ACT I

SCENE I. Elsinore. A platform before the castle.

 FRANCISCO at his post. Enter to him BERNARDO

BERNARDO

 Who's there?

FRANCISCO

 Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

BERNARDO

 Long live the king!

FRANCISCO

 Bernardo?

BERNARDO

 He.

FRANCISCO

 You come most carefully upon your hour.

BERNARDO

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

FRANCISCO

 For this relief much thanks: 'tis bitter cold,

 And I am sick at heart.

BERNARDO

 Have you had quiet guard?

FRANCISCO

 Not a mouse stirring.

BERNARDO

 Well, good night.

 If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,

 The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

FRANCISCO

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

 Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS

HORATIO

 Friends to this ground.

MARCELLUS

 And liegemen to the Dane.

FRANCISCO

 Give you good night.

MARCELLUS

 O, farewell, honest soldier:

 Who hath relieved you?

FRANCISCO

 Bernardo has my place.

 Give you good night.

 Exit

MARCELLUS

 Holla! Bernardo!

BERNARDO

 Say,

 What, is Horatio there?

HORATIO

 A piece of him.

BERNARDO

 Welcome, Horatio: welcome, good Marcellus.

MARCELLUS

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

BERNARDO

 I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS

 Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,

 And will not let belief take hold of him

 Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us:

 Therefore I have entreated him along

 With us to watch the minutes of this night;

 That if again this apparition come,

 He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

HORATIO

 Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

BERNARDO

 Sit down awhile;

 And let us once again assail your ears,

 That are so fortified against our story

 What we have two nights seen.

HORATIO

 Well, sit we down,

 And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

BERNARDO

 Last night of all,

 When yond same star that's westward from the pole

 Had made his course to illume that part of heaven

 Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

 The bell then beating one,--

 Enter Ghost

MARCELLUS

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

BERNARDO

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

MARCELLUS

 Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

BERNARDO

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

HORATIO

 Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

BERNARDO

 It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS

 Question it, Horatio.

HORATIO

 What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,

 Together with that fair and warlike form

 In which the majesty of buried Denmark

 Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!

MARCELLUS

 It is offended.

BERNARDO

 See, it stalks away!

HORATIO

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

 Exit Ghost

MARCELLUS

 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

BERNARDO

 How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:

 Is not this something more than fantasy?

 What think you on't?

HORATIO

 Before my God, I might not this believe

 Without the sensible and true avouch

 Of mine own eyes.

MARCELLUS

 Is it not like the king?

HORATIO

 As thou art to thyself:

 Such was the very armour he had on

 When he the ambitious Norway combated;

 So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,

 He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.

 'Tis strange.

MARCELLUS

 Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,

 With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

HORATIO

 In what particular thought to work I know not;

 But in the gross and scope of my opinion,

 This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

MARCELLUS

 Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,

 Why this same strict and most observant watch

 So nightly toils the subject of the land,

 And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,

 And foreign mart for implements of war;

 Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task

 Does not divide the Sunday from the week;

 What might be toward, that this sweaty haste

 Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:

 Who is't that can inform me?

HORATIO

 That can I;

 At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,

 Whose image even but now appear'd to us,

 Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,

 Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,

 Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet--

 For so this side of our known world esteem'd him--

 Did slay this Fortinbras; who by a seal'd compact,

 Well ratified by law and heraldry,

 Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands

 Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror:

 Against the which, a moiety competent

 Was gaged by our king; which had return'd

 To the inheritance of Fortinbras,

 Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same covenant,

 And carriage of the article design'd,

 His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,

 Of unimproved mettle hot and full,

 Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there

 Shark'd up a list of lawless resolutes,

 For food and diet, to some enterprise

 That hath a stomach in't; which is no other--

 As it doth well appear unto our state--

 But to recover of us, by strong hand

 And terms compulsatory, those foresaid lands

 So by his father lost: and this, I take it,

 Is the main motive of our preparations,

 The source of this our watch and the chief head

 Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

BERNARDO

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

 Well may it sort that this portentous figure

 Comes armed through our watch; so like the king

 That was and is the question of these wars.

HORATIO

 A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.

 In the most high and palmy state of Rome,

 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,

 The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead

 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets:

 As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,

 Disasters in the sun; and the moist star

 Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands

 Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse:

 And even the like precurse of fierce events,

 As harbingers preceding still the fates

 And prologue to the omen coming on,

 Have heaven and earth together demonstrated

 Unto our climatures and countrymen.--

 But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!

 Re-enter Ghost

 I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!

 If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,

 Speak to me:

 If there be any good thing to be done,

 That may to thee do ease and grace to me,

 Speak to me:

 Cock crows

 If thou art privy to thy country's fate,

 Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid, O, speak!

 Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life

 Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,

 For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,

 Speak of it: stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.

MARCELLUS

 Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

HORATIO

 Do, if it will not stand.

BERNARDO

 'Tis here!

HORATIO

 'Tis here!

MARCELLUS

 'Tis gone!

 Exit Ghost

 We do it wrong, being so majestical,

 To offer it the show of violence;

 For it is, as the air, invulnerable,

 And our vain blows malicious mockery.

BERNARDO

 It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

HORATIO

 And then it started like a guilty thing

 Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,

 The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,

 Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat

 Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,

 Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,

 The extravagant and erring spirit hies

 To his confine: and of the truth herein

 This present object made probation.

MARCELLUS

 It faded on the crowing of the cock.

 Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes

 Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,

 The bird of dawning singeth all night long:

 And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;

 The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,

 No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,

 So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

HORATIO

 So have I heard and do in part believe it.

 But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,

 Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill:

 Break we our watch up; and by my advice,

 Let us impart what we have seen to-night

 Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,

 This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

 Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,

 As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

MARCELLUS

 Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know

 Where we shall find him most conveniently.

 Exeunt

SCENE II. A room of state in the castle.

 Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants

KING CLAUDIUS

 Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death

 The memory be green, and that it us befitted

 To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom

 To be contracted in one brow of woe,

 Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature

 That we with wisest sorrow think on him,

 Together with remembrance of ourselves.

 Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,

 The imperial jointress to this warlike state,

 Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,--

 With an auspicious and a dropping eye,

 With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,

 In equal scale weighing delight and dole,--

 Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd

 Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone

 With this affair along. For all, our thanks.

 Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,

 Holding a weak supposal of our worth,

 Or thinking by our late dear brother's death

 Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,

 Colleagued with the dream of his advantage,

 He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,

 Importing the surrender of those lands

 Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,

 To our most valiant brother. So much for him.

 Now for ourself and for this time of meeting:

 Thus much the business is: we have here writ

 To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,--

 Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears

 Of this his nephew's purpose,--to suppress

 His further gait herein; in that the levies,

 The lists and full proportions, are all made

 Out of his subject: and we here dispatch

 You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,

 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;

 Giving to you no further personal power

 To business with the king, more than the scope

 Of these delated articles allow.

 Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

CORNELIUS VOLTIMAND

 In that and all things will we show our duty.

KING CLAUDIUS

 We doubt it nothing: heartily farewell.

 Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS

 And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?

 You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?

 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,

 And loose your voice: what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,

 That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?

 The head is not more native to the heart,

 The hand more instrumental to the mouth,

 Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.

 What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

LAERTES

 My dread lord,

 Your leave and favour to return to France;

 From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,

 To show my duty in your coronation,

 Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,

 My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France

 And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

KING CLAUDIUS

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

LORD POLONIUS

 He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave

 By laboursome petition, and at last

 Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:

 I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,

 And thy best graces spend it at thy will!

 But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,--

HAMLET

 [Aside] A little more than kin, and less than kind.

KING CLAUDIUS

 How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,

 And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

 Do not for ever with thy 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 GERTRUDE

 If it be,

 Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET

 Seems, madam! nay it is; I know not 'seems.'

 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

 Nor customary suits of solemn black,

 Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,

 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,

 Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,

 Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,

 That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,

 For they are actions that a man might play:

 But I have that within which passeth show;

 These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING CLAUDIUS

 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,

 To give these mourning duties to your father:

 But, you must know, your father lost a father;

 That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound

 In filial obligation for some term

 To do obsequious sorrow: but to persever

 In obstinate condolement is a course

 Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief;

 It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,

 A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,

 An understanding simple and unschool'd:

 For what we know must be and is as common

 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,

 Why should we in our peevish opposition

 Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,

 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,

 To reason most absurd: whose common theme

 Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,

 From the first corse till he that died to-day,

 'This must be so.' We pray you, throw to earth

 This unprevailing woe, and think of us

 As of a father: for let the world take note,

 You are the most immediate to our throne;

 And with no less nobility of love

 Than that which dearest father bears his son,

 Do I impart toward you. For your intent

 In going back to school in Wittenberg,

 It is most retrograde to our desire:

 And we beseech you, bend you to remain

 Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,

 Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:

 I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

HAMLET

 I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:

 Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;

 This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet

 Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,

 No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,

 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,

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

 Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

 Exeunt all but HAMLET

HAMLET

 O, that this too too solid flesh would melt

 Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!

 Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd

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

 How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,

 Seem to me all the uses of this world!

 Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,

 That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature

 Possess it merely. That it should come to this!

 But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:

 So excellent a king; that was, to this,

 Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother

 That he might not beteem the winds of heaven

 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!

 Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,

 As if increase of appetite had grown

 By what it fed on: and yet, within a month--

 Let me not think on't--Frailty, thy name is woman!--

 A little month, or ere those shoes were old

 With which she follow'd my poor father's body,

 Like Niobe, all tears:--why she, even she--

 O, God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,

 Would have mourn'd longer--married with my uncle,

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

 Than I to Hercules: within a month:

 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears

 Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,

 She married. O, most wicked speed, to post

 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!

 It is not nor it cannot come to good:

 But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

 Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO

HORATIO

 Hail to your lordship!

HAMLET

 I am glad to see you well:

 Horatio,--or I do forget myself.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

 Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you:

 And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio? Marcellus?

MARCELLUS

 My good lord--

HAMLET

 I am very glad to see you. Good even, sir.

 But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

HORATIO

 A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAMLET

 I would not hear your enemy say so,

 Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,

 To make it truster of your own report

 Against yourself: I know you are no truant.

 But what is your affair in Elsinore?

 We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

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

 I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

 Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked meats

 Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

 Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

 Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!

 My father!--methinks I see my father.

HORATIO

 Where, my lord?

HAMLET

 In my mind's eye, Horatio.

HORATIO

 I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

HAMLET

 He was a man, take him for all in all,

 I shall not look upon his like again.

HORATIO

 My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAMLET

 Saw? who?

HORATIO

 My lord, the king your father.

HAMLET

 The king my father!

HORATIO

 Season your admiration for awhile

 With an attent ear, till I may deliver,

 Upon the witness of these gentlemen,

 This marvel to you.

HAMLET

 For God's love, let me hear.

HORATIO

 Two nights together had these gentlemen,

 Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,

 In the dead vast and middle of the night,

 Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,

 Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,

 Appears before them, and with solemn march

 Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd

 By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,

 Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distilled

 Almost to jelly with the act of fear,

 Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me

 In dreadful secrecy impart they did;

 And I with them the third night kept the watch;

 Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,

 Form of the thing, each word made true and good,

 The apparition comes: I knew your father;

 These hands are not more like.

HAMLET

 But where was this?

MARCELLUS

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

HAMLET

 Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO

 My lord, I did;

 But answer made it none: yet once methought

 It lifted up its head and did address

 Itself to motion, like as it would speak;

 But even then the morning cock crew loud,

 And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,

 And vanish'd from our sight.

HAMLET

 'Tis very strange.

HORATIO

 As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true;

 And we did think it writ down in our duty

 To let you know of it.

HAMLET

 Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.

 Hold you the watch to-night?

MARCELLUS BERNARDO

 We do, my lord.

HAMLET

 Arm'd, say you?

MARCELLUS BERNARDO

 Arm'd, my lord.

HAMLET

 From top to toe?

MARCELLUS BERNARDO

 My lord, from head to foot.

HAMLET

 Then saw you not his face?

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

 What, look'd he frowningly?

HORATIO

 A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

HAMLET

 Pale or red?

HORATIO

 Nay, very pale.

HAMLET

 And fix'd his eyes upon you?

HORATIO

 Most constantly.

HAMLET

 I would I had been there.

HORATIO

 It would have much amazed you.

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

 While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

MARCELLUS BERNARDO

 Longer, longer.

HORATIO

 Not when I saw't.

HAMLET

 His beard was grizzled--no?

HORATIO

 It was, as I have seen it in his life,

 A sable silver'd.

HAMLET

 I will watch to-night;

 Perchance 'twill walk again.

HORATIO

 I warrant it will.

HAMLET

 If it assume my noble father's person,

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

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

 If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,

 Let it be tenable in your silence still;

 And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,

 Give it an understanding, but no tongue:

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

 Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,

 I'll visit you.

All

 Our duty to your honour.

HAMLET

 Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

 Exeunt all but HAMLET

 My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;

 I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!

 Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,

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

 Exit

SCENE III. A room in Polonius' house.

 Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA

LAERTES

 My necessaries are embark'd: farewell:

 And, sister, as the winds give benefit

 And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,

 But let me hear from you.

OPHELIA

 Do you doubt that?

LAERTES

 For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour,

 Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,

 A violet in the youth of primy nature,

 Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,

 The perfume and suppliance of a minute; No more.

OPHELIA

 No more but so?

LAERTES

 Think it no more;

 For nature, crescent, does not grow alone

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

 The inward service of the mind and soul

 Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,

 And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch

 The virtue of his will: but you must fear,

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

 For he himself is subject to his birth:

 He may not, as unvalued persons do,

 Carve for himself; for on his choice depends

 The safety and health of this whole state;

 And therefore must his choice be circumscribed

 Unto the voice and yielding of that body

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

 It fits your wisdom so far to believe it

 As he in his particular act and place

 May give his saying deed; which is no further

 Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.

 Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,

 If with too credent ear you list his songs,

 Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open

 To his unmaster'd importunity.

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

 And keep you in the rear of your affection,

 Out of the shot and danger of desire.

 The chariest maid is prodigal enough,

 If she unmask her beauty to the moon:

 Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes:

 The canker galls the infants of the spring,

 Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,

 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth

 Contagious blastments are most imminent.

 Be wary then; best safety lies in fear:

 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPHELIA

 I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,

 As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,

 Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,

 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;

 Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,

 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,

 And recks not his own rede.

LAERTES

 O, fear me not.

 I stay too long: but here my father comes.

 Enter POLONIUS

 A double blessing is a double grace,

 Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

LORD POLONIUS

 Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!

 The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,

 And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!

 And these few precepts in thy memory

 See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,

 Nor any unproportioned thought his act.

 Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.

 Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,

 Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;

 But do not dull thy palm with entertainment

 Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware

 Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,

 Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.

 Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;

 Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.

 Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,

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

 For the apparel oft proclaims the man,

 And they in France of the best rank and station

 Are of a most select and generous chief in that.

 Neither a borrower nor a lender be;

 For loan oft loses both itself and friend,

 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.

 This above all: to thine ownself be true,

 And it must follow, as the night the day,

 Thou canst not then be false to any man.

 Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!

LAERTES

 Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

LORD POLONIUS

 The time invites you; go; your servants tend.

LAERTES

 Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well

 What I have said to you.

OPHELIA

 'Tis in my memory lock'd,

 And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

LAERTES

 Farewell.

 Exit

LORD POLONIUS

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

OPHELIA

 So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

LORD POLONIUS

 Marry, well bethought:

 'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late

 Given private time to you; and you yourself

 Have of your audience been most free and bounteous:

 If it be so, as so 'tis put on me,

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

 You do not understand yourself so clearly

 As it behoves my daughter and your honour.

 What is between you? give me up the truth.

OPHELIA

 He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders

 Of his affection to me.

LORD POLONIUS

 Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,

 Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

 Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

OPHELIA

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

LORD POLONIUS

 Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby;

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

 Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;

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

 Running it thus--you'll tender me a fool.

OPHELIA

 My lord, he hath importuned me with love

 In honourable fashion.

LORD POLONIUS

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

OPHELIA

 And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,

 With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

LORD POLONIUS

 Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,

 When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul

 Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,

 Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,

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

 You must not take for fire. From this time

 Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;

 Set your entreatments at a higher rate

 Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,

 Believe so much in him, that he is young

 And with a larger tether may he walk

 Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,

 Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,

 Not of that dye which their investments show,

 But mere implorators of unholy suits,

 Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,

 The better to beguile. This is for all:

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

 Have you so slander any moment leisure,

 As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.

 Look to't, I charge you: come your ways.

OPHELIA

 I shall obey, my lord.

 Exeunt

SCENE IV. The platform.

 Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS

HAMLET

 The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HORATIO

 It is a nipping and an eager air.

HAMLET

 What hour now?

HORATIO

 I think it lacks of twelve.

HAMLET

 No, it is struck.

HORATIO

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

 Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

 A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off, within

 What does this mean, my lord?

HAMLET

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

 Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;

 And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,

 The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out

 The triumph of his pledge.

HORATIO

 Is it a custom?

HAMLET

 Ay, marry, is't:

 But to my mind, though I am native here

 And to the manner born, it is a custom

 More honour'd in the breach than the observance.

 This heavy-headed revel east and west

 Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations:

 They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase

 Soil our addition; and indeed it takes

 From our achievements, though perform'd at height,

 The pith and marrow of our attribute.

 So, oft it chances in particular men,

 That for some vicious mole of nature in them,

 As, in their birth--wherein they are not guilty,

 Since nature cannot choose his origin--

 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,

 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,

 Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens

 The form of plausive manners, that these men,

 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,

 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,--

 Their virtues else--be they as pure as grace,

 As infinite as man may undergo--

 Shall in the general censure take corruption

 From that particular fault: the dram of eale

 Doth all the noble substance of a doubt

 To his own scandal.

HORATIO

 Look, my lord, it comes!

 Enter Ghost

HAMLET

 Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

 Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,

 Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,

 Be thy intents wicked or charitable,

 Thou comest in such a questionable shape

 That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,

 King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me!

 Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell

 Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,

 Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,

 Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,

 Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws,

 To cast thee up again. What may this mean,

 That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel

 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,

 Making night hideous; and we fools of nature

 So horridly to shake our disposition

 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?

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

 Ghost beckons HAMLET

HORATIO

 It beckons you to go away with it,

 As if it some impartment did desire

 To you alone.

MARCELLUS

 Look, with what courteous action

 It waves you to a more removed ground:

 But do not go with it.

HORATIO

 No, by no means.

HAMLET

 It will not speak; then I will follow it.

HORATIO

 Do not, my lord.

HAMLET

 Why, what should be the fear?

 I do not set my life in a pin's fee;

 And for my soul, what can it do to that,

 Being a thing immortal as itself?

 It waves me forth again: I'll follow it.

HORATIO

 What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,

 Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff

 That beetles o'er his base into the sea,

 And there assume some other horrible form,

 Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason

 And draw you into madness? think of it:

 The very place puts toys of desperation,

 Without more motive, into every brain

 That looks so many fathoms to the sea

 And hears it roar beneath.

HAMLET

 It waves me still.

 Go on; I'll follow thee.

MARCELLUS

 You shall not go, my lord.

HAMLET

 Hold off your hands.

HORATIO

 Be ruled; you shall not go.

HAMLET

 My fate cries out,

 And makes each petty artery in this body

 As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.

 Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.

 By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!

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

 Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET

HORATIO

 He waxes desperate with imagination.

MARCELLUS

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

HORATIO

 Have after. To what issue will this come?

MARCELLUS

 Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HORATIO

 Heaven will direct it.

MARCELLUS

 Nay, let's follow him.

 Exeunt

SCENE V. Another part of the platform.

 Enter GHOST and HAMLET

HAMLET

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

Ghost

 Mark me.

HAMLET

 I will.

Ghost

 My hour is almost come,

 When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames

 Must render up myself.

HAMLET

 Alas, poor ghost!

Ghost

 Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing

 To what I shall unfold.

HAMLET

 Speak; I am bound to hear.

Ghost

 So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAMLET

 What?

Ghost

 I am thy father's spirit,

 Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,

 And for the day confined to fast in fires,

 Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature

 Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid

 To tell the secrets of my prison-house,

 I could a tale unfold whose lightest word

 Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,

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

 Thy knotted and combined locks to part

 And each particular hair to stand on end,

 Like quills upon the fretful porpentine:

 But this eternal blazon must not be

 To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!

 If thou didst ever thy dear father love--

HAMLET

 O God!

Ghost

 Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET

 Murder!

Ghost

 Murder most foul, as in the best it is;

 But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

HAMLET

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

 As meditation or the thoughts of love,

 May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost

 I find thee apt;

 And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed

 That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,

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

 'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,

 A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark

 Is by a forged process of my death

 Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,

 The serpent that did sting thy father's life

 Now wears his crown.

HAMLET

 O my prophetic soul! My uncle!

Ghost

 Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,

 With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,--

 O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power

 So to seduce!--won to his shameful lust

 The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen:

 O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!

 From me, whose love was of that dignity

 That it went hand in hand even with the vow

 I made to her in marriage, and to decline

 Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor

 To those of mine!

 But virtue, as it never will be moved,

 Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,

 So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,

 Will sate itself in a celestial bed,

 And prey on garbage.

 But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;

 Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,

 My custom always of the afternoon,

 Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,

 With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,

 And in the porches of my ears did pour

 The leperous distilment; whose effect

 Holds such an enmity with blood of man

 That swift as quicksilver it courses through

 The natural gates and alleys of the body,

 And with a sudden vigour doth posset

 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,

 The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;

 And a most instant tetter bark'd about,

 Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,

 All my smooth body.

 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand

 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd:

 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,

 Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd,

 No reckoning made, but sent to my account

 With all my imperfections on my head:

 O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!

 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;

 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be

 A couch for luxury and damned incest.

 But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,

 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive

 Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven

 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,

 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!

 The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,

 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:

 Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.

 Exit

HAMLET

 O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?

 And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my heart;

 And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,

 But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee!

 Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat

 In this distracted globe. Remember thee!

 Yea, from the table of my memory

 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,

 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,

 That youth and observation copied there;

 And thy commandment all alone shall live

 Within the book and volume of my brain,

 Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!

 O most pernicious woman!

 O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!

 My tables,--meet it is I set it down,

 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;

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

 Writing

 So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;

 It is 'Adieu, adieu! remember me.'

 I have sworn 't.

MARCELLUS HORATIO

 [Within] My lord, my lord,--

MARCELLUS

 [Within] Lord Hamlet,--

HORATIO

 [Within] Heaven secure him!

HAMLET

 So be it!

HORATIO

 [Within] Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!

HAMLET

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

 Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS

MARCELLUS

 How is't, my noble lord?

HORATIO

 What news, my lord?

HAMLET

 O, wonderful!

HORATIO

 Good my lord, tell it.

HAMLET

 No; you'll reveal it.

HORATIO

 Not I, my lord, by heaven.

MARCELLUS

 Nor I, my lord.

HAMLET

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

 But you'll be secret?

HORATIO MARCELLUS

 Ay, by heaven, my lord.

HAMLET

 There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark

 But he's an arrant knave.

HORATIO

 There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave

 To tell us this.

HAMLET

 Why, right; you are i' the right;

 And so, without more circumstance at all,

 I hold it fit that we shake hands and part:

 You, as your business and desire shall point you;

 For every man has business and desire,

 Such as it is; and for mine own poor part,

 Look you, I'll go pray.

HORATIO

 These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

HAMLET

 I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;

 Yes, 'faith heartily.

HORATIO

 There's no offence, my lord.

HAMLET

 Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,

 And much offence too. Touching this vision here,

 It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:

 For your desire to know what is between us,

 O'ermaster 't as you may. And now, good friends,

 As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,

 Give me one poor request.

HORATIO

 What is't, my lord? we will.

HAMLET

 Never make known what you have seen to-night.

HORATIO MARCELLUS

 My lord, we will not.

HAMLET

 Nay, but swear't.

HORATIO

 In faith,

 My lord, not I.

MARCELLUS

 Nor I, my lord, in faith.

HAMLET

 Upon my sword.

MARCELLUS

 We have sworn, my lord, already.

HAMLET

 Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost

 [Beneath] Swear.

HAMLET

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

 truepenny?

 Come on--you hear this fellow in the cellarage--

 Consent to swear.

HORATIO

 Propose the oath, my lord.

HAMLET

 Never to speak of this that you have seen,

 Swear by my sword.

Ghost

 [Beneath] Swear.

HAMLET

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

 Come hither, gentlemen,

 And lay your hands again upon my sword:

 Never to speak of this that you have heard,

 Swear by my sword.

Ghost

 [Beneath] Swear.

HAMLET

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

 A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends.

HORATIO

 O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAMLET

 And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.

 There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,

 Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come;

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

 How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,

 As I perchance hereafter shall think meet

 To put an antic disposition on,

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

 With arms encumber'd thus, or this headshake,

 Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

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

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

 Or such ambiguous giving out, to note

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

 So grace and mercy at your most need help you, Swear.

Ghost

 [Beneath] Swear.

HAMLET

 Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!

 They swear

 So, gentlemen,

 With all my love I do commend me to you:

 And what so poor a man as Hamlet is

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

 God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;

 And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.

 The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,

 That ever I was born to set it right!

 Nay, come, let's go together.

 Exeunt

ACT II

SCENE I. A room in POLONIUS' house.

 Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO

LORD POLONIUS

 Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

REYNALDO

 I will, my lord.

LORD POLONIUS

 You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,

 Before you visit him, to make inquire

 Of his behavior.

REYNALDO

 My lord, I did intend it.

LORD POLONIUS

 Marry, well said; very well said. Look you, sir,

 Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris;

 And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,

 What company, at what expense; and finding

 By this encompassment and drift of question

 That they do know my son, come you more nearer

 Than your particular demands will touch it:

 Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him;

 As thus, 'I know his father and his friends,

 And in part him: ' do you mark this, Reynaldo?

REYNALDO

 Ay, very well, my lord.

LORD POLONIUS

 'And in part him; but' you may say 'not well:

 But, if't be he I mean, he's very wild;

 Addicted so and so:' and there put on him

 What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank

 As may dishonour him; take heed of that;

 But, sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips

 As are companions noted and most known

 To youth and liberty.

REYNALDO

 As gaming, my lord.

LORD POLONIUS

 Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,

 Drabbing: you may go so far.

REYNALDO

 My lord, that would dishonour him.

LORD POLONIUS

 'Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge

 You must not put another scandal on him,

 That he is open to incontinency;

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

 That they may seem the taints of liberty,

 The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,

 A savageness in unreclaimed blood,

 Of general assault.

REYNALDO

 But, my good lord,--

LORD POLONIUS

 Wherefore should you do this?

REYNALDO

 Ay, my lord,

 I would know that.

LORD POLONIUS

 Marry, sir, here's my drift;

 And I believe, it is a fetch of wit:

 You laying these slight sullies on my son,

 As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working, Mark you,

 Your party in converse, him you would sound,

 Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes

 The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured

 He closes with you in this consequence;

 'Good sir,' or so, or 'friend,' or 'gentleman,'

 According to the phrase or the addition

 Of man and country.

REYNALDO

 Very good, my lord.

LORD POLONIUS

 And then, sir, does he this--he does--what was I

 about to say? By the mass, I was about to say

 something: where did I leave?

REYNALDO

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

 and 'gentleman.'

LORD POLONIUS

 At 'closes in the consequence,' ay, marry;

 He closes thus: 'I know the gentleman;

 I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,

 Or then, or then; with such, or such; and, as you say,

 There was a' gaming; there o'ertook in's rouse;

 There falling out at tennis:' or perchance,

 'I saw him enter such a house of sale,'

 Videlicet, a brothel, or so forth.

 See you now;

 Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:

 And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,

 With windlasses and with assays of bias,

 By indirections find directions out:

 So by my former lecture and advice,

 Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

REYNALDO

 My lord, I have.

LORD POLONIUS

 God be wi' you; fare you well.

REYNALDO

 Good my lord!

LORD POLONIUS

 Observe his inclination in yourself.

REYNALDO

 I shall, my lord.

LORD POLONIUS

 And let him ply his music.

REYNALDO

 Well, my lord.

LORD POLONIUS

 Farewell!

 Exit REYNALDO

 Enter OPHELIA

 How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

OPHELIA

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

LORD POLONIUS

 With what, i' the name of God?

OPHELIA

 My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,

 Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced;

 No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,

 Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;

 Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;

 And with a look so piteous in purport

 As if he had been loosed out of hell

 To speak of horrors,--he comes before me.

LORD POLONIUS

 Mad for thy love?

OPHELIA

 My lord, I do not know;

 But truly, I do fear it.

LORD POLONIUS

 What said he?

OPHELIA

 He took me by the wrist and held me hard;

 Then goes he to the length of all his arm;

 And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,

 He falls to such perusal of my face

 As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;

 At last, a little shaking of mine arm

 And thrice his head thus waving up and down,

 He raised a sigh so piteous and profound

 As it did seem to shatter all his bulk

 And end his being: that done, he lets me go:

 And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,

 He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;

 For out o' doors he went without their helps,

 And, to the last, bended their light on me.

LORD POLONIUS

 Come, go with me: I will go seek the king.

 This is the very ecstasy of love,

 Whose violent property fordoes itself

 And leads the will to desperate undertakings

 As oft as any passion under heaven

 That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.

 What, have you given him any hard words of late?

OPHELIA

 No, my good lord, but, as you did command,

 I did repel his fetters and denied

 His access to me.

LORD POLONIUS

 That hath made him mad.

 I am sorry that with better heed and judgment

 I had not quoted him: I fear'd he did but trifle,

 And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!

 By heaven, it is as proper to our age

 To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions

 As it is common for the younger sort

 To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king:

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

 move

 More grief to hide than hate to utter love.

 Exeunt

SCENE II. A room in the castle.

 Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and Attendants

KING CLAUDIUS

 Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!

 Moreover that we much did long to see you,

 The need we have to use you did provoke

 Our hasty sending. Something have you heard

 Of Hamlet's transformation; so call it,

 Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man

 Resembles that it was. What it should be,

 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him

 So much from the understanding of himself,

 I cannot dream of: I entreat you both,

 That, being of so young days brought up with him,

 And sith so neighbour'd to his youth and havior,

 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court

 Some little time: so by your companies

 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,

 So much as from occasion you may glean,

 Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,

 That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

 And sure I am two men there are not living

 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you

 To show us so much gentry and good will

 As to expend your time with us awhile,

 For the supply and profit of our hope,

 Your visitation shall receive such thanks

 As fits a king's remembrance.

ROSENCRANTZ

 Both your majesties

 Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,

 Put your dread pleasures more into command

 Than to entreaty.

GUILDENSTERN

 But we both obey,

 And here give up ourselves, in the full bent

 To lay our service freely at your feet,

 To be commanded.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz:

 And I beseech you instantly to visit

 My too much changed son. Go, some of you,

 And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

GUILDENSTERN

 Heavens make our presence and our practises

 Pleasant and helpful to him!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Ay, amen!

 Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and some Attendants

 Enter POLONIUS

LORD POLONIUS

 The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,

 Are joyfully return'd.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Thou still hast been the father of good news.

LORD POLONIUS

 Have I, my lord? I assure my good liege,

 I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,

 Both to my God and to my gracious king:

 And I do think, or else this brain of mine

 Hunts not the trail of policy so sure

 As it hath used to do, that I have found

 The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

KING CLAUDIUS

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

LORD POLONIUS

 Give first admittance to the ambassadors;

 My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

 Exit POLONIUS

 He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found

 The head and source of all your son's distemper.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 I doubt it is no other but the main;

 His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Well, we shall sift him.

 Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS

 Welcome, my good friends!

 Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

VOLTIMAND

 Most fair return of greetings and desires.

 Upon our first, he sent out to suppress

 His nephew's levies; which to him appear'd

 To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;

 But, better look'd into, he truly found

 It was against your highness: whereat grieved,

 That so his sickness, age and impotence

 Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests

 On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;

 Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine

 Makes vow before his uncle never more

 To give the assay of arms against your majesty.

 Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,

 Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee,

 And his commission to employ those soldiers,

 So levied as before, against the Polack:

 With an entreaty, herein further shown,

 Giving a paper

 That it might please you to give quiet pass

 Through your dominions for this enterprise,

 On such regards of safety and allowance

 As therein are set down.

KING CLAUDIUS

 It likes us well;

 And at our more consider'd time well read,

 Answer, and think upon this business.

 Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour:

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

 Most welcome home!

 Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS

LORD POLONIUS

 This business is well ended.

 My liege, and madam, to expostulate

 What majesty should be, what duty is,

 Why day is day, night night, and time is time,

 Were nothing but to waste night, day and time.

 Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,

 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,

 I will be brief: your noble son is mad:

 Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,

 What is't but to be nothing else but mad?

 But let that go.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 More matter, with less art.

LORD POLONIUS

 Madam, I swear I use no art at all.

 That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true 'tis pity;

 And pity 'tis 'tis true: a foolish figure;

 But farewell it, for I will use no art.

 Mad let us grant him, then: and now remains

 That we find out the cause of this effect,

 Or rather say, the cause of this defect,

 For this effect defective comes by cause:

 Thus it remains, and the remainder thus. Perpend.

 I have a daughter--have while she is mine--

 Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,

 Hath given me this: now gather, and surmise.

 Reads

 'To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most

 beautified Ophelia,'--

 That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is

 a vile phrase: but you shall hear. Thus:

 Reads

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Came this from Hamlet to her?

LORD POLONIUS

 Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.

 Reads

 'Doubt thou the stars are fire;

 Doubt that the sun doth move;

 Doubt truth to be a liar;

 But never doubt I love.

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

 I have not art to reckon my groans: but that

 I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

 'Thine evermore most dear lady, whilst

 this machine is to him, HAMLET.'

 This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me,

 And more above, hath his solicitings,

 As they fell out by time, by means and place,

 All given to mine ear.

KING CLAUDIUS

 But how hath she

 Received his love?

LORD POLONIUS

 What do you think of me?

KING CLAUDIUS

 As of a man faithful and honourable.

LORD POLONIUS

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

 When I had seen this hot love on the wing--

 As I perceived it, I must tell you that,

 Before my daughter told me--what might you,

 Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,

 If I had play'd the desk or table-book,

 Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,

 Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;

 What might you think? No, I went round to work,

 And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:

 'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;

 This must not be:' and then I precepts gave her,

 That she should lock herself from his resort,

 Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.

 Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;

 And he, repulsed--a short tale to make--

 Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,

 Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,

 Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,

 Into the madness wherein now he raves,

 And all we mourn for.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Do you think 'tis this?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 It may be, very likely.

LORD POLONIUS

 Hath there been such a time--I'd fain know that--

 That I have positively said 'Tis so,'

 When it proved otherwise?

KING CLAUDIUS

 Not that I know.

LORD POLONIUS

 [Pointing to his head and shoulder]

 Take this from this, if this be otherwise:

 If circumstances lead me, I will find

 Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed

 Within the centre.

KING CLAUDIUS

 How may we try it further?

LORD POLONIUS

 You know, sometimes he walks four hours together

 Here in the lobby.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 So he does indeed.

LORD POLONIUS

 At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him:

 Be you and I behind an arras then;

 Mark the encounter: if he love her not

 And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,

 Let me be no assistant for a state,

 But keep a farm and carters.

KING CLAUDIUS

 We will try it.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

LORD POLONIUS

 Away, I do beseech you, both away:

 I'll board him presently.

 Exeunt KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, and Attendants

 Enter HAMLET, reading

 O, give me leave:

 How does my good Lord Hamlet?

HAMLET

 Well, God-a-mercy.

LORD POLONIUS

 Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET

 Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

LORD POLONIUS

 Not I, my lord.

HAMLET

 Then I would you were so honest a man.

LORD POLONIUS

 Honest, my lord!

HAMLET

 Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be

 one man picked out of ten thousand.

LORD POLONIUS

 That's very true, my lord.

HAMLET

 For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a

 god kissing carrion,--Have you a daughter?

LORD POLONIUS

 I have, my lord.

HAMLET

 Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a

 blessing: but not as your daughter may conceive.

 Friend, look to 't.

LORD POLONIUS

 [Aside] How say you by that? Still harping on my

 daughter: yet he knew me not at first; he said I

 was a fishmonger: he is far gone, far gone: and

 truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for

 love; very near this. I'll speak to him again.

 What do you read, my lord?

HAMLET

 Words, words, words.

LORD POLONIUS

 What is the matter, my lord?

HAMLET

 Between who?

LORD POLONIUS

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

HAMLET

 Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here

 that old men have grey beards, that their faces are

 wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and

 plum-tree gum and that they have a plentiful lack of

 wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir,

 though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet

 I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for

 yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if like a crab

 you could go backward.

LORD POLONIUS

 [Aside] Though this be madness, yet there is method

 in 't. Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

HAMLET

 Into my grave.

LORD POLONIUS

 Indeed, that is out o' the air.

 Aside

 How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness

 that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity

 could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will

 leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of

 meeting between him and my daughter.--My honourable

 lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

HAMLET

 You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will

 more willingly part withal: except my life, except

 my life, except my life.

LORD POLONIUS

 Fare you well, my lord.

HAMLET

 These tedious old fools!

 Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

LORD POLONIUS

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

ROSENCRANTZ

 [To POLONIUS] God save you, sir!

 Exit POLONIUS

GUILDENSTERN

 My honoured lord!

ROSENCRANTZ

 My most dear lord!

HAMLET

 My excellent good friends! How dost thou,

 Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

ROSENCRANTZ

 As the indifferent children of the earth.

GUILDENSTERN

 Happy, in that we are not over-happy;

 On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

HAMLET

 Nor the soles of her shoe?

ROSENCRANTZ

 Neither, my lord.

HAMLET

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

 her favours?

GUILDENSTERN

 'Faith, her privates we.

HAMLET

 In the secret parts of fortune? O, most true; she

 is a strumpet. What's the news?

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

 Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true.

 Let me question more in particular: what have you,

 my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune,

 that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN

 Prison, my lord!

HAMLET

 Denmark's a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ

 Then is the world one.

HAMLET

 A goodly one; in which there are many confines,

 wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

ROSENCRANTZ

 We think not so, my lord.

HAMLET

 Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing

 either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me

 it is a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ

 Why then, your ambition makes it one; 'tis too

 narrow for your mind.

HAMLET

 O God, I could be bounded in a nut shell and count

 myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I

 have bad dreams.

GUILDENSTERN

 Which dreams indeed are ambition, for the very

 substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

HAMLET

 A dream itself is but a shadow.

ROSENCRANTZ

 Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a

 quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

HAMLET

 Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and

 outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we

 to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

ROSENCRANTZ GUILDENSTERN

 We'll wait upon you.

HAMLET

 No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest

 of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest

 man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the

 beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

ROSENCRANTZ

 To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

HAMLET

 Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I

 thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are

 too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it

 your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come,

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

GUILDENSTERN

 What should we say, my lord?

HAMLET

 Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent

 for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks

 which your modesties have not craft enough to colour:

 I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ

 To what end, my lord?

HAMLET

 That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by

 the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of

 our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved

 love, and by what more dear a better proposer could

 charge you withal, be even and direct with me,

 whether you were sent for, or no?

ROSENCRANTZ

 [Aside to GUILDENSTERN] What say you?

HAMLET

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

 love me, hold not off.

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 majestical roof fretted

 with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to

 me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.

 What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason!

 how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how

 express and admirable! in action how like an angel!

 in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the

 world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me,

 what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not

 me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling

 you seem to say so.

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

 To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what

 lenten entertainment the players shall receive from

 you: we coted them on the way; and hither are they

 coming, to offer you service.

HAMLET

 He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty

 shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight

 shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not

 sigh gratis; the humourous man shall end his part

 in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose

 lungs are tickled o' the sere; and the lady shall

 say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt

 for't. What players are they?

ROSENCRANTZ

 Even those you were wont to take delight in, the

 tragedians of the city.

HAMLET

 How chances it they travel? their residence, both

 in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

ROSENCRANTZ

 I think their inhibition comes by the means of the

 late innovation.

HAMLET

 Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was

 in the city? are they so followed?

ROSENCRANTZ

 No, indeed, are they not.

HAMLET

 How comes it? do they grow rusty?

ROSENCRANTZ

 Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: but

 there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases,

 that cry out on the top of question, and are most

 tyrannically clapped for't: these are now the

 fashion, and so berattle the common stages--so they

 call them--that many wearing rapiers are afraid of

 goose-quills and dare scarce come thither.

HAMLET

 What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are

 they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no

 longer than they can sing? will they not say

 afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common

 players--as it is most like, if their means are no

 better--their writers do them wrong, to make them

 exclaim against their own succession?

ROSENCRANTZ

 'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and

 the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to

 controversy: there was, for a while, no money bid

 for argument, unless the poet and the player went to

 cuffs in the question.

HAMLET

 Is't possible?

GUILDENSTERN

 O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

HAMLET

 Do the boys carry it away?

ROSENCRANTZ

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

HAMLET

 It is not very strange; for mine uncle is king of

 Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while

 my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an

 hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little.

 'Sblood, there is something in this more than

 natural, if philosophy could find it out.

 Flourish of trumpets within

GUILDENSTERN

 There are the players.

HAMLET

 Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands,

 come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion

 and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb,

 lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you,

 must show fairly outward, should more appear like

 entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my

 uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

GUILDENSTERN

 In what, my dear lord?

HAMLET

 I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is

 southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

 Enter POLONIUS

LORD POLONIUS

 Well be with you, gentlemen!

HAMLET

 Hark you, Guildenstern; and you too: at each ear a

 hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet

 out of his swaddling-clouts.

ROSENCRANTZ

 Happily he's the second time come to them; for they

 say an old man is twice a child.

HAMLET

 I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players;

 mark it. You say right, sir: o' Monday morning;

 'twas so indeed.

LORD POLONIUS

 My lord, I have news to tell you.

HAMLET

 My lord, I have news to tell you.

 When Roscius was an actor in Rome,--

LORD POLONIUS

 The actors are come hither, my lord.

HAMLET

 Buz, buz!

LORD POLONIUS

 Upon mine honour,--

HAMLET

 Then came each actor on his ass,--

LORD POLONIUS

 The best actors in the world, either for tragedy,

 comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical,

 historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-

 comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or

 poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor

 Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the

 liberty, these are the only men.

HAMLET

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

LORD POLONIUS

 What a treasure had he, my lord?

HAMLET

 Why,

 'One fair daughter and no more,

 The which he loved passing well.'

LORD POLONIUS

 [Aside] Still on my daughter.

HAMLET

 Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

LORD POLONIUS

 If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter

 that I love passing well.

HAMLET

 Nay, that follows not.

LORD POLONIUS

 What follows, then, my lord?

HAMLET

 Why,

 'As by lot, God wot,'

 and then, you know,

 'It came to pass, as most like it was,'--

 the first row of the pious chanson will show you

 more; for look, where my abridgement comes.

 Enter four or five Players

 You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad

 to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old

 friend! thy face is valenced since I saw thee last:

 comest thou to beard me in Denmark? What, my young

 lady and mistress! By'r lady, your ladyship is

 nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the

 altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like

 apiece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the

 ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en

 to't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see:

 we'll have a speech straight: come, give us a taste

 of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

First Player

 What speech, my lord?

HAMLET

 I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was

 never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the

 play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas

 caviare to the general: but it was--as I received

 it, and others, whose judgments in such matters

 cried in the top of mine--an excellent play, well

 digested in the scenes, set down with as much

 modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there

 were no sallets in the lines to make the matter

 savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might

 indict the author of affectation; but called it an

 honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very

 much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I

 chiefly loved: 'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido; and

 thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of

 Priam's slaughter: if it live in your memory, begin

 at this line: let me see, let me see--

 'The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,'--

 it is not so:--it begins with Pyrrhus:--

 'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,

 Black as his purpose, did the night resemble

 When he lay couched in the ominous horse,

 Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd

 With heraldry more dismal; head to foot

 Now is he total gules; horridly trick'd

 With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,

 Baked and impasted with the parching streets,

 That lend a tyrannous and damned light

 To their lord's murder: roasted in wrath and fire,

 And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,

 With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus

 Old grandsire Priam seeks.'

 So, proceed you.

LORD POLONIUS

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

 good discretion.

First Player

 'Anon he finds him

 Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,

 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,

 Repugnant to command: unequal match'd,

 Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;

 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword

 The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,

 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top

 Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash

 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword,

 Which was declining on the milky head

 Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:

 So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,

 And like a neutral to his will and matter,

 Did nothing.

 But, as we often see, against some storm,

 A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,

 The bold winds 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;

 And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall

 On Mars's armour forged for proof eterne

 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword

 Now falls on Priam.

 Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,

 In general synod 'take away her power;

 Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,

 And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,

 As low as to the fiends!'

LORD POLONIUS

 This is too long.

HAMLET

 It shall to the barber's, with your beard. Prithee,

 say on: he's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he

 sleeps: say on: come to Hecuba.

First Player

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

HAMLET

 'The mobled queen?'

LORD POLONIUS

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

First Player

 'Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames

 With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head

 Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,

 About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,

 A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up;

 Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,

 'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have

 pronounced:

 But if the gods themselves did see her then

 When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport

 In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,

 The instant burst of clamour that she made,

 Unless things mortal move them not at all,

 Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,

 And passion in the gods.'

LORD POLONIUS

 Look, whether he has not turned his colour and has

 tears in's eyes. Pray you, no more.

HAMLET

 'Tis well: I'll have thee speak out the rest soon.

 Good my lord, will you see the players well

 bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; for

 they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the

 time: after your death you were better have a bad

 epitaph than their ill report while you live.

LORD POLONIUS

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

HAMLET

 God's bodykins, man, much better: use every man

 after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?

 Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less

 they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty.

 Take them in.

LORD POLONIUS

 Come, sirs.

HAMLET

 Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow.

 Exit POLONIUS with all the Players but the First

 Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the

 Murder of Gonzago?

First Player

 Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

 We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need,

 study a 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

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

 welcome to Elsinore.

ROSENCRANTZ

 Good my lord!

HAMLET

 Ay, so, God be wi' ye;

 Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

 Now I am alone.

 O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!

 Is it not monstrous that this player here,

 But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

 Could force his soul so to his own conceit

 That from her working all his visage wann'd,

 Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,

 A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

 With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!

 For Hecuba!

 What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,

 That he should weep for her? What would he do,

 Had he the motive and the cue for passion

 That I have? He would drown the stage with tears

 And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,

 Make mad the guilty and appal the free,

 Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed

 The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,

 A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,

 Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,

 And can say nothing; no, not for a king,

 Upon whose property and most dear life

 A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?

 Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?

 Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?

 Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,

 As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?

 Ha!

 'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be

 But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall

 To make oppression bitter, or ere this

 I should have fatted all the region kites

 With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!

 Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!

 O, vengeance!

 Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,

 That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,

 Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,

 Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,

 And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,

 A scullion!

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

 That guilty creatures sitting at a play

 Have by the very cunning of the scene

 Been struck so to the soul that presently

 They have proclaim'd their malefactions;

 For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak

 With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players

 Play something like the murder of my father

 Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;

 I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,

 I know my course. The spirit that I have seen

 May be the devil: and the devil hath power

 To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps

 Out of my weakness and my melancholy,

 As he is very potent with such spirits,

 Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds

 More relative than this: the play 's the thing

 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

 Exit

ACT III

SCENE I. A room in the castle.

 Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN

KING CLAUDIUS

 And can you, by no drift of circumstance,

 Get from him why he puts on this confusion,

 Grating so harshly all his days of quiet

 With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

ROSENCRANTZ

 He does confess he feels himself distracted;

 But from what cause he will by no means speak.

GUILDENSTERN

 Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,

 But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,

 When we would bring him on to some confession

 Of his true state.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Did he receive you well?

ROSENCRANTZ

 Most like a gentleman.

GUILDENSTERN

 But with much forcing of his disposition.

ROSENCRANTZ

 Niggard of question; but, of our demands,

 Most free in his reply.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Did you assay him?

 To any pastime?

ROSENCRANTZ

 Madam, it so fell out, that certain players

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

 And there did seem in him a kind of joy

 To hear of it: they are about the court,

 And, as I think, they have already order

 This night to play before him.

LORD POLONIUS

 'Tis most true:

 And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties

 To hear and see the matter.

KING CLAUDIUS

 With all my heart; and it doth much content me

 To hear him so inclined.

 Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,

 And drive his purpose on to these delights.

ROSENCRANTZ

 We shall, my lord.

 Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

KING CLAUDIUS

 Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;

 For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,

 That he, as 'twere by accident, may here

 Affront Ophelia:

 Her father and myself, lawful espials,

 Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,

 We may of their encounter frankly judge,

 And gather by him, as he is behaved,

 If 't be the affliction of his love or no

 That thus he suffers for.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 I shall obey you.

 And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish

 That your good beauties be the happy cause

 Of Hamlet's wildness: so shall I hope your virtues

 Will bring him to his wonted way again,

 To both your honours.

OPHELIA

 Madam, I wish it may.

 Exit QUEEN GERTRUDE

LORD POLONIUS

 Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,

 We will bestow ourselves.

 To OPHELIA

 Read on this book;

 That show of such an exercise may colour

 Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,--

 'Tis too much proved--that with devotion's visage

 And pious action we do sugar o'er

 The devil himself.

KING CLAUDIUS

 [Aside] O, 'tis too true!

 How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!

 The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,

 Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it

 Than is my deed to my most painted word:

 O heavy burthen!

LORD POLONIUS

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

 Exeunt KING CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS

 Enter HAMLET

HAMLET

 To be, or not to be: that is the question:

 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,

 And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;

 No more; and by a sleep to say we end

 The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks

 That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation

 Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;

 To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;

 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come

 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,

 Must give us pause: there's the respect

 That makes calamity of so long life;

 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,

 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,

 The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,

 The insolence of office and the spurns

 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,

 When he himself might his quietus make

 With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,

 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,

 But that the dread of something after death,

 The undiscover'd country from whose bourn

 No traveller returns, puzzles the will

 And makes us rather bear those ills we have

 Than fly to others that we know not of?

 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;

 And thus the native hue of resolution

 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,

 And enterprises of great pith and moment

 With this regard their currents turn awry,

 And lose the name of action.--Soft you now!

 The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons

 Be all my sins remember'd.

OPHELIA

 Good my lord,

 How does your honour for this many a day?

HAMLET

 I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

OPHELIA

 My lord, I have remembrances of yours,

 That I have longed long to re-deliver;

 I pray you, now receive them.

HAMLET

 No, not I;

 I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA

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

 And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed

 As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,

 Take these again; for to the noble mind

 Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.

 There, my lord.

HAMLET

 Ha, ha! are you honest?

OPHELIA

 My lord?

HAMLET

 Are you fair?

OPHELIA

 What means your lordship?

HAMLET

 That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should

 admit no discourse to your beauty.

OPHELIA

 Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than

 with honesty?

HAMLET

 Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner

 transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the

 force of honesty can translate beauty into his

 likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the

 time gives it proof. I did love you once.

OPHELIA

 Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAMLET

 You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot

 so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of

 it: I loved you not.

OPHELIA

 I was the more deceived.

HAMLET

 Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a

 breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest;

 but yet I could accuse me of such things that it

 were better my mother had not borne me: I am very

 proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at

 my beck than I have thoughts to put them in,

 imagination to give them shape, or time to act them

 in. What should such fellows as I do crawling

 between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves,

 all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery.

 Where's your father?

OPHELIA

 At home, my lord.

HAMLET

 Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the

 fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

OPHELIA

 O, help him, you sweet heavens!

HAMLET

 If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for

 thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as

 snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a

 nunnery, go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs

 marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough

 what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go,

 and quickly too. Farewell.

OPHELIA

 O heavenly powers, restore him!

HAMLET

 I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God

 has 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!

 Re-enter KING CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS

KING CLAUDIUS

 Love! his affections do not that way tend;

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

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

 O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;

 And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose

 Will be some danger: which for to prevent,

 I have in quick determination

 Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England,

 For the demand of our neglected tribute

 Haply the seas and countries different

 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?

LORD POLONIUS

 It shall do well: but yet do I believe

 The origin and commencement of his grief

 Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia!

 You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;

 We heard it all. My lord, do as you please;

 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 CLAUDIUS

 It shall be so:

 Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.

 Exeunt

SCENE II. A hall in the castle.

 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,

 the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget

 a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it

 offends me to the soul to hear a robustious

 periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to

 very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who

 for the most part are capable of nothing but

 inexplicable dumbshows 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 o'erstep not

 the modesty of nature: for any thing 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.

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

 Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN

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

LORD POLONIUS

 And the queen too, and that presently.

HAMLET

 Bid the players make haste.

 Exit POLONIUS

 Will you two help to hasten them?

ROSENCRANTZ GUILDENSTERN

 We will, my lord.

 Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

HAMLET

 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,

 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 commingled,

 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 afoot,

 Even with the very comment of thy soul

 Observe mine uncle: if his occulted guilt

 Do not itself unkennel in one speech,

 It is a damned ghost that we have seen,

 And my imaginations are as foul

 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.

HORATIO

 Well, my lord:

 If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,

 And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

HAMLET

 They are coming to the play; I must be idle:

 Get you a place.

 Danish march. A flourish. Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and others

KING CLAUDIUS

 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.

KING CLAUDIUS

 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?

LORD POLONIUS

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

HAMLET

 What did you enact?

LORD POLONIUS

 I did enact Julius Caesar: 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 GERTRUDE

 Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAMLET

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

LORD POLONIUS

 [To KING CLAUDIUS] O, ho! do you mark that?

HAMLET

 Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

 Lying down at OPHELIA's feet

OPHELIA

 No, my lord.

HAMLET

 I mean, my head upon your lap?

OPHELIA

 Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

 Do you think I meant country matters?

OPHELIA

 I think nothing, my lord.

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

 What is, my lord?

HAMLET

 Nothing.

OPHELIA

 You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET

 Who, I?

OPHELIA

 Ay, my lord.

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 these 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; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with

 the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is 'For, O, for, O,

 the hobby-horse is forgot.'

 Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters

 Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly; the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love

 Exeunt

OPHELIA

 What means this, my lord?

HAMLET

 Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

OPHELIA

 Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

 Enter Prologue

HAMLET

 We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot

 keep counsel; they'll tell all.

OPHELIA

 Will he tell us what this show meant?

HAMLET

 Ay, or any show that you'll show him: be not you

 ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

OPHELIA

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

Prologue

 For us, and for our tragedy,

 Here stooping to your clemency,

 We beg your hearing patiently.

 Exit

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

 'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET

 As woman's love.

 Enter two Players, King and Queen

Player King

 Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round

 Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground,

 And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen

 About the world have times twelve thirties been,

 Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands

 Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

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:

 For women's fear and love holds quantity;

 In neither aught, or in extremity.

 Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;

 And as my love is sized, my fear is so:

 Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;

 Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

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 Queen

 The instances that second marriage move

 Are base respects of thrift, but none of love:

 A second time I kill my husband dead,

 When second husband kisses me in bed.

Player King

 I do believe you think what now you speak;

 But what we do determine oft we break.

 Purpose is but the slave to memory,

 Of violent birth, but poor validity;

 Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree;

 But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.

 Most necessary 'tis that we forget

 To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:

 What to ourselves in passion we propose,

 The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.

 The violence of either grief or joy

 Their own enactures with themselves destroy:

 Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;

 Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.

 This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange

 That even our loves should with our fortunes change;

 For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,

 Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.

 The great man down, you mark his favourite flies;

 The poor advanced makes friends of enemies.

 And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;

 For who not needs shall never lack a friend,

 And who in want a hollow friend doth try,

 Directly seasons him his enemy.

 But, orderly to end where I begun,

 Our wills and fates do so contrary run

 That our devices still are overthrown;

 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:

 So think thou wilt no second husband wed;

 But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

Player Queen

 Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!

 Sport and repose lock from me day and night!

 To desperation turn my trust and hope!

 An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!

 Each opposite that blanks the face of joy

 Meet what I would have well and it destroy!

 Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,

 If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

HAMLET

 If she should break it now!

Player King

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

 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 GERTRUDE

 The lady protests too much, methinks.

HAMLET

 O, but she'll keep her word.

KING CLAUDIUS

 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.

KING CLAUDIUS

 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.

OPHELIA

 You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

HAMLET

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

OPHELIA

 Still better, and worse.

HAMLET

 So you must take your husbands. Begin, murderer;

 pox, 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 ears

HAMLET

 He poisons him i' the garden for's estate. His

 name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and writ in

 choice Italian: you shall see anon how the murderer

 gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

OPHELIA

 The king rises.

HAMLET

 What, frighted with false fire!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 How fares my lord?

LORD POLONIUS

 Give o'er the play.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Give me some light: away!

All

 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:

 So runs the world away.

 Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers-- if

 the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me--with two

 Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a

 fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

HORATIO

 Half a share.

HAMLET

 A whole one, I.

 For thou dost know, O Damon dear,

 This realm dismantled was

 Of Jove himself; and now reigns here

 A very, very--pajock.

HORATIO

 You might have rhymed.

HAMLET

 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 recorders!

 For if the king like not the comedy,

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

 Come, some music!

 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 his 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.

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 behavior 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.

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, but sir, '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

 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with

 your lingers 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.

 Enter POLONIUS

 God bless you, sir!

LORD 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?

LORD POLONIUS

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

HAMLET

 Methinks it is like a weasel.

LORD POLONIUS

 It is backed like a weasel.

HAMLET

 Or like a whale?

LORD 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.

LORD POLONIUS

 I will say so.

HAMLET

 By and by is easily said.

 Exit POLONIUS

 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;

 My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites;

 How in my words soever she be shent,

 To give them seals never, my soul, consent!

 Exit

SCENE III. A room in the castle.

 Enter KING CLAUDIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN

KING CLAUDIUS

 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:

 The terms of our estate may not endure

 Hazard so dangerous as doth hourly grow

 Out of his lunacies.

GUILDENSTERN

 We will ourselves provide:

 Most holy and religious fear it is

 To keep those many many bodies safe

 That live and feed upon your majesty.

ROSENCRANTZ

 The single and peculiar life is bound,

 With all the strength and armour of the mind,

 To keep itself from noyance; but much more

 That spirit upon whose weal depend and rest

 The lives of many. The cease of majesty

 Dies not alone; but, like a gulf, doth draw

 What's near it with it: it is a massy wheel,

 Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,

 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things

 Are mortised and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,

 Each small annexment, petty consequence,

 Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone

 Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;

 For we will fetters put upon this fear,

 Which now goes too free-footed.

ROSENCRANTZ GUILDENSTERN

 We will haste us.

 Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

 Enter POLONIUS

LORD POLONIUS

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

 Behind the arras I'll convey myself,

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

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

 'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,

 Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear

 The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege:

 I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,

 And tell you what I know.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Thanks, dear my lord.

 Exit POLONIUS

 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 two-fold 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

 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 newborn 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?

 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 gaming, 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 CLAUDIUS

 [Rising] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:

 Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

 Exit

SCENE IV. The Queen's closet.

 Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE and POLONIUS

LORD 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 between

 Much heat and him. I'll sconce me even here.

 Pray you, be round with him.

HAMLET

 [Within] Mother, mother, mother!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 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?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET

 Mother, you have my father much offended.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET

 Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Why, how now, Hamlet!

HAMLET

 What's the matter now?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 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 GERTRUDE

 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 GERTRUDE

 What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?

 Help, help, ho!

LORD POLONIUS

 [Behind] What, ho! help, help, help!

HAMLET

 [Drawing] How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!

 Makes a pass through the arras

LORD POLONIUS

 [Behind] O, I am slain!

 Falls and dies

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 O me, what hast thou done?

HAMLET

 Nay, I know not:

 Is it the king?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 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 GERTRUDE

 As kill a king!

HAMLET

 Ay, lady, 'twas my word.

 Lifts up the array and discovers POLONIUS

 Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

 I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;

 Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.

 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 is proof and bulwark against sense.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 What have I done, that thou darest wag thy tongue

 In noise so rude against me?

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 GERTRUDE

 Ay me, what act,

 That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?

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

 Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,

 Else could you not have motion; but sure, that sense

 Is apoplex'd; for madness would not err,

 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd

 But it reserved some quantity of choice,

 To serve in such a difference. What devil was't

 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?

 Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,

 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,

 Or but a sickly part of one true sense

 Could not so mope.

 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: proclaim no shame

 When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,

 Since frost itself as actively doth burn

 And reason panders will.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 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 enseamed bed,

 Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love

 Over the nasty sty,--

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 O, speak to me no more;

 These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears;

 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 GERTRUDE

 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 gracious figure?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Alas, he's mad!

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:

 Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works:

 Speak to her, Hamlet.

HAMLET

 How is it with you, lady?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Alas, how is't with you,

 That you do bend your eye on vacancy

 And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?

 Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;

 And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,

 Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,

 Starts up, and stands on end. 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 GERTRUDE

 To whom do you speak this?

HAMLET

 Do you see nothing there?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

HAMLET

 Nor did you nothing hear?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 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 GERTRUDE

 This 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 mattering unction to your soul,

 That not your trespass, but my madness speaks:

 It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,

 Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,

 Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;

 Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;

 And do not spread the compost on the weeds,

 To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue;

 For in the fatness of these pursy times

 Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,

 Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 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.

 Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed;

 Assume a virtue, if you have it not.

 That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,

 Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,

 That to the use of actions fair and good

 He likewise gives a frock or livery,

 That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,

 And that shall lend a kind of easiness

 To the next abstinence: the next more easy;

 For use almost can change the stamp of nature,

 And either [ ] the devil, or throw him out

 With wondrous potency. Once more, good night:

 And when you are desirous to be bless'd,

 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. So, again, good night.

 I must be cruel, only to be kind:

 Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.

 One word more, good lady.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 What shall I do?

HAMLET

 Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:

 Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed;

 Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse;

 And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,

 Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,

 Make you to ravel all this matter out,

 That I essentially am not in madness,

 But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know;

 For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,

 Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,

 Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?

 No, in despite of sense and secrecy,

 Unpeg the basket on the house's top.

 Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,

 To try conclusions, in the basket creep,

 And break your own neck down.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,

 And breath of life, I have no life to breathe

 What thou hast said to me.

HAMLET

 I must to England; you know that?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Alack,

 I had forgot: 'tis so concluded on.

HAMLET

 There's letters seal'd: and my two schoolfellows,

 Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,

 They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,

 And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;

 For 'tis the sport to have the engineer

 Hoist with his own petard: and 't shall go hard

 But I will delve one yard below their mines,

 And blow them at the moon: O, 'tis most sweet,

 When in one line two crafts directly meet.

 This man shall set me packing:

 I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.

 Mother, good night. Indeed this counsellor

 Is now most still, most secret and most grave,

 Who was in life a foolish prating knave.

 Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.

 Good night, mother.

 Exeunt severally; HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS

ACT IV

SCENE I. A room in the castle.

 Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN

KING CLAUDIUS

 There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves:

 You must translate: 'tis fit we understand them.

 Where is your son?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Bestow this place on us a little while.

 Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

 Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night!

KING CLAUDIUS

 What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend

 Which is the mightier: in his lawless fit,

 Behind the arras hearing something stir,

 Whips out his rapier, cries, 'A rat, a rat!'

 And, in this brainish apprehension, kills

 The unseen good old man.

KING CLAUDIUS

 O heavy deed!

 It had been so with us, had we been there:

 His liberty is full of threats to all;

 To you yourself, to us, to every one.

 Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?

 It will be laid to us, whose providence

 Should have kept short, restrain'd and out of haunt,

 This mad young man: but so much was our love,

 We would not understand what was most fit;

 But, like the owner of a foul disease,

 To keep it from divulging, let it feed

 Even on the pith of Life. Where is he gone?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:

 O'er whom his very madness, like some ore

 Among a mineral of metals base,

 Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

KING CLAUDIUS

 O Gertrude, come away!

 The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,

 But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed

 We must, with all our majesty and skill,

 Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

 Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

 Friends both, go join you with some further aid:

 Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,

 And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:

 Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body

 Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

 Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

 Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;

 And let them know, both what we mean to do,

 And what's untimely done. O, come away!

 My soul is full of discord and dismay.

 Exeunt

SCENE II. Another room in the castle.

 Enter HAMLET

HAMLET

 Safely stowed.

ROSENCRANTZ: GUILDENSTERN:

 [Within] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

HAMLET

 What noise? who calls on Hamlet?

 O, here they come.

 Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

ROSENCRANTZ

 What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

HAMLET

 Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

ROSENCRANTZ

 Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence

 And bear it to the chapel.

HAMLET

 Do not believe it.

ROSENCRANTZ

 Believe what?

HAMLET

 That I can keep your counsel and not mine own.

 Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! what

 replication should be made by the son of a king?

ROSENCRANTZ

 Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

HAMLET

 Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his

 rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the

 king best service in the end: he keeps them, like

 an ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to

 be last swallowed: when he needs what you have

 gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you

 shall be dry again.

ROSENCRANTZ

 I understand you not, my lord.

HAMLET

 I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in a

 foolish ear.

ROSENCRANTZ

 My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go

 with us to the king.

HAMLET

 The body is with the king, but the king is not with

 the body. The king is a thing--

GUILDENSTERN

 A thing, my lord!

HAMLET

 Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.

 Exeunt

SCENE III. Another room in the castle.

 Enter KING CLAUDIUS, attended

KING CLAUDIUS

 I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.

 How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!

 Yet must not we put the strong law on him:

 He's loved of the distracted multitude,

 Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;

 And where tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,

 But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,

 This sudden sending him away must seem

 Deliberate pause: diseases desperate grown

 By desperate appliance are relieved,

 Or not at all.

 Enter ROSENCRANTZ

 How now! what hath befall'n?

ROSENCRANTZ

 Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,

 We cannot get from him.

KING CLAUDIUS

 But where is he?

ROSENCRANTZ

 Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Bring him before us.

ROSENCRANTZ

 Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

 Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN

KING CLAUDIUS

 Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAMLET

 At supper.

KING CLAUDIUS

 At supper! where?

HAMLET

 Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain

 convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your

 worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all

 creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for

 maggots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but

 variable service, two dishes, but to one table:

 that's the end.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Alas, alas!

HAMLET

 A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a

 king, and cat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

KING CLAUDIUS

 What dost you mean by this?

HAMLET

 Nothing but to show you how a king may go a

 progress through the guts of a beggar.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Where is Polonius?

HAMLET

 In heaven; send hither to see: if your messenger

 find him not there, seek him i' the other place

 yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within

 this month, you shall nose him as you go up the

 stairs into the lobby.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Go seek him there.

 To some Attendants

HAMLET

 He will stay till ye come.

 Exeunt Attendants

KING CLAUDIUS

 Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,--

 Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve

 For that which thou hast done,--must send thee hence

 With fiery quickness: therefore prepare thyself;

 The bark is ready, and the wind at help,

 The associates tend, and every thing is bent

 For England.

HAMLET

 For England!

KING CLAUDIUS

 Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET

 Good.

KING CLAUDIUS

 So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

HAMLET

 I see a cherub that sees them. But, come; for

 England! Farewell, dear mother.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Thy loving father, Hamlet.

HAMLET

 My mother: father and mother is man and wife; man

 and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother. Come, for England!

 Exit

KING CLAUDIUS

 Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard;

 Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night:

 Away! for every thing is seal'd and done

 That else leans on the affair: pray you, make haste.

 Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

 And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught--

 As my great power thereof may give thee sense,

 Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red

 After the Danish sword, and thy free awe

 Pays homage to us--thou mayst not coldly set

 Our sovereign process; which imports at full,

 By letters congruing to that effect,

 The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;

 For like the hectic in my blood he rages,

 And thou must cure me: till I know 'tis done,

 Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

 Exit

SCENE IV. A plain in Denmark.

 Enter FORTINBRAS, a Captain, and Soldiers, marching

PRINCE FORTINBRAS

 Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;

 Tell him that, by his licence, Fortinbras

 Craves the conveyance of a promised march

 Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.

 If that his majesty would aught with us,

 We shall express our duty in his eye;

 And let him know so.

Captain

 I will do't, my lord.

PRINCE FORTINBRAS

 Go softly on.

 Exeunt FORTINBRAS and Soldiers

 Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and others

HAMLET

 Good sir, whose powers are these?

Captain

 They are of Norway, sir.

HAMLET

 How purposed, sir, I pray you?

Captain

 Against some part of Poland.

HAMLET

 Who commands them, sir?

Captain

 The nephews to old Norway, Fortinbras.

HAMLET

 Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,

 Or for some frontier?

Captain

 Truly to speak, and with no addition,

 We go to gain a little patch of ground

 That hath in it no profit but the name.

 To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;

 Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole

 A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

HAMLET

 Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

Captain

 Yes, it is already garrison'd.

HAMLET

 Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats

 Will not debate the question of this straw:

 This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,

 That inward breaks, and shows no cause without

 Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.

Captain

 God be wi' you, sir.

 Exit

ROSENCRANTZ

 Wilt please you go, my lord?

HAMLET

 I'll be with you straight go a little before.

 Exeunt all except HAMLET

 How all occasions do inform against me,

 And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,

 If his chief good and market of his time

 Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.

 Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,

 Looking before and after, gave us not

 That capability and god-like reason

 To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be

 Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple

 Of thinking too precisely on the event,

 A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom

 And ever three parts coward, I do not know

 Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do;'

 Sith I have cause and will and strength and means

 To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me:

 Witness this army of such mass and charge

 Led by a delicate and tender prince,

 Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd

 Makes mouths at the invisible event,

 Exposing what is mortal and unsure

 To all that fortune, death and danger dare,

 Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great

 Is not to stir without great argument,

 But greatly to find quarrel in a straw

 When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,

 That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,

 Excitements of my reason and my blood,

 And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see

 The imminent death of twenty thousand men,

 That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,

 Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot

 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,

 Which is not tomb enough and continent

 To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,

 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

 Exit

SCENE V. Elsinore. A room in the castle.

 Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE, HORATIO, and a Gentleman

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 I will not speak with her.

Gentleman

 She is importunate, indeed distract:

 Her mood will needs be pitied.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 What would she have?

Gentleman

 She speaks much of her father; says she hears

 There's tricks i' the world; and hems, and beats her heart;

 Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,

 That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,

 Yet the unshaped use of it doth move

 The hearers to collection; they aim at it,

 And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;

 Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures

 yield them,

 Indeed would make one think there might be thought,

 Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

HORATIO

 'Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew

 Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Let her come in.

 Exit HORATIO

 To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,

 Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:

 So full of artless jealousy is guilt,

 It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

 Re-enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA

OPHELIA

 Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 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 GERTRUDE

 Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

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.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Nay, but, Ophelia,--

OPHELIA

 Pray you, mark.

 Sings

 White his shroud as the mountain snow,--

 Enter KING CLAUDIUS

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Alas, look here, my lord.

OPHELIA

 [Sings]

 Larded with sweet flowers

 Which bewept to the grave did go

 With true-love showers.

KING CLAUDIUS

 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 CLAUDIUS

 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:

 Sings

 To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,

 All in the morning betime,

 And I a maid at your window,

 To be your Valentine.

 Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,

 And dupp'd the chamber-door;

 Let in the maid, that out a maid

 Never departed more.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Pretty Ophelia!

OPHELIA

 Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on't:

 Sings

 By Gis and by Saint Charity,

 Alack, and fie for shame!

 Young men will do't, if they come to't;

 By cock, they are to blame.

 Quoth she, before you tumbled me,

 You promised me to wed.

 So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,

 An thou hadst not come to my bed.

KING CLAUDIUS

 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 CLAUDIUS

 Follow her close; give her good watch,

 I pray you.

 Exit HORATIO

 O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs

 All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,

 When sorrows come, they come not single spies

 But in battalions. First, her father slain:

 Next, your son gone; and he most violent author

 Of his own just remove: the people muddied,

 Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,

 For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly,

 In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia

 Divided from herself and her fair judgment,

 Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts:

 Last, and as much containing as all these,

 Her brother is in secret come from France;

 Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,

 And wants not buzzers to infect his ear

 With pestilent speeches of his father's death;

 Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,

 Will nothing stick our person to arraign

 In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,

 Like to a murdering-piece, in many places

 Gives me superfluous death.

 A noise within

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Alack, what noise is this?

KING CLAUDIUS

 Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

 Enter another Gentleman

 What is the matter?

Gentleman

 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,

 O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;

 And, as the world were now but to begin,

 Antiquity forgot, custom not known,

 The ratifiers and props of every word,

 They cry 'Choose we: Laertes shall be king:'

 Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds:

 'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!'

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!

 O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!

KING CLAUDIUS

 The doors are broke.

 Noise within

 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 GERTRUDE

 Calmly, good Laertes.

LAERTES

 That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard,

 Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot

 Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow

 Of my true mother.

KING CLAUDIUS

 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,

 Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,

 Why thou art thus incensed. Let him go, Gertrude.

 Speak, man.

LAERTES

 Where is my father?

KING CLAUDIUS

 Dead.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 But not by him.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Let him demand his fill.

LAERTES

 How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:

 To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!

 Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!

 I dare damnation. To this point I stand,

 That both the worlds I give to negligence,

 Let come what comes; only I'll be revenged

 Most thoroughly for my father.

KING CLAUDIUS

 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 CLAUDIUS

 Good Laertes,

 If you desire to know the certainty

 Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,

 That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,

 Winner and loser?

LAERTES

 None but his enemies.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Will you know them then?

LAERTES

 To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms;

 And like the kind life-rendering pelican,

 Repast them with my blood.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Why, now you speak

 Like a good child and a true gentleman.

 That I am guiltless of your father's death,

 And am most sensible 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 heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt,

 Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!

 By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight,

 Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!

 Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!

 O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits

 Should be as moral as an old man's life?

 Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine,

 It sends some precious instance of itself

 After the thing it loves.

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 a-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,

 love, remember: and there is pansies. that's for thoughts.

LAERTES

 A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance 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-grace o' Sundays: O you must wear your rue with

 a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you

 some violets, but they withered all when my father

 died: they say he made a good end,--

 Sings

 For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

LAERTES

 Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,

 She turns to favour and to prettiness.

OPHELIA

 [Sings]

 And will he not come again?

 And will he 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' ye.

 Exit

LAERTES

 Do you see this, O God?

KING CLAUDIUS

 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 can ours,

 To you in satisfaction; but if not,

 Be you content to lend your patience to us,

 And we shall jointly labour with your soul

 To give it due content.

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.

KING CLAUDIUS

 So you shall;

 And where the offence is let the great axe fall.

 I pray you, go with me.

 Exeunt

SCENE VI. Another room in the castle.

 Enter HORATIO and a Servant

HORATIO

 What are they that would speak with me?

Servant

 Sailors, sir: they say they have letters for you.

HORATIO

 Let them come in.

 Exit Servant

 I do not know from what part of the world

 I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

 Enter Sailors

First Sailor

 God bless you, sir.

HORATIO

 Let him bless thee too.

First Sailor

 He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for

 you, sir; it comes from the ambassador that was

 bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am

 let to know it is.

HORATIO

 [Reads] 'Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked

 this, give these fellows some means to the king:

 they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old

 at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us

 chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on

 a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded

 them: on the instant they got clear of our ship; so

 I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with

 me like thieves of mercy: but they knew what they

 did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king

 have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me

 with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. I

 have words to speak in thine ear will make thee

 dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of

 the matter. These good fellows will bring thee

 where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their

 course for England: of them I have much to tell

 thee. Farewell.

 'He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.'

 Come, I will make you way for these your letters;

 And do't the speedier, that you may direct me

 To him from whom you brought them.

 Exeunt

SCENE VII. Another room in the castle.

 Enter KING CLAUDIUS and LAERTES

KING CLAUDIUS

 Now must your conscience my acquaintance seal,

 And you must put me in your heart for friend,

 Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,

 That he which hath your noble father slain

 Pursued my life.

LAERTES

 It well appears: but tell me

 Why you proceeded not against these feats,

 So crimeful and so capital in nature,

 As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,

 You mainly were stirr'd up.

KING CLAUDIUS

 O, for two special reasons;

 Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinew'd,

 But yet to me they are strong. The queen his mother

 Lives almost by his looks; and for myself--

 My virtue or my plague, be it either which--

 She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,

 That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,

 I could not but by her. The other motive,

 Why to a public count I might not go,

 Is the great love the general gender bear him;

 Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,

 Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,

 Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,

 Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,

 Would have reverted to my bow again,

 And not where I had aim'd them.

LAERTES

 And so have I a noble father lost;

 A sister driven into desperate terms,

 Whose worth, if praises may go back again,

 Stood challenger on mount of all the age

 For her perfections: but my revenge will come.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Break not your sleeps for that: you must not think

 That we are made of stuff so flat and dull

 That we can let our beard be shook with danger

 And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more:

 I loved your father, and we love ourself;

 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine--

 Enter a Messenger

 How now! what news?

Messenger

 Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:

 This to your majesty; this to the queen.

KING CLAUDIUS

 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 CLAUDIUS

 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, recount the occasion of my sudden

 and more strange return. 'HAMLET.'

 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 CLAUDIUS

 'Tis Hamlets 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 CLAUDIUS

 If it be so, Laertes--

 As how should it be so? how otherwise?--

 Will you be ruled by me?

LAERTES

 Ay, my lord;

 So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

KING CLAUDIUS

 To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,

 As checking at his voyage, and that he means

 No more to undertake it, I will work him

 To an exploit, now ripe in my device,

 Under the which he shall not choose but fall:

 And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,

 But even his mother shall uncharge the practise

 And call it accident.

LAERTES

 My lord, I will be ruled;

 The rather, if you could devise it so

 That I might be the organ.

KING CLAUDIUS

 It falls right.

 You have been talk'd of since your travel much,

 And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality

 Wherein, they say, you shine: your sum of parts

 Did not together pluck such envy from him

 As did that one, and that, in my regard,

 Of the unworthiest siege.

LAERTES

 What part is that, my lord?

KING CLAUDIUS

 A very riband in the cap of youth,

 Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes

 The light and careless livery that it wears

 Than settled age his sables and his weeds,

 Importing health and graveness. Two months since,

 Here was a gentleman of Normandy:--

 I've seen myself, and served against, the French,

 And they can well on horseback: but this gallant

 Had witchcraft in't; he grew unto his seat;

 And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,

 As he had been incorpsed and demi-natured

 With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought,

 That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,

 Come short of what he did.

LAERTES

 A Norman was't?

KING CLAUDIUS

 A Norman.

LAERTES

 Upon my life, Lamond.

KING CLAUDIUS

 The very same.

LAERTES

 I know him well: he is the brooch indeed

 And gem of all the nation.

KING CLAUDIUS

 He made confession of you,

 And gave you such a masterly report

 For art and exercise in your defence

 And for your rapier most especially,

 That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,

 If one could match you: the scrimers of their nation,

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

 If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his

 Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy

 That he could nothing do but wish and beg

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

 Now, out of this,--

LAERTES

 What out of this, my lord?

KING CLAUDIUS

 Laertes, was your father dear to you?

 Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,

 A face without a heart?

LAERTES

 Why ask you this?

KING CLAUDIUS

 Not that I think you did not love your father;

 But that I know love is begun by time;

 And that I see, in passages of proof,

 Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.

 There lives within the very flame of love

 A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it;

 And nothing is at a like goodness still;

 For goodness, growing to a plurisy,

 Dies in his own too much: that we would do

 We should do when we would; for this 'would' changes

 And hath abatements and delays as many

 As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;

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

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

 Hamlet comes back: what would you undertake,

 To show yourself your father's son in deed

 More than in words?

LAERTES

 To cut his throat i' the church.

KING CLAUDIUS

 No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;

 Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,

 Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.

 Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home:

 We'll put on those shall praise your excellence

 And set a double varnish on the fame

 The Frenchman gave you, bring you in fine together

 And wager on your heads: he, being remiss,

 Most generous and free from all contriving,

 Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,

 Or with a little shuffling, you may choose

 A sword unbated, and in a pass of practise

 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.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Let's further think of this;

 Weigh what convenience both of time and means

 May fit us to our shape: if this should fail,

 And that our drift look through our bad performance,

 'Twere better not assay'd: therefore this project

 Should have a back or second, that might hold,

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

 We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings: 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 GERTRUDE

 How now, sweet queen!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 One woe doth tread upon another's heel,

 So fast they follow; your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

LAERTES

 Drown'd! O, where?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 There is a willow grows aslant a brook,

 That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;

 There with fantastic garlands did she come

 Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples

 That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,

 But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:

 There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds

 Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;

 When down her weedy trophies and herself

 Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;

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

 Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes;

 As one incapable of her own distress,

 Or like a creature native and indued

 Unto that element: but long it could not be

 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,

 Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay

 To muddy death.

LAERTES

 Alas, then, she is drown'd?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Drown'd, drown'd.

LAERTES

 Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,

 And therefore I forbid my tears: but yet

 It is our trick; nature her custom holds,

 Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,

 The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord:

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

 But that this folly douts it.

 Exit

KING CLAUDIUS

 Let's follow, Gertrude:

 How much I had to do to calm his rage!

 Now fear I this will give it start again;

 Therefore let's follow.

 Exeunt

ACT V

SCENE I. A churchyard.

 Enter two Clowns, with spades, & c

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.

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

 gentleman but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers:

 they hold up Adam's profession.

Second Clown

 Was he a gentleman?

First Clown

 He 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?

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 in: 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, at a distance

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, ah, my behove,

 O, methought, there was nothing meet.

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

 Or of a courtier; which could say 'Good morrow,

 sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?' This might

 be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord

 such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

HORATIO

 Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

 Why, e'en so: and now my Lady Worm's; chapless, and

 knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade:

 here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to

 see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding,

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

First 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

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? Hum! This fellow might be

 in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes,

 his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers,

 his recoveries: is this the fine of his fines, and

 the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine

 pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him

 no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than

 the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The

 very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in

 this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

HORATIO

 Not a jot more, my lord.

HAMLET

 Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

 They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance

 in that. 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 it is 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 gain, 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

 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. By the Lord,

 Horatio, these three years I have taken a note of

 it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the

 peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he

 gaffs his kibe. 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 overcame Fortinbras.

HAMLET

 How long is that since?

First Clown

 Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it

 was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he that

 is mad, and sent into England.

HAMLET

 Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

First Clown

 Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits

 there; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

HAMLET

 Why?

First Clown

 'Twill, a not be seen in him there; there the men

 are as mad as he.

HAMLET

 How came he mad?

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 he be not rotten before he die--as we

 have many pocky corses now-a-days, that will scarce

 hold the laying in--he will last you some eight year

 or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

HAMLET

 Why he more than another?

First Clown

 Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that

 he will keep out water a great while; and your water

 is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body.

 Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth

 three and twenty years.

HAMLET

 Whose was it?

First Clown

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

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

 Let me see.

 Takes the skull

 Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow

 of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath

 borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how

 abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rims 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 chap-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.

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 Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,

 Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:

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

 Should patch a wall to expel the winter flaw!

 But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the king.

 Enter Priest, & c. in procession; the Corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following; KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, 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

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 warrantise: 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!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

 Scattering flowers

 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 awhile,

 Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

 Leaps into the grave

 Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,

 Till of this flat a mountain you have made,

 To o'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.

 Leaps into the grave

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 something in me dangerous,

 Which let thy wiseness fear: hold off thy hand.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Pluck them asunder.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 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 GERTRUDE

 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 CLAUDIUS

 O, he is mad, Laertes.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 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?

 Woo't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile?

 I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?

 To outface me with leaping in her grave?

 Be buried quick with her, and so will I:

 And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw

 Millions of acres on us, till our ground,

 Singeing his pate against the burning zone,

 Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,

 I'll rant as well as thou.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 This is mere madness:

 And thus awhile 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 CLAUDIUS

 I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.

 Exit HORATIO

 To LAERTES

 Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;

 We'll put the matter to the present push.

 Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.

 This grave shall have a living monument:

 An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;

 Till then, in patience our proceeding be.

 Exeunt

SCENE II. A hall in the castle.

 Enter HAMLET and HORATIO

HAMLET

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

 You do remember all the circumstance?

HORATIO

 Remember it, my lord?

HAMLET

 Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,

 That would not let me sleep: methought I lay

 Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,

 And praised be rashness for it, let us know,

 Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,

 When our deep plots do pall: and that should teach us

 There's a divinity that shapes our ends,

 Rough-hew them how we will,--

HORATIO

 That is most certain.

HAMLET

 Up from my cabin,

 My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark

 Groped I to find out them; had my desire.

 Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew

 To mine own room again; making so bold,

 My fears forgetting manners, to unseal

 Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,--

 O royal knavery!--an exact command,

 Larded with many several sorts of reasons

 Importing Denmark's health and England's too,

 With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,

 That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,

 No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,

 My head should be struck off.

HORATIO

 Is't possible?

HAMLET

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

 But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed?

HORATIO

 I beseech you.

HAMLET

 Being thus be-netted round with villanies,--

 Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,

 They had begun the play--I sat me down,

 Devised a new commission, wrote it fair:

 I once did hold it, as our statists do,

 A baseness to write fair and labour'd much

 How to forget that learning, but, sir, now

 It did me yeoman's service: wilt thou know

 The effect of what I wrote?

HORATIO

 Ay, good my lord.

HAMLET

 An earnest conjuration from the king,

 As England was his faithful tributary,

 As love between them like the palm might flourish,

 As peace should stiff her wheaten garland wear

 And stand a comma 'tween their amities,

 And many such-like 'As'es of great charge,

 That, on the view and knowing of these contents,

 Without debatement further, more or less,

 He should the bearers put to sudden death,

 Not shriving-time allow'd.

HORATIO

 How was this seal'd?

HAMLET

 Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.

 I had my father's signet in my purse,

 Which was the model of that Danish seal;

 Folded the writ up in form of the other,

 Subscribed it, gave't the impression, placed it safely,

 The changeling never known. Now, the next day

 Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent

 Thou know'st already.

HORATIO

 So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

HAMLET

 Why, man, they did make love to this employment;

 They are not near my conscience; their defeat

 Does by their own insinuation grow:

 'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes

 Between the pass and fell incensed points

 Of mighty opposites.

HORATIO

 Why, what a king is this!

HAMLET

 Does it not, think'st thee, stand me now upon--

 He that hath kill'd my king and whored my mother,

 Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,

 Thrown out his angle for my proper life,

 And with such cozenage--is't not perfect conscience,

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

 To let this canker of our nature come

 In further evil?

HORATIO

 It must be shortly known to him from England

 What is the issue of the business there.

HAMLET

 It will be short: the interim is mine;

 And a man's life's no more than to say 'One.'

 But I am very sorry, good Horatio,

 That to Laertes I forgot myself;

 For, by the image of my cause, I see

 The portraiture of his: I'll 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. He hath much land, and fertile: let a

 beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at

 the king's mess: 'tis a chough; but, as I say,

 spacious in the possession of dirt.

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.

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 for 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

 Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you;

 though, I know, to divide him inventorially would

 dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw

 neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the

 verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of

 great article; and his infusion of such dearth and

 rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his

 semblable is his mirror; and who else would trace

 him, his umbrage, nothing more.

OSRIC

 Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

HAMLET

 The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman

 in our more rawer breath?

OSRIC

 Sir?

HORATIO

 Is't not possible to understand in another tongue?

 You will do't, sir, really.

HAMLET

 What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

OSRIC

 Of Laertes?

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

 Of him, sir.

OSRIC

 I know you are not ignorant--

HAMLET

 I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did,

 it would not much approve me. Well, 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; but in the imputation

 laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

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, hangers, and so: three of the

 carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very

 responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages,

 and of very liberal conceit.

HAMLET

 What call you the carriages?

HORATIO

 I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

OSRIC

 The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

HAMLET

 The phrase would be more german to the matter, if we

 could carry cannon by our sides: I would it might

 be hangers till then. But, on: six Barbary horses

 against six French swords, their assigns, and three

 liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet

 against the Danish. Why is this 'imponed,' as you call it?

OSRIC

 The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes

 between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you

 three hits: he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it

 would come to immediate trial, if your lordship

 would vouchsafe the answer.

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, 'tis the breathing time of day with me; let

 the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the

 king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can;

 if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

OSRIC

 Shall I re-deliver 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

 This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

HAMLET

 He did comply with his dug, before he sucked it.

 Thus has he--and many more of the same bevy that I

 know the dressy age dotes on--only got the tune of

 the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of

 yesty collection, which carries them through and

 through the most fond and winnowed opinions; and do

 but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

 Enter a Lord

Lord

 My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young

 Osric, who brings back to him that you attend him in

 the hall: he sends to know if your pleasure hold to

 play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

HAMLET

 I am constant to my purpose; they follow the king's

 pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now

 or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

Lord

 The king and queen and all are coming down.

HAMLET

 In happy time.

Lord

 The queen desires you to use some gentle

 entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

HAMLET

 She well instructs me.

 Exit Lord

HORATIO

 You will lose this wager, my lord.

HAMLET

 I do not think so: since he went into France, I

 have been in continual practise: 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

 forestall their repair hither, and say you are not

 fit.

HAMLET

 Not a whit, we defy augury: there's a special

 providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now,

 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be

 now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the

 readiness is all: since no man has aught of what he

 leaves, what is't to leave betimes?

 Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and Attendants with foils, & c

KING CLAUDIUS

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

 KING CLAUDIUS 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.

 This presence knows,

 And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd

 With sore distraction. What I have done,

 That might your nature, honour and exception

 Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

 Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:

 If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

 And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,

 Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

 Who does it, then? His madness: if't be so,

 Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;

 His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

 Sir, in this audience,

 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: but in my terms of honour

 I stand aloof; and will no reconcilement,

 Till by some elder masters, of known honour,

 I have a voice and precedent of peace,

 To keep my name ungored. But till that time,

 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

 No, by this hand.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,

 You know the wager?

HAMLET

 Very well, my lord

 Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

KING CLAUDIUS

 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 CLAUDIUS

 Set me the stoops 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 heavens to earth,

 'Now the king dunks to Hamlet.' Come, begin:

 And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

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 CLAUDIUS

 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 awhile. Come.

 They play

 Another hit; what say you?

LAERTES

 A touch, a touch, I do confess.

KING CLAUDIUS

 Our son shall win.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 He's fat, and scant of breath.

 Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows;

 The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

HAMLET

 Good madam!

KING CLAUDIUS

 Gertrude, do not drink.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

KING CLAUDIUS

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

HAMLET

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 Come, let me wipe thy face.

LAERTES

 My lord, I'll hit him now.

KING CLAUDIUS

 I do not think't.

LAERTES

 [Aside] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

HAMLET

 Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;

 I pray you, pass with your best violence;

 I am afeard 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 CLAUDIUS

 Part them; they are incensed.

HAMLET

 Nay, come, again.

 QUEEN GERTRUDE falls

OSRIC

 Look to the queen there, ho!

HORATIO

 They bleed on both sides. 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 CLAUDIUS

 She swounds to see them bleed.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

 No, no, the drink, the drink,--O my dear Hamlet,--

 The drink, the drink! I am poison'd.

 Dies

HAMLET

 O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd:

 Treachery! Seek it out.

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 practise

 Hath turn'd itself on me lo, here I lie,

 Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd:

 I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.

HAMLET

 The point!--envenom'd too!

 Then, venom, to thy work.

 Stabs KING CLAUDIUS

All

 Treason! treason!

KING CLAUDIUS

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

HAMLET

 Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,

 Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?

 Follow my mother.

 KING CLAUDIUS dies

LAERTES

 He is justly served;

 It is a poison temper'd by himself.

 Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:

 Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,

 Nor thine on me.

 Dies

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 awhile,

 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,

 To the ambassadors of England gives

 This warlike volley.

HAMLET

 O, I die, Horatio;

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

 I cannot live to hear the news from England;

 But I do prophesy the election lights

 On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;

 So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,

 Which have solicited. The rest is silence.

 Dies

HORATIO

 Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince:

 And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

 Why does the drum come hither?

 March within

 Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors, and others

PRINCE FORTINBRAS

 Where is this sight?

HORATIO

 What is it ye would see?

 If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

PRINCE FORTINBRAS

 This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,

 What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,

 That thou so many princes at a shot

 So bloodily hast struck?

First Ambassador

 The sight is dismal;

 And our affairs from England come too late:

 The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,

 To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,

 That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:

 Where should we have our thanks?

HORATIO

 Not from his mouth,

 Had it the ability of life to thank you:

 He never gave commandment for their death.

 But since, so jump upon this bloody question,

 You from the Polack wars, and you from England,

 Are here arrived give order that these bodies

 High on a stage be placed to the view;

 And let me speak to the yet unknowing world

 How these things came about: so shall you hear

 Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,

 Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,

 Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,

 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook

 Fall'n on the inventors' reads: all this can I

 Truly deliver.

PRINCE 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,

 Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

HORATIO

 Of that I shall have also cause to speak,

 And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more;

 But let this same be presently perform'd,

 Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mischance

 On plots and errors, happen.

PRINCE FORTINBRAS

 Let four captains

 Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;

 For he was likely, had he been put on,

 To have proved most royally: and, for his passage,

 The soldiers' music and the rites of war

 Speak loudly for him.

 Take up the bodies: such a sight as this

 Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

 Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

 A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off