

ACT THREE. SECOND SCENE

Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above;
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature, and we ourselves compell'd
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
Try what repentance can: what can it not?
Yet what can it when one can not repent?
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
O limed soul, that struggling to be free
Art more engaged! Help, angels! make assay!
Bow, stubborn knees, and, heart with strings of
steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!
All may be well. *(Retires and kneels.)*

Enter HAMLET.

HAMLET.

Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
And now I'll do 't: and so he goes to heaven:
And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd:
A villain kills my father; and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.
O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread,
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?
But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him: and am I then revenged,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

No.

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent :
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed ;
At game, a-swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in 't ;
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays :
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. (*Exit.*)

KING. (*Rising.*)

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below :
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.
(*Exit.*)

Enter QUEEN *and* POLONIUS.

POLONIUS.

He will come straight. Look you lay home to
him :
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear
with,
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood be-
tween
Much heat and him. I'll sconce me even here.
Pray you, be round with him.

HAMLET. (*Within.*)

Mother, mother, mother !

QUEEN.

I'll warrant you ; fear me not. Withdraw, I hear
him coming.
(POLONIUS *hides behind the arras.*)

Enter HAMLET.

HAMLET.

Now, mother, what's the matter ?

ACT THREE. SECOND SCENE

QUEEN.

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET.

Mother, you have my father much offended.

QUEEN.

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET.

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

QUEEN.

Why, how now, Hamlet!

HAMLET.

What's the matter now?

QUEEN.

Have you forgot me?

HAMLET.

No, by the rood, not so:
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
And — would it were not so! — you are my
mother.

QUEEN.

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

HAMLET.

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

QUEEN.

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

POLONIUS. (*Behind.*)

What, ho! help, help, help!

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

HAMLET. (*Drawing.*)

How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!
(*Makes a pass through the arras.*)

POLONIUS. (*Behind.*)

O, I am slain! (*Falls and dies.*)

QUEEN.

O me, what hast thou done?

HAMLET.

Nay, I know not: is it the king?

QUEEN.

O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAMLET.

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

QUEEN.

As kill a king!

HAMLET.

Ay, lady, 'twas my word.

(*Lifts up the arras and discovers POLONIUS.*)

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

I took thee for thy better.

Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you
down,

And let me wring your heart: for so I shall,

If it be made of penetrable stuff;

If damned custom have not brass'd it so,

That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

QUEEN.

What have I done, that thou darest wag thy
tongue

In noise so rude against me?

ACT THREE SECOND SCENE

HAMLET.

Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows
As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul, and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words: heaven's face doth glow;
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.

QUEEN.

Ay me, what act?

HAMLET.

Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See what a grace was seated on this brow;
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man:
This was your husband. Look you now, what
follows:

Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love, for at your age
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgment: and what judgment

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

Would step from this to this?
O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax
And melt in her own fire.

QUEEN.

O Hamlet, speak no more:
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,
And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.

HAMLET.

Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an incestuous bed.

QUEEN.

No more, sweet Hamlet!

HAMLET.

A murderer and a villain;
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings;
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole
And put it in his pocket!

QUEEN.

No more!

HAMLET.

A king of shreds and patches—

Enter GHOST.

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards! What would your gra-
cious figure?

QUEEN.

Alas, he's mad!

ACT THREE & SECOND SCENE

HAMLET.

Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

GHOST.

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

HAMLET.

How is it with you, lady?

QUEEN.

Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?
O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

HAMLET.

On him, on him! Look you how pale he glares!
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable. Do not look upon
me,
Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects: then what I have to do
Will want true colour; tears perchance for blood.

QUEEN.

To whom do you speak this?

HAMLET.

Do you see nothing there?

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HAMLET ❧ A TRAGEDY

QUEEN.

Nothing at all ; yet all that is I see

HAMLET.

Nor did you nothing hear ?

QUEEN.

No, nothing but ourselves.

HAMLET.

Why, look you there ! look, how it steals away !
My father, in his habit as he lived !
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal !
(Exit GHOST.)

QUEEN.

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

HAMLET.

Ecstasy !

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music : it is not madness
That I have utter'd : bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word, which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass but my madness speaks :
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven ;
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come.

QUEEN.

O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

HAMLET.

O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.

ACT THREE & SECOND SCENE

Good night: but go not to my uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.

Once more, good night:

And when you are desirous to be blest,
I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,

(Pointing to POLONIUS.)

I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,
To punish me with this, and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.

I will bestow him, and will answer well

The death I gave him. Good night, mother.

(Exit QUEEN.)

I must be cruel, only to be kind:

Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.

(HAMLET weeps over body of POLONIUS.)

CURTAIN.

ACT FOUR

THE FIRST SCENE

[*The scene shows a room in the Castle of Elsinore.
The QUEEN and MARCELLUS enter.*]

QUEEN.

I WILL not speak with her.

MARCELLUS.

She is importunate, indeed distract :
Her mood will needs be pitied.
She speaks much of her father, says she hears
There's tricks i' the world, and hems and beats
her heart,
'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may
strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

QUEEN.

Let her come in. (*Exit MARCELLUS.*)
(*Aside.*) To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss.

Re-enter MARCELLUS, with OPHELIA.

OPHELIA.

Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark ?

QUEEN

How now, Ophelia !

OPHELIA. (*Sings.*)

How should I your true love know
From another one ?
By his cockle hat and staff
And his sandal shoon.

QUEEN.

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song ?

H A M L E T ❁ A T R A G E D Y

OPHELIA.

Say you ? nay, pray you, mark.

(*Sings.*) He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone ;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.

Oh, oh !

QUEEN.

Nay, but, Ophelia,—

OPHELIA.

Pray you, mark.

(*Sings.*) White his shroud as the mountain snow,—

Enter KING.

QUEEN.

Alas, look here, my lord.

OPHELIA. (*Sings.*)

Larded with sweet flowers ;
Which bewept to the grave did go
With true-love showers.

KING,

How do you, pretty lady ?

OPHELIA.

Well, God 'ild you ! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table !

KING.

Conceit upon her father.

OPHELIA.

Pray you, let's have no words of this ; but when they ask you what it means, say you this :



“HE IS DEAD AND GONE, LADY.”

ACT FOUR. FIRST SCENE

(Sings.) To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window
To be your Valentine.

KING.

Pretty Ophelia!
How long hath she been thus?

OPHELIA.

I hope all will be well. We must be patient:
but I cannot choose but weep, to think they
should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother
shall know of it: and so I thank you for your good
counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies;
good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night.
(Exit.)

KING.

Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray
you. (Exit MARCELLUS.)
O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Ger-
trude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions! (A noise within.)

QUEEN.

Alack, what noise is this?

Enter MARCELLUS.

KING.

What is the matter?

MARCELLUS.

Save yourself, my lord:
The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;
They cry "Choose we; Laertes shall be king!"
Caps, hands and tongues applaud it to the clouds,
"Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!"

(Noise within.)

KING.

The doors are broke.

Enter LAERTES, armed; DANES following.

LAERTES.

Where is this king? Sirs, stand you all without.

DANES.

No, let's come in.

LAERTES.

I pray you, give me leave.

DANES.

We will, we will. *(They retire without the door.)*

LAERTES.

I thank you: keep the door. O thou vile king,
Give me my father!

QUEEN.

Calmly, good Laertes.

KING.

What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person:
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would.
Let him go, Gertrude.

LAERTES.

Where is my father?

KING.

Dead.

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“ AT HIS HEAD A GRASS GREEN TURF, AT HIS FOOT A STONE.”

ACT FOUR & FIRST SCENE

QUEEN.

But not by him.

KING.

Let him demand his fill.

LAERTES.

How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:
To hell, allegiance! To this point I stand,
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I'll be revenged
Most throughly for my father.

KING.

Who shall stay you?

LAERTES.

My will, not all the world:
And for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

KING.

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

DANES. (*Within.*)

Let her come in.

LAERTES.

How now! what noise is that?

Re-enter OPHELIA.

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

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

OPHELIA. (*Sings.*)

They bore him barefaced on the bier :
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny :
And in his grave rain'd many a tear,—

Fare you well, my dove !

LAERTES.

Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus.

OPHELIA. (*Sings.*)

You must sing down a-down,
An you call him a-down-a.

O, how the wheel becomes it ! It is the false
steward, that stole his master's daughter.

LAERTES.

This nothing's more than matter.

OPHELIA.

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance : pray
you, love, remember : and there is pansies, that's
for thoughts.

LAERTES.

A document in madness ; thoughts and re-
membrance fitted.

OPHELIA.

There's fennel for you, and columbines : there's
rue for you : and here's some for me : we may
call it herb of grace o' Sundays : O, you must
wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy :
I would give you some violets, but they with-
ered all when my father died : they say a' made
a good end,—

(*Sings.*) For bonnie sweet Robin is all my joy.



“AND IN HIS GRAVE RAIN'D MANY A TEAR.”

ACT FOUR FIRST SCENE

LAERTES.

Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

OPHELIA. (*Sings.*)

And will a' not come again?
And will a' not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.
His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll:
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan:
God ha' mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be
wi' you. (*Exit.*)

KING.

Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you
will.
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and
me:
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom
give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction.

LAERTES.

Let this be so;
His means of death, his obscure funeral,
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite nor formal ostentation,
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call 't in question.

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

KING.

So you shall ;
And where the offence is let the great axe fall.
Hamlet who hath your noble father slain
Pursued my life.

LAERTES.

And so have I a noble father lost ;
A sister driven into desperate terms,
Whose worth,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections : but my revenge will come.

Enter a MESSENGER, with letters.

KING.

How now ! what news ?

MESSENGER.

Letters, my lord, from Hamlet :
This to your majesty ; this to the queen.

KING.

From Hamlet ! who brought them ?

MESSENGER.

Sailors, my lord, they say ; I saw them not :
They were given me by Claudio ; he received
them
Of him that brought them.

KING.

Laertes, you shall hear them.

Leave us.

(Exit MESSENGER.)

(Reads.) “ High and mighty, You shall know I
am set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow
shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes : when
I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, re-
count the occasion of my sudden and more
strange return.

“ HAMLET.”



"THERE'S A DAISY!"

ACT FOUR FIRST SCENE

What should this mean? Are all the rest come
back?

Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

LAERTES.

Know you the hand?

KING.

'Tis Hamlet's character. "Naked!"
And in a postscript here, he says "alone."
Can you advise me?

LAERTES.

I'm lost in it, my lord. But let him come;
It warms the very sickness in my heart,
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
"Thus didest thou."

KING.

If it be so, Laertes,
Will you be ruled by me?

LAERTES.

Ay, my lord;
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

KING.

To thine own peace.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine.

LAERTES.

What part is that, my lord?

KING.

A very riband in the cap of youth.
Here was a gentleman of Normandy:—
He made confession of you,
And gave you such a masterly report,

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

For art and exercise in your defence,
And for your rapier most especial,
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed
If one could match you.
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—

LAERTES.

What out of this, my lord ?

KING.

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 to-
gether
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.

LAERTES.

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.



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."

ACT FOUR & FIRST SCENE

KING.

Let's further think of this ;
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunning's :
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 prepared him
A chalice for the nonce ; whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there.

Enter QUEEN.

QUEEN.

One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow : your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

LAERTES.

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 ;
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.

Enter MARCELLUS *and a* SOLDIER, *bearing the body*
of OPHELIA *and followed by ladies and courtiers.*

LAERTES.

I forbid my tears : but yet
It is our trick ; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will.
Adieu, my lord :
I have a speech of fire that fain would blaze,
But that this folly doubts it.

ACT FIVE

THE FIRST SCENE

[*A churchyard is shown on the stage. Two CLOWNS enter, bearing spades, etc.*]

FIRST CLOWN.

IS she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

SECOND CLOWN.

I tell thee she is; and therefore make her grave straight: the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

FIRST CLOWN.

How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

SECOND CLOWN.

Why, 'tis found so.

FIRST CLOWN.

It must be "se offendendo;" it cannot 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, to perform: argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

SECOND CLOWN.

Nay, but hear you, goodman delver.

FIRST CLOWN.

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.

H A M L E T ❁ A T R A G E D Y

SECOND CLOWN.

But is this law ?

FIRST CLOWN.

Ay, marry, is 't; crowner's quest law.

SECOND CLOWN.

Will you ha' the truth on 't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

FIRST CLOWN.

Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, 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.

SECOND CLOWN.

Was he a gentleman ?

FIRST CLOWN.

A' was the first that ever bore arms.

SECOND CLOWN.

Why, he had none.

FIRST CLOWN.

What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says Adam digged: could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

SECOND CLOWN.

Go to.

FIRST CLOWN.

What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter ?

ACT FIVE. THE FIRST SCENE

SECOND CLOWN.

The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

FIRST CLOWN.

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.

SECOND CLOWN.

“Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?”

FIRST CLOWN.

Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

SECOND CLOWN.

Marry, now I can tell.

FIRST CLOWN.

To 't.

SECOND CLOWN.

Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, afar off.

FIRST CLOWN.

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.)

(He digs, and sings.)

In youth, when I did love, did love,

Methought it was very sweet,

To contract, O, the time, for-a my behove,

O, methought, there-a was nothing-a meet.

H A M L E T ❁ A T R A G E D Y

HAMLET.

Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

HORATIO.

Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

HAMLET.

'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

FIRST CLOWN. (*Sings.*)

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.*)

HAMLET.

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! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

HORATIO.

It might, my lord.

HAMLET.

Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with 'em? mine ache to think on 't.

FIRST CLOWN. (*Sings.*)

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.*)

ACT FIVE THE FIRST SCENE

HAMLET.

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? I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

FIRST CLOWN.

Mine, sir.

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

HAMLET.

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

FIRST CLOWN.

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

HAMLET.

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

FIRST CLOWN.

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

HAMLET.

What man dost thou dig it for?

FIRST CLOWN.

For no man, sir.

HAMLET.

What woman then?

FIRST CLOWN.

For none neither.

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

HAMLET.

Who is to be buried in 't?

FIRST CLOWN.

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

HAMLET.

How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

FIRST CLOWN.

Of all the days i' the year, I came to 't that day that our last King Hamlet o'ercame Fortinbras.

HAMLET.

How long is that since?

FIRST CLOWN.

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

HAMLET.

Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

FIRST CLOWN.

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

HAMLET.

Why?

FIRST CLOWN.

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

HAMLET.

How came he mad?

ACT FIVE THE FIRST SCENE

FIRST CLOWN.

Very strangely, they say.

HAMLET.

How "strangely" ?

FIRST CLOWN.

Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

HAMLET.

Upon what ground ?

FIRST CLOWN.

Why, here in Denmark : I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

HAMLET.

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

FIRST CLOWN.

I' faith, if a' be not rotten before a' die—a' will last you some eight year or nine year : a tanner will last you nine year.

HAMLET.

Why he more than another ?

FIRST CLOWN.

Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade that a' will keep out water a great while ; and your water is a sore decayer of your dead body. Here's a skull now : this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years.

HAMLET.

Whose was it ?

FIRST CLOWN.

A mad fellow's it was : whose do you think it was ?

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

HAMLET.

Nay, I know not.

FIRST CLOWN.

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.

HAMLET.

This ?

FIRST CLOWN.

E'en that.

HAMLET. (*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 chop-fallen? 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.

HORATIO.

What's that, my lord ?

HAMLET.

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

HORATIO.

E'en so.

ACT FIVE ❁ THE FIRST SCENE

HAMLET.

And smelt so? pah! (*Puts down the skull.*)

HORATIO.

E'en so, my lord.

HAMLET.

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?

HORATIO.

'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

HAMLET.

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 Cæsar, 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 this 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.*)

HAMLET * A TRAGEDY

LAERTES.

What ceremony else ?

HAMLET.

That is Laertes, a very noble youth : mark.

LAERTES.

What ceremony else ?

FIRST PRIEST.

Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
As we have warranty : her death was doubtful ;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
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.

LAERTES.

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.

LAERTES.

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.

HAMLET.

What, the fair Ophelia !



“THE DEVIL TAKE THY SOUL.”

ACT FIVE. THE FIRST SCENE

QUEEN. (*Scattering flowers.*)

Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

I hoped 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.

LAERTES.

O, treble woe

Fall ten times treble on that cursed head

Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense

Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth a while,

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'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head

Of blue Olympus.

HAMLET. (*Advancing.*)

What is he whose grief

Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow

Conjures the wandering stars and makes them
stand

Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,

Hamlet the Dane.

LAERTES.

The devil take thy soul. (*Grappling with him.*)

HAMLET.

Thou pray'st not well.

I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;

For, though I am not splenitive and rash,

Yet have I in me something dangerous,

Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand.

KING.

Pluck them asunder.

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

QUEEN.

Hamlet, Hamlet!

ALL.

Gentlemen,—

HORATIO.

Good my lord, be quiet.

(The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.)

HAMLET.

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

QUEEN.

O my son, what theme?

HAMLET.

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

KING.

O, he is mad, Laertes.

QUEEN.

For love of God, forbear him.

HAMLET.

'Swounds, show me what thou 'lt do:

Woo 't weep? woo 't fight? woo 't fast? woo 't
tear thyself?

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, and thou 'lt mouth,

I'll rant as well as thou.

ACT FIVE. THE FIRST SCENE

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 disclosed,
His silence will sit drooping.

HAMLET.

Hear you, sir ;
What is the reason that you use me thus ?
I loved 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 thee, 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.
This grave shall have a living monument :
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see ;
Till then, in patience our proceeding be.
(*Exeunt.*)

THE SECOND SCENE

[*A hall in the castle. HAMLET and HORATIO enter.*]

HAMLET.

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

HORATIO.

Peace! who comes here?

Enter OSRIC.

OSRIC.

Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

HAMLET.

I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this water-fly?

HORATIO.

No, my good lord.

HAMLET.

Thy state is the more gracious, for 'tis a vice to know him.

OSRIC.

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

HAMLET.

I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

ACT FIVE ❁ SECOND SCENE

OSRIC.

I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

HAMLET.

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

OSRIC.

It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

HAMLET.

But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot, or my complexion—

OSRIC.

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—

HAMLET.

I beseech you, remember—

(HAMLET moves him to put on his hat.)

OSRIC.

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.

HAMLET.

What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

OSRIC.

Of Laertes?

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HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

HAMLET.

Of him, sir.

OSRIC.

You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

HAMLET.

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

OSRIC.

I mean, sir, for his weapon.

HAMLET.

What's his weapon?

OSRIC.

Rapier and dagger.

HAMLET.

That's two of his weapons: but, well.

OSRIC.

The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hanger, 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.

HAMLET.

What call you the carriages?

OSRIC.

The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

HAMLET.

The phrase would be more germane to the matter if we could carry a cannon by our sides.

ACT FIVE & SECOND SCENE

OSRIC.

The king, sir, hath laid, sir, 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.

HAMLET.

How if I answer "no"?

OSRIC.

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

HAMLET.

Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his majesty, it is 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.

OSRIC.

Shall I redeliver you e'en so?

HAMLET.

To this effect, sir, after what flourish your nature will.

OSRIC.

I commend my duty to your lordship.

HAMLET.

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

HORATIO.

You will lose this wager, my lord.

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HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

HAMLET.

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.

HORATIO.

Nay, good my lord,—

HAMLET.

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

HORATIO.

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

HAMLET.

Not a whit; we defy augury: there is 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. There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will. Let be.
(*Exit* HORATIO *and* HAMLET.)

THE THIRD SCENE

[*A hall in the castle, where are seen the KING, the QUEEN, LAERTES, and LORDS, OSRIC, and other Attendants with foils and gauntlets ; also a table and flagons of wine on it.*]

KING.

COME, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

(*The KING puts LAERTES' hand into HAMLET'S.*)

HAMLET.

Give me your pardon, sir : I've done you wrong ;
But pardon 't, as you are a gentleman.
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.

LAERTES.

I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge.
I do receive your offer'd love like love
And will not wrong it.

HAMLET.

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

LAERTES.

Come, one for me.

HAMLET.

I'll be your foil, Laertes : in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

LAERTES.

You mock me, sir.

HAMLET & A TRAGEDY

HAMLET.

No, by this hand.

KING.

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

HAMLET.

Very well, my lord;
Your grace has laid the odds o' the weaker side.

KING.

I do not fear it; I have seen you both:
But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

LAERTES.

This is too heavy; let me see another.

HAMLET.

This likes me well. These foils have all a
length? *(They prepare to play.)*

OSRIC.

Ay, my good lord.

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;
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;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
"Now the king drinks to Hamlet." Come, begin;
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

ACT FIVE *&* THIRD SCENE

HAMLET.

Come on, sir.

LAERTES.

Come, my lord. (*They play.*)

HAMLET.

One.

LAERTES.

No.

HAMLET.

Judgment.

OSRIC.

A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAERTES.

Well; again.

KING.

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

Here's to thy health.

(*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within.*)

Give him the cup.

HAMLET.

I'll play this bout first; set it by a while.

Come. (*They play.*) Another hit; what say you?

LAERTES.

A touch, a touch, I do confess.

KING.

Our son shall win.

QUEEN.

The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

HAMLET.

Good madam!

H A M L E T ❁ A T R A G E D Y

KING.

Gertrude, do not drink.

QUEEN.

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

KING. (*Aside.*)

It is the poison'd cup; it is too late.

LAERTES.

My lord, I'll hit him now.

KING.

I do not think 't.

LAERTES. (*Aside.*)

And yet it is almost against my conscience.

HAMLET.

Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;
I pray you, pass with your best violence;
I am afraid you make a wanton of me.

LAERTES.

Say you so? come on. (*They play.*)

OSRIC.

Nothing, neither way.

LAERTES.

Have at you now!

(*LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES.*)

KING.

Part them; they are incensed.

HAMLET.

Nay, come, again. (*The QUEEN falls.*)

OSRIC.

Look to the queen there, ho!



THE EXCHANGE OF THE FOILS.

ACT FIVE & THIRD SCENE

HORATIO.

How is it, my lord ?

OSRIC.

How is 't, Laertes ?

LAERTES.

Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric ;
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

HAMLET.

How does the queen ?

KING.

She swounds to see them bleed.

QUEEN.

No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Ham-
let,—
The drink, the drink ! I am poison'd. (*Dies.*)

HAMLET.

O villany ! Ho ! let the door be lock'd :
Treachery ! seek it out. (*LAERTES falls.*)

LAERTES.

It is here, Hamlet : Hamlet, thou art slain ;
No medicine in the world can do thee good,
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,
Never to rise again : thy mother's poisoned :
I can no more : the king, the king's to blame.

HAMLET.

The point envenom'd too !
Then, venom, to thy work. (*Stabs the KING.*)

ALL.

Treason ! treason !

H A M L E T & A T R A G E D Y

KING.

O, yet defend me, friends ; I am but hurt.

HAMLET.

Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion :
Follow my mother. (KING *dies.*)

LAERTES.

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

HAMLET.

Heaven make thee free of it ! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu !
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you—
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead ;
Thou livest ; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

HORATIO.

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

HAMLET.

As thou 'rt a man,
Give me the cup : let go ; by heaven, I'll have 't.
O good Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind
me !
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity a while,



"ALAS, POOR YORICK!"



“BEAR HAMLET, LIKE A SOLDIER, TO THE STAGE.”

ACT FIVE ❧ THIRD SCENE

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.

(March afar off, and shot within.)

What warlike noise is this ?

OSRIC.

Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from
Poland.

HAMLET.

O, I die, Horatio ;

The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit :

But I do prophesy the election lights

On Fortinbras : he has my dying voice.

The rest is silence. *(Dies.)*

HORATIO.

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet
prince,

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest !

(March within.)

*Enter FORTINBRAS, and the ENGLISH AMBASSADORS,
with drum, colours, and Attendants.*

FORTINBRAS.

Where is this sight ?

HORATIO.

What is it you would see ?

If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

And let me speak to the yet unknowing world

How these things came about.

FORTINBRAS.

Let us haste to hear it,

And call the noblest to the audience.

For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune :

I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,

HAMLET ❁ A TRAGEDY

Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;
And, for his passage,
The soldiers' music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him.
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

*(A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the bodies :
after which a peal of ordnance is shot off.)*



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