

PRESHOW DUMBSHOW

7:25pm

Lights dim, but sufficient to read the program without a headache.

FRANCISCO, with a rifle and a flashlight, takes his post; at first calm and soldierly, as the time passes, he grows increasingly cold, increasingly nervous, starting and squinting after loud or sudden noises (though not audience conversation or background rumblings), changing his grip, sometimes pacing to keep warm or blowing on his hands.

The GHOST goes out the back door and wanders the few blocks around the Peanut Gallery, neither speaking to anyone, nor acknowledging them with any more than a nod. Ideally, he should be visible occasionally to arriving audience members, but always a block away or so, or on the other side of the street—one more down-and-out, perhaps disturbed, downtown Rock Islander.

LAERTES and POLONIUS sit in the audience, in character, front and center, waiting for the King's speech.

HAMLET and OPHELIA also sit in the audience, in character, in the worst and least-visible seats, as far away from LAERTES and POLONIUS as possible, and unseen by them.

CAIT and ANDY, as themselves, cooperate to take money and seat patrons.

BARNARDO, HORATIO and MARCELLUS are backstage, probably, or seated far from FRANCISCO.

7:30pm

CAIT/ANDY opens the door.

POLONIUS reads the program while LAERTES keeps an eye on the arriving audience members, waiting for OPHELIA.

HAMLET and OPHELIA quietly, subtly improvise, as though a real couple here for the show, for the next thirty minutes. HAMLET stares sullenly at the floor, lost in himself while OPHELIA reads the program, maybe murmuring a comment on something or other now and then, to which he hardly responds. The longer he ignores her, the more distressed she gets and the more she works to get his attention. Finally, she succeeds, and he begins to woo her—always quietly, subtly, inaudible and invisible to everyone but the people sitting nearby—to ask her questions, look into her eyes, take her hand, put his arm around her, kiss her, but now OPHELIA has the upper hand and delays his attentions at every level, sets limits, allows him so much and no farther, etc. etc. Whenever they think nobody's looking, they make out for a while, with a sort of junior-high restraint; but then HAMLET begins to slip back into the brooding again until the two of them are back

where they started, with OPHELIA trying to get his attention again. Again she succeeds, and again he woos her.

7:45pm

LAERTES begins to get worried that OPHELIA hasn't yet arrived.

7:50pm

LAERTES stands up and looks for OPHELIA in the audience. He doesn't see her. Casually, probably unnoticed by 90% of the audience, he starts checking all the backstage areas, one by one.

7:55pm

LAERTES goes over to CAIT and—quietly, normal low conversation inaudible to anybody not nearby—asks, “Is Ophelia here?” CAIT hasn't seen her. (Let anyone who hears think the actress has gone missing.) LAERTES goes over to ANDY and, in the same tone, asks: “Have you seen Ophelia? Nobody's seen her. Is she even here?” ANDY hasn't seen her. Again, LAERTES scans the audience, and this time he spots OPHELIA, way off in the dim back, kissing HAMLET. He watches them, agitated, trying to decide what to do, only to be interrupted by—

7:59pm

CAIT rings the bell to begin the show; FRANCISCO starts at the sound, unable to tell where it's coming from. ANDY retreats to the backdoor so as able to signal entrance cues to the GHOST. LAERTES returns to his seat. The lights fall to utter darkness.

ACT 1

Scene 1. *[A guard platform of the castle.]*

Darkness still.

Enter BARNARDO, with a rifle and a flashlight, far away.

BARNARDO: Who's there?

FRANCISCO: Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

BARNARDO: Long live the King!

FRANCISCO: Barnardo?

BARNARDO: He.

FRANCISCO: You come most carefully upon your hour.

BARNARDO: 'Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco.

FRANCISCO: For this relief much thanks: 'Tis bitter cold,

And I am sick at heart.

BARNARDO: Have you had quiet guard?

FRANCISCO: Not a mouse stirring.

BARNARDO: 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 is there?

[Enter MARCELLUS, with a rifle and a flashlight, and HORATIO, far away. They meet FRANCISCO exiting.]

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: Barnardo has my place.
Give you good night.

[Exit FRANCISCO. FRANCISCO becomes GERTRUDE.]

MARCELLUS: Holla! Barnardo!

BARNARDO: Say—
What, is Horatio there?

HORATIO: A piece of him.

BARNARDO: Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.

MARCELLUS: What, has this thing appeared again tonight?

BARNARDO: I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS: Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him.

HORATIO: Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

BARNARDO: Sit down awhile,
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we two nights have seen.

HORATIO: Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Barnardo speak of this.

BARNARDO: Last night of all,
When yond same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his course t' illumine that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one—

[The GHOST walks along the sidewalk outside, silent, indifferent. The soldiers fix their flashlights on it.]

MARCELLUS: Peace, break thee off. Look where it comes again.

BARNARDO: In the same figure like the king that's dead.

MARCELLUS: Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

BARNARDO: Looks 'a not like the king? Mark it, Horatio.

HORATIO: Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

[The GHOST stops where an aisle allows a clear shot from window to soldiers and regards them.]

BARNARDO: It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS: Speak to 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.

[The GHOST turns and begins walking out of sight, back to where it came.]

MARCELLUS: It is offended.

BARNARDO: See, it stalks away.

HORATIO: Stay! Speak, speak. I charge thee speak.

MARCELLUS: 'Tis gone and will not answer.

BARNARDO: How now, Horatio! You tremble and look pale.

Is not this something more than fantasy?

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 armor he had on

When he the ambitious Norway combated;

So frowned he once, when, in an angry parle,

He smote the sledged 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: 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 appeared to us,

Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway

Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet

Did slay this Fortinbras, who, by a sealed compact,

Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands,

Which he stood seized of. Now, young Fortinbras

Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there

Sharked up a list of lawless resolute,

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 GHOST, still outside, appearing at the window at the end of the aisle, smacks the glass with open palms.]

But, soft, behold, lo where it comes again!
 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.
 If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
 Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,

[Offstage, GERTRUDE crows like a cock.]

Speak of it. Stay and speak. Stop it, Marcellus.

MARCELLUS: Shall I shoot at it with my arquebus?

HORATIO: Do, if it will not stand.

BARNARDO: 'Tis here!

HORATIO: 'Tis here!

[MARCELLUS tries to aim his rifle by the light of BARNARDO'S swooping flashlight as the GHOST walks out of sight; he then reenters through the backdoor and becomes the KING.]

MARCELLUS: 'Tis gone!

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
 To offer it the show of violence.

BARNARDO: It was about to speak when the cock crew.

MARCELLUS: Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
 Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
 The bird of dawning singeth all night long,
 And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad,
 The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
 No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm:
 So hallowed 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 tonight
 Unto young Hamlet, for upon my life
 This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

MARCELLUS: Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know
 Where we shall find him most convenient.

[Exeunt MARCELLUS, HORATIO and BARNARDO. MARCELLUS becomes VOLTEMAND. BARNARDO becomes CORNELIUS.]

Scene 2. [*The castle.*]

Bright lights! POLONIUS rises.

POLONIUS: Good gentles, you must rise! The King and Queen

Come hither, presently! Upon your feet!

[LAERTES stands at once as POLONIUS gestures the AUDIENCE to its feet, along with HAMLET and OPHELIA. POLONIUS begins the applause, which everyone else takes up too. Enter the KING and QUEEN down the long aisle. The KING silences the applause and gestures the AUDIENCE, POLONIUS, LAERTES, HAMLET, OPHELIA to their seats again. During this speech, the KING subtly searches the audience for HAMLET and, at some point, finds him there in the back.]

KING: Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death

The memory be green, and that it us befitted

To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom

To be contracted in one brow of woe,

Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature

That we with wisest sorrow think on him

Together with remembrance of ourselves.

Therefore our sometime sister, now our Queen,

Th' imperial jointress to this warlike state,

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

With an auspicious and a drooping eye,

With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,

In equal scale weighing delight and dole,

Taken to wife. Nor have we herein barred

Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone

With this affair along. For all, our thanks.

[POLONIUS applauds, perhaps rising to ensure everyone else does too. POLONIUS then hands the KING an important-looking document, the letter of demand from FORTINBRAS, while VOLTEMAND and CORNELIUS enter and bow.]

Now follows that you know young Fortinbras,

Thinking by our late dear brother's death

Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,

He hath not failed 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.

[The KING tears the document in two and hands the pieces to POLONIUS, who leads everyone in applause, laughter, cheers, again. POLONIUS then hands the KING an important looking sealed envelope.]

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 bedrid, 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, Voltemand,
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway.

[The KING gives the envelope to CORNELIUS.]

Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

VOLTEMAND & CORNELIUS: In that, and all things, will we show our duty.

KING: We doubt it nothing. Heartily farewell.

[POLONIUS, and everyone, again applaud. Exeunt VOLTEMAND and CORNELIUS.

VOLTEMAND becomes MARCELLUS. CORNELIUS becomes BARNARDO]

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

[LAERTES rises.]

You told us of some suit. What is't, Laertes?
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane
 And lose your voice. What wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
 That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
 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: Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

[POLONIUS rises.]

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

By laborsome petition, and at last
 Upon his will I sealed my hard consent.

KING: Take thy fair hour, Laertes. Time be thine!

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son—

HAMLET: *[Low, to Ophelia]* A little more than kin, and less than kind!

KING: How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET: Not so, my lord. *[Rises.]* I am too much in the sun.

*[The QUEEN beckons to HAMLET and he edges the long way out of his row, murmuring
 Pardon to the audience members he passes, ending up on stage.]*

QUEEN: Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off.

Do not forever with thy vailèd lids
 Seek for thy noble father in the dust.
 Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die.

HAMLET: Ay, madam, it is common.

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

HAMLET: Seems, madam? Nay, it is. I know not "seems."

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
 Nor customary suits of solemn black,

Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
 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: '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 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 today,
 "This must be so." We pray you think of us
 As of a father, for let the world take note
 You are the most immediate to our throne—

[POLONIUS initiates more applause.]

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: 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.

[Awkward silence.]

KING: Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.

This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
 Sits smiling to my heart, in grace whereof,
 No jocund health that Denmark drinks today,
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
 And the King's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,
 Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away.

*[POLONIUS initiates applause as exeunt down the long aisle KING, QUEEN, LAERTES,
 POLONIUS and OPHELIA. The KING becomes the GHOST.]*

HAMLET: O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,

Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,
 Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
 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 followed my poor father's body
 Like Niobe, all tears, why, she—
 O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason
 Would have mourned longer—married with mine 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 gallèd 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 BARNARDO.]

HORATIO: Hail to your lordship!

HAMLET: I am glad to see you well:

Horatio—or I do forget myself.

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

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

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?—

Marcellus.

MARCELLUS: My good lord!

HAMLET: I am very glad to see you. [to Barnardo] 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.

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 prithee do not mock me, fellow student.

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

HORATIO: Indeed, my lord, it followed 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. 'A was a goodly king.

HAMLET: 'A 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

This marvel to you.

HAMLET: For God's love let me hear!

HORATIO: Two nights together had these gentlemen,

Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch

Been thus encountered. A figure like your father

Appears before them, and with solemn march

Goes slow and stately by them. This to me

In dreadful secrecy impart they did,

And I with them the third night kept the watch,

Where, as they had delivered, each word true,

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 watched.

HAMLET: Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO: My lord, I did;

But answer made it none.

HAMLET: 'Tis very strange.

HORATIO: As I do live, my honored lord, 'tis true.

HAMLET: Hold you the watch tonight?

HOR & MAR & BAR: We do, my lord.

HAMLET: But did you see his face?

HORATIO: O, yes, my lord.

HAMLET: What, looked he frowningly?

HORATIO: A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

HAMLET: Pale or red?

HORATIO: Nay, very pale.

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

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

LAERTES: O, fear me not.
[Enter POLONIUS.]

I stay too long. But here my father comes.
 A double blessing is a double grace;
 Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

POLONIUS: Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!
 The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
 And you are stayed for. There—my blessing with thee,
 And these few precepts in thy memory
 Look thou character.

[OPHELIA, behind POLONIUS but visible to LAERTES, imitates her father, mouthing the following lines up to “borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry” as LAERTES tries to keep a straight face. Both of them know exactly what POLONIUS will say, but not the order he’ll choose to say it in.]

Give thy thoughts no tongue,
 Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
 Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
 Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel,
 But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
 Of each new-hatched, unfledged courage. Beware
 Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
 Bear’t that th’ opposèd may beware of thee.
 Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;
 Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
 This above all, to thine own self be true,
 And it must follow, as the night the day,
 Thou canst not then be false to any man.

LAERTES: Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POLONIUS: The time invites you. Go, your servants tend.

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

OPHELIA: 'Tis in my memory locked.

LAERTES: Farewell.

[Exit LAERTES. He becomes himself, Actor 7.]

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

OPHELIA: So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

POLONIUS: Marry, well bethought:

'Tis told me he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous.
What is between you? Give me up the truth.

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

POLONIUS: Affection pooh! You speak like a green girl.
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

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

POLONIUS: Marry, I'll teach you. Think yourself a baby
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly,
Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase)
Tend'ring it thus you'll tender me a fool.

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

POLONIUS: Ay, fashion you may call it. Go to, go to.

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

POLONIUS: Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows. These blazes, daughter,
You must not take for fire. From this time
Be something 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. 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.

OPHELIA: I shall obey, my lord.

[Exeunt POLONIUS and OPHELIA. Utter darkness.]

Scene 4. *[A guard platform.]*

*Darkness still. Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, MARCELLUS, with a flashlight and rifle,
and BARNARDO, with a flashlight and rifle.*

HAMLET: The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HORATIO: It is a nipping and an eager air.

HAMLET: What hour now?

HORATIO: I think it lacks of twelve.

MARCELLUS: No, it is struck.

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

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[A crowd of shouts and cheers offstage.]

What does this mean, my lord?

HAMLET: The King doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,
And as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The court brays out the triumph of his pledge.

HORATIO: Is it a custom?

HAMLET: Marry, ay, it is,
But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honored in the breach than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations.
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition, and indeed it takes
From our achievements, though performed at height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So oft it chanceth in particular men
That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As in their birth, wherein they are not guilty,
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens
The form of plausible manners, that, these men,
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 GHOST appears at the door.]

HORATIO: My lord, it comes.

[HAMLET grabs BARNARDO's flashlight to illuminate the GHOST.]

HAMLET: Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane. O, answer me!

[The GHOST beckons HAMLET.]

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

MARCELLUS: But do not go with it.

HAMLET: It will not speak. Then I will follow it.

[First gently, then more forcefully, HORATIO and MARCELLUS attempt to hold HAMLET back.]

HORATIO: Do not, my lord.

HAMLET: Why, what should be the fear?

I do not set my life at a pin's fee,
 And for my soul, what can it do to that,
 Being a thing immortal as itself?
 It waves me forth again. I'll follow it.

HORATIO: What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
 Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
 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.

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.
 Still am I called! Unhand me, gentlemen.
 By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!
 I say, away! Go on. I'll follow thee.

[The GHOST steps away from the door, and HAMLET follows. MARCELLUS keeps track of them as long as he can with his flashlight.]

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.
[HORATIO, MARCELLUS and BARNARDO run out the door after the GHOST and HAMLET.]

Scene 5. *[The battlements.]*

[Darkness still. The GHOST enters the playspace through the back door—invisible but for the red winking eye at the tip of his cigar. The smell of smoke gently permeates the room. Enter HAMLET, who illuminates him with his flashlight.]

HAMLET: Whither 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 sulf'rous 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,
 Doomed 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. 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 rots 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 forgèd 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.

[The GHOST breathes deep to calm himself.]

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
 And in the porches of my ears did pour
 A 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 it doth posset
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
 The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine.
 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand,
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
 Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled,
 No reck'ning made, but sent to my account
 With all my imperfections on my head.
 O, horrible! O, horrible! Most horrible!

[The GHOST has begun to weep.]

If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.
 But howsoever thou pursues 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 glowworm shows the matin to be near
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire.

[HAMLET's flashlight goes out. Darkness.]

Adieu, adieu, adieu! Remember me.

*[The GHOST exits and becomes the KING. HAMLET's flashlight begins to work again
 and he searches futilely for the GHOST.]*

HAMLET: Remember? Ay, whiles 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,
 Unmixed with baser matter. Yes, by heaven!
 O most pernicious woman!
 O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain!
 My tables—meet it is I set it down,
 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain.

[HAMLET scribbles his vow into his notebook.]

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word:
 It is "Adieu, adieu, remember me."
 I have sworn't.

HOR & MAR & BAR: (*Within*) My lord, my lord!

*[Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS and BARNARDO by the light of MARCELLUS'
 flashlight.]*

MARCELLUS:

Lord Hamlet!

HORATIO:

Heaven secure him!

MARCELLUS: How is't, my noble lord?

HORATIO: What news, my lord?
HAMLET: O, wonderful!
HORATIO: Good my lord, tell it.
HAMLET: No, you will reveal it.
HORATIO: Not I, my lord.
MARCELLUS: Nor I, my lord.
BARNARDO: Nor I, my lord.
HAMLET: But you'll be secret?
HOR & MAR & BAR: 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 desires shall point you,
For every man hath business and desire
Such as it is, and for my own poor part,
Look you, I'll go pray.
HORATIO: These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.
HAMLET: I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;
Yes, faith, heartily.
HORATIO: There's no offence, my lord.
HAMLET: Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you.
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster't as you may. And now, good friends,
Give me one poor request.
HORATIO: What is't, my lord? We will.
HAMLET: Never make known what you have seen tonight.
Swear it.
MARCELLUS: We've sworn, my lord, already.
[The GHOST possesses BARNARDO, who drops his rifle.]
BARNARDO: Swear.
HAMLET: Ha, ha boy, say'st thou so? Art thou there, truepenny?
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.
Consent to swear.
HORATIO: Propose the oath, my lord.
HAMLET: Never to speak of this that you have seen.
[Simultaneously, the GHOST jumps from BARNARDO, left shaking and gasping, to MARCELLUS, who drops his rifle and flashlight.]

MARCELLUS: Swear.

HAMLET: Hic et ubique? Come, friends, swear
Never to speak of this that you have heard.

*[Simultaneously, the GHOST jumps from MARCELLUS, left shaking and gasping, to
HORATIO.]*

HORATIO: Swear.

HAMLET: Well said! Canst thou work so fast?—But come:

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
How strange or odd some'er I bear myself
(As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic disposition on),
That you, at such times seeing me, ne'er shall note
That you know aught of me—this do swear.

*[Simultaneously, the GHOST jumps from HORATIO, left shaking and gasping, to
HAMLET.]*

Swear.

BARNARDO: I swear to never make known what I've seen.

MARCELLUS: I swear to never make known what I've seen.

HORATIO: I swear to never make known what I've seen.

[The GHOST leaves HAMLET shaking and gasping.]

HAMLET: Rest, rest, perturbèd spirit!—Let us in.

[aside] —The time is out of joint. O cursèd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!

—Nay, come, let's go together.

*[Exeunt HAMLET, HORATIO, MARCELLUS and BARNARDO. MARCELLUS becomes
GUILDENSTERN. BARNARDO becomes ROSENCRANTZ. All the lights come up and
POLONIUS enters and sets up the sign for the*

FIRST INTERMISSION.]

ACT II

Scene 1. [A room.]

[POLONIUS enters to remove the First Intermission Sign. The instant the sign leaves the stage, OPHELIA screams, then enters running. POLONIUS hurries to her.]

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

POLONIUS: With what, i' th' name of God?

OPHELIA: My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
 Lord Hamlet, with a look as piteous
 As if he had been loosèd out of hell
 To speak of horrors—he comes before me.

POLONIUS: Mad for thy love?

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

POLONIUS: What said he?

OPHELIA: He took me by the wrist and held me hard;
 Then goes he to the length of all his arm,
 And with his other hand thus o'er his brow
 He falls to such perusal of my face
 As 'a would draw it. Long stayèd 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 turned,
 He seemed to find his way without his eyes,
 For out o' doors he went without their helps,
 And to the last bended their light on me.

POLONIUS: Come, go with me. I will go seek the King.
 This is the very ecstasy of love.

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

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

POLONIUS: That hath made him mad.
 I'm sorry that with better heed and judgment
 I had not quoted him. I feared he did but trifle
 And meant to wrack thee; but beshrew my jealousy.
 Come. I am sorry. Go we to the King.

[Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, nervous and waiting. POLONIUS, in passing, gives a quick, courteous nod to the gentlemen. Exeunt OPHELIA and POLONIUS to their seats..]

Scene 2. *[The castle.]*

[Enter the KING and QUEEN. ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN bow. Throughout the play, the KING treats these two like identical twins, never sure which is which, and speaks their names with some hesitation even when he happens to get them right.]

KING: Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.
 Moreover that we much did long to see you,
 The need we have to use you did provoke
 Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
 Of Hamlet's transformation: so call it,
 Since 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 th' understanding of himself,
 I cannot dream of. I entreat you both
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
 Some little time, so by your companies
 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
 Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus,
 That opened lies within our remedy.

QUEEN: Good gentlemen, he hath much talked of you,
 And sure I am two men there are not living
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
 As to expend your time with us awhile,
 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.

[ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN give full courtier's bows.]

KING: Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

[The KING has got the names wrong. The QUEEN, showing the gentlemen out, quietly corrects him without his hearing.]

QUEEN: Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz.

[Enter POLONIUS to the KING in confidence.]

GUILDENSTERN: Heavens make our presence and our practices Pleasant and helpful to your son!	POLONIUS: Th' ambassadors from Norway, my good lord, Are joyfully returned.
QUEEN: Amen!	

[Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN. ROSENCRANTZ becomes CORNELIUS. GUILDENSTERN becomes VOLTEMAND.]

KING: Thou still hast been the father of good news.

POLONIUS: 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: O, speak of that! That do I long to hear.

POLONIUS: Give first admittance to th' ambassadors.
 My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

KING: ThyselF do grace to them, and bring them in.
[Exit POLONIUS. The KING kisses the QUEEN or takes her hand or some such affectionate gesture.]
 —He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
 The head and source of all your son's distemper.

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

KING: Well, we shall sift him.
[Enter POLONIUS, VOLTEMAND and CORNELIUS.]
 Welcome, my good friends!
[VOLTEMAND and CORNELIUS bow.]
 Say, Voltemand, what from our brother Norway?

VOLTEMAND: Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
 His nephew's levies; which to him appeared
 To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;
 But, better looked 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 th' assay of arms against your Majesty.
 Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
 Gives him commission to employ those soldiers,
 So levied as before, against the Polack,
 With an entreaty, herein further shown,
[CORNELIUS gives a paper to POLONIUS, who hands it to the KING.]
 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: It likes us well.
 Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together.
 Most welcome home!
*[Exeunt VOLTEMAND and CORNELIUS VOLTEMAND becomes GUILDENSTERN.
 CORNELIUS becomes ROSENCRANTZ.]*

POLONIUS: This business is well ended.
 My liege and madam, to expostulate
 What majesty should be, what duty is,

Why day is day, night is 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.

QUEEN: More matter, with less art.

POLONIUS: Madam, I swear I use no art at all.

Your noble son is mad, 'tis true, 'tis pity,
 And pity 'tis 'tis true—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.

[POLONIUS takes a letter from his pocket, and fetches OPHELIA from her seat. She curtsies to the KING and QUEEN.]

I have a daughter, mark, who, in her duty,
 Hath given me this. Now gather, and surmise.

OPHELIA: “To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia”—

POLONIUS: That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; “beautified” is a vile phrase.

QUEEN: *[to OPHELIA]* Came this from Hamlet to you?

POLONIUS: Good madam, stay awhile. I will be faithful.

OPHELIA: “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 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.”

POLONIUS: This hath my daughter showed me.

KING: *[to OPHELIA]* How have you
 Received his love?

POLONIUS: What do you think of me?

KING: As of a man faithful and honourable.

POLONIUS: I would fain prove so. But what might you think,
 When I had seen this hot love on the wing
 If I had looked on it with idle sight?
 What might you think? No, I went round to work
 And my young mistress thus I precepts gave her,
 That she should lock herself from his resort,
 And he, repellèd, 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 wail for.

KING: Do you think 'tis this?

QUEEN: It may be, very like.

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

KING: Not that I know.

[POLONIUS points to his head and then his neck.]

POLONIUS: Take this from this, if this be otherwise.

[Enter HAMLET, unseen, his clothes disarranged a bit too well. He eavesdrops.]

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

QUEEN: So he does indeed.

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

[to the KING] Be you and I behind an arras then.

Mark the encounter. If he love her not,
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.

KING: We will try it.

[HAMLET takes out a book and steps forward, as though entering only now.]

QUEEN: But look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

POLONIUS: Away.

[POLONIUS kisses OPHELIA and she exits.]

[to the KING and QUEEN] I beseech you, give me leave.

[Exeunt the KING and QUEEN.]

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

HAMLET: Well, God-a-mercy.

POLONIUS: Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET: Excellent well. You are a fishmonger.

POLONIUS: Not I, my lord.

HAMLET: Then I would you were so honest a man. Have you a daughter?

POLONIUS: I have, my lord.

HAMLET: Let her not walk i' th' sun. Conception is a blessing, but as your daughter
may conceive, friend, look to't.

POLONIUS: *[aside]* Still harping on my daughter. Yet he knew me not at first. 'A said I
was a fishmonger. 'A is far gone, far gone. And truly in my youth I suffered much
extremity for love, very near this.—What do you read, my lord?

HAMLET: Words, words, words.

POLONIUS: What is the matter, my lord?

HAMLET: Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards,
that their faces are wrinkled, 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 you yourself, sir, should be old as I am if, like a
crab, you could go backward.

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

HAMLET: Into my grave.

POLONIUS: [*Aside*] Indeed, that's out of the air. How pregnant sometimes his replies are! I will leave him and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

HAMLET: You cannot take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal,—except my life, except my life, except my life.

POLONIUS: Fare you well, my lord.

[*POLONIUS begins to exit, but encounters ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, both wearing coats and carrying luggage, as though having only now arrived.*]

You go to seek the Lord Hamlet? There he is.

ROSENCRANTZ: [*To POLONIUS.*] God save you, sir!

[*Exit POLONIUS.*]

GUILDENSTERN: My honored lord!

ROSENCRANTZ: My most dear lord!

[*HAMLET has to guess which one is which, but guesses right.*]

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: 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 favors?

GUILDENSTERN: Faith, her privates we.

HAMLET: In the secret parts of fortune? O, most true! She is a strumpet. What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN: Prison, my lord?

HAMLET: Denmark's a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ: We think not so, my lord.

HAMLET: Why, then 'tis none to you, for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

ROSENCRANTZ: To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

HAMLET: Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come, deal justly with me. Come, come; nay, speak.

GUILDENSTERN: What should we say, my lord?

HAMLET: You were sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to color. I know the good King and Queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ: To what end, my lord?

HAMLET: That you must teach me. Be even and direct whether you were sent for or no.

ROSENCRANTZ: [*aside to GUILDENSTERN.*] What say you?

GUILDENSTERN: My lord, we were sent for.

HAMLET: I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery. 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 appeareth nothing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, 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: What players are they?

ROSENCRANTZ: Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the Prentie Players.

HAMLET: He that plays the king shall be welcome. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then. I'll leave you till night.

[HAMLET shakes hands with ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN.]

You are welcome.

[Enter POLONIUS, with the program for this very show, who passes ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN as they exit. ROSENCRANTZ becomes him/herself, Actor 2.

GUILDENSTERN becomes himself, Actor 4.]

POLONIUS: Well be with you, gentlemen!—My lord, I have news to tell you.

HAMLET: My lord, I have news to tell you. I prophecy you come to tell me of the players.

<p>POLONIUS: The actors are come hither, my lord: <i>[reading]</i> "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."</p>	<p>HAMLET: Buzz, buzz.</p>
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[Enter ACTOR 4, ACTOR 2 & ACTOR 7, the latter with a sword in his belt.]

HAMLET: You are welcome, masters, welcome, all. *[to ACTOR 4]* I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. *[to ACTOR 7]* O, old friend, why, thy face is valanced since I saw thee last. Com'st thou to beard me in Denmark? *[to ACTOR 2]* What, my young lady and mistress?—Masters, you are all welcome. We'll have a speech straight. Come, a passionate speech.

ACTOR 4: What speech, my lord?

HAMLET: I heard thee speak me a speech once—'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido—and thereabout of it especially when he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line—let me see, let me see:

[HAMLET tries hard to remember this as he goes; his acting style stiffens and becomes bombastic, with large stylized gestures and at top volume always. ACTOR 4 knows all this by heart and makes encouraging gestures, perhaps murmuring along or moving his lips, but too polite to interrupt.]

"The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms—"

'Tis not so; it begins—

"The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian beast,
Hath now his dread and black complexion smeared

With heraldry more dismal. Head to foot
 Now is he total gules, horridly tricked
 With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
 Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
 That lend a tyrannous and a damnèd light
 To their lord's murder. Roasted in wrath and fire,
 With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
 Old grandsire Priam seeks—”

*[HAMLET has gotten carried away and has to stop himself. ACTOR 4, ACTOR 2 and
 ACTOR 7 applaud.]*

So, proceed you.

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

*[ACTOR 4 opens his hand to ACTOR 7, who gives him the sword. ACTOR 4's
 performance is even more old-fashioned and over the top than Hamlet's was.]*

ACTOR 4: “Anon he finds him,
 Striking too short at Greeks. His antique sword,
 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
 Repugnant to command. Unequal matched,
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide,
 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
 Th' unnervèd father falls. But then, that sword,
 Which was declining on the milky head
 Of reverend Priam, seemed i' th' 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,
 A rousèd vengeance sets him new awork,
 And never did the Cyclops' hammer fall
 On Mars's armor, forged for proof eterne,
 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
 Now falls on Priam.”

POLONIUS: This is too long.

HAMLET: Prithèe say on. He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps. Say on; come
 to Hecuba.

[ACTOR 4 sets down the sword.]

<p>ACTOR 4: "For if the gods had seen the mobled queen Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe A blanket in the alarm of fear caught up— 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 clamor that she made Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven And passion in the gods.</p>	<p>HAMLET: "The mobled queen"? POLONIUS: That's good. "Mobled queen" is good.</p> <p>Look, whe'r he has not turned his color, and has tears in's eyes. Prithce no more.</p>
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[ACTOR 4 weeps. HAMLET, ACTOR 2 and ACTOR 7 applaud. ACTOR 4 bows.]

HAMLET: 'Tis well. Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear? Let them be well used.

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

HAMLET: God's bodkin, man, much better! Use every man after his desert, and who should scape whipping? Use them after your own honor and dignity. The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

POLONIUS: Come, sirs.

HAMLET: Follow him, friends. We'll hear a play tomorrow.

*[POLONIUS leads ACTOR 2 and ACTOR 7 off, but HAMLET detains ACTOR 4.
ACTOR 2 becomes ROSENCRANTZ.]*

Dost thou hear me, old friend? Can you play *The Murder of Gonzago*?

ACTOR 4: Ay, my lord.

HAMLET: We'll ha't tomorrow 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?

ACTOR 4: Ay, my lord.

HAMLET: Very well. Follow that lord, and look you mock him not.

[ACTOR 4 exits and becomes GUILDENSTERN. HAMLET sees the sword laid by and forgotten, snatches it up and starts after ACTOR 4. Then stops. Regards the blade. Swipes it about a few times as he saw ACTOR 4 do, then feels the edge and is surprised to find it sharp.]

HAMLET: 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 wanned,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his 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 appall 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 damned 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' th' 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-livered, and lack gall
 To make oppression bitter, or ere this
 I should ha' fatted all the region kites
 With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!
 Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
 O, vengeance!

[HAMLET, having worked himself into a theatrical passion, waving the sword overhead as had ACTOR 4, overhears his own rhetoric, and his moment collapses in self-disgust.]

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
 That I, the son of a dear father murdered,
 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 brains!
 Hum—

[HAMLET sticks the sword into his belt.]

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 proclaimed 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 'a do blench,
 I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
 May be the devil, and the devil hath power
 T' 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.

[HAMLET exits.]

ACT III

Scene 1. [*The castle.*]

[*Enter the KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

KING: And can you by no drift of conference

Get from him why he puts on this confusion?

ROSENCRANTZ: He does confess he feels himself distracted,

But from what cause 'a 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: 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: Did you assay him

To any pastime?

ROSENCRANTZ: Madam, it so fell out that certain players

We o'errought on the way; of these we told him,

And there did seem in him a kind of joy

To hear of it. They are here about the court,

And, as I think, they have already order

This night to play before him.

POLONIUS: 'Tis most true,

And he beseeched me to entreat your majesties

To hear and see the matter.

KING: With all my heart, and it doth much content me

To hear him so inclined.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge

And drive his purpose into these delights.

ROSENCRANTZ: We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN. ROSENCRANTZ becomes ACTOR2. GUILDENSTERN becomes ACTOR4.*]

KING: Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;

For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,

That he, as 'twere by accident, may here

Affront Ophelia.

Her father and myself (lawful espials)

Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,

We may of their encounter frankly judge

If't be th' affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

QUEEN: I shall obey you.
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness. So shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honors.

OPHELIA: Madam, I wish it may.
[Exit the QUEEN.]

POLONIUS: Ophelia, walk you here.—Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves.
[POLONIUS reveals the hiding place to the KING, then turns to OPHELIA.]
—Read on this book,

That show of such an exercise may color
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.

*[OPHELIA, very self-consciously, a terrible actress, begins walking, pretending to read,
with her back to the hiding spot. POLONIUS hides.]*

KING: *[Aside.]* O, 'tis too true.
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word:
O heavy burden!

[POLONIUS pops out again.]

POLONIUS: I hear him coming. Let's withdraw, my lord.
*[POLONIUS and the KING hide, but not perfectly: Something—a shoe, an edge of cloak,
a cracked door—remains visible. Enter HAMLET past their hiding place. He notices the
visible something immediately but doesn't think anything of it, because just then he sees
OPHELIA, as far away as possible, her back to him. He smiles and opens his mouth as if
to quietly call to her; then stops suddenly, eyeing the visible something again and again
eyeing OPHELIA, then suddenly draws his new sword to strike at the hidden figure only
to hesitate, with another glance at OPHELIA. With a long look, he shares what he knows
with the audience; then turns the sword around to his own heart. As he begins to speak,
the theatricality of the start of his previous monologue remains—this is a performance
for the benefit of the eavesdroppers and OPHELIA—with only the audience in on his
joke; but as the speech continues, he begins to overhear his own rhetoric and follow it to
its logical conclusions until, by the end, he almost—almost—believes his own
performance. At the sound of his voice, OPHELIA spins around, expecting him to be
speaking to her, instead to find him seemingly uncognizant of her, holding a sword to his
breast. She stifles a cry and watches, listens, frozen, "like a neutral to her will and
matter"—and does nothing.]*

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 heartache, and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to! 'Tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wished. 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,
 Th' 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 th' 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 undiscovered country, from whose bourn
 No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have
 Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
 And enterprises of great pitch and moment,
 With this regard, their currents turn awry,
 And lose the name of action.

*[HAMLET has long since belted his sword again. The following line is a kind of in-joke,
 shared with the audience.]*

—Soft you now!

The fair Ophelia! *[to OPHELIA]*—Nymph, in thy orisons
 Be all my sins remembered.

OPHELIA: Good my lord—!

*[OPHELIA has forgotten the whole ruse for a moment and, almost crying, nearly reacts
 to the speech and the sword; but then, remembering, she stiffens into her awkward role,
 as if having neither seen nor heard anything strange.]*

How does your honor for this many a day?

HAMLET: I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

OPHELIA: My lord, I have remembrances of yours

That I have longèd long to redeliver.

I pray you now, receive them.

[OPHELIA hands HAMLET his love letters to her.]

HAMLET: No, not I,
I never gave you aught.

[HAMLET doesn't take the letters.]

OPHELIA: My honored 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.

[OPHELIA presses the letters into HAMLET's hand. He throws them down.]

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: 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. [HAMLET is very close to her now, and whispers this next line—her last chance.] Where's your father?

OPHELIA: At home, my lord.

[HAMLET pushes OPHELIA away.]

HAMLET: Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool nowhere but in his 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. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell.

OPHELIA: Heavenly powers, restore him!

HAMLET: I say, we will have no more marriage. Those that are married already—all but one—shall live. The rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

[Exit HAMLET.]

OPHELIA: O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!

The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,
 Th' expectancy and rose of the fair state,
 The glass of fashion, and the mold of form,
 Th' observed of all observers, quite, quite down!
 And I, of ladies most deject and wretched
 That sucked the honey of his musicked vows,
 Now see that noble and most sovereign reason
 Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh,
 That unmatched form and feature of blown youth
 Blasted with ecstasy. O, woe is me,
 T' have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

[The KING and POLONIUS emerge from hiding.]

KING: Love? His affections do not that way tend,
 Nor what he spake, though it lacked 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?

POLONIUS: It shall do well. But yet do I believe
 The origin and commencement of his grief
 Sprung from neglected love.

[POLONIUS goes to OPHELIA and comforts her.]

—How now, Ophelia?

You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;
 We heard it all.

[POLONIUS leads OPHELIA to a seat amongst the audience—perhaps the same back row one she sat in for the pre-show, or else one near the front but not center, with a good view of the central seats where the KING and QUEEN will sit for the play. There should be an empty seat beside it as well.]

—My lord, do as you please,
 But if you hold it fit, after the play,
 Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
 To show his grief. Let her be round with him,
 And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear
 Of all their conference. If she find him not,
 To England send him; or confine him where
 Your wisdom best shall think.

KING: It shall be so.

Madness in great ones must not unwatched go.
[Exeunt the KING and POLONIUS.]

Scene 2. *[The castle.]*

[Enter HAMLET. Throughout this following conversation, he changes clothes from his slumming, disheveled duds into formal attire.]

HAMLET: What, ho, Horatio!

[Enter HORATIO, who stops, embarrassed, at HAMLET's state of undress (about which embarrassment HAMLET is utterly oblivious).]

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 revèue hast, but thy good spirits
 To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flattered?
 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,
 S' hath sealed thee for herself, for thou hast been
 As one, in suf'ring 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 commedled
 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 tonight 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
 Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt
 Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
 It is a damnèd 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.

[HAMLET has finished dressing.]

HORATIO: If 'a steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
 And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

[Enter POLONIUS, who gestures for the audience to stand.]

POLONIUS: All rise for his majesty, the King of Denmark!

[The audience stands and POLONIUS moves to stand before his own front-row seat amongst them.]

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

Get you a place.

[HORATIO finds an empty chair and stands before it with the rest of the audience. Enter the KING and QUEEN. The KING beckons the audience to sit and then himself sits with the QUEEN in the front-row next to POLONIUS. Now everyone is seated amongst the audience except HAMLET.]

KING: How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAMLET: Excellent, i' faith, of the chameleon's dish; I eat the air, promise-crammed.

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

HAMLET: No, nor mine now.

QUEEN: Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

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

[HAMLET approaches OPHELIA.]

POLONIUS: *[aside to the KING]* O ho! Do you mark that?

HAMLET: Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[HAMLET kneels provocatively before OPHELIA.]

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.

[HAMLET sits beside her.]

OPHELIA: You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET: Who, I?

OPHELIA: Ay, my lord.

HAMLET: What should a man do but be merry? For look you how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within's two hours.

OPHELIA: Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

HAMLET: So long? 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.

[Houselights dim to allow theatrical lighting. Perhaps a clumsy spotlight shines. Enter ACTOR 7 before the audience. He bows to the KING and QUEEN.]

ACTOR 7: For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.

<p>HAMLET: Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring? OPHELIA: 'Tis brief, my lord. HAMLET: As woman's love.</p>	<p><i>[ACTOR 7 exits as ACTOR 4, now very traditionally dressed, with more enthusiasm than success, as a king, and ACTOR 2, likewise garbed as a queen, enter, very lovingly, both embracing, before breaking character to bow to the KING and QUEEN. As in the previous act, the players always speak at the top of their voice, and every gesture and movement is highly stylized and artificial—not bad, just inappropriate for a venue of this size. No word or action is ever small.]</i></p>
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ACTOR 4: Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbèd ground,
And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,
Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

ACTOR 2: 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.

ACTOR 4: 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,
Honored, beloved, and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou—

[ACTOR 2 kneels before ACTOR 4.]

<p>ACTOR 2: 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 killed the first. 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.</p> <p>ACTOR 4: 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. 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. 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.</p>	<p>HAMLET: <i>[Aside to OPHELIA.]</i></p> <p>That's wormwood!</p> <p>OPHELIA: Belike this speech imports the argument of the show. 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.</p>
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[ACTOR 2 kneels and makes show of protestation to him.]

ACTOR 2: Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light,
Sport and repose lock from me day and night,
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!

[ACTOR 4 takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck.]

<p>ACTOR 4: 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile; My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile The tedious day with sleep.</p> <p>ACTOR 2: Sleep rock thy brain, <i>[ACTOR 4 lies him down upon a bank of flowers.]</i> And never come mischance between us twain!</p>	<p>HAMLET: <i>[aside to OPHELIA]</i> If she should break it now!</p>
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[ACTOR 2, seeing ACTOR 4 asleep, exits. Enter ACTOR 7, now dressed as archaically as his fellow actors, holding a vial of imaginary liquid. He starts to speak at the same time as HAMLET, and stops, hanging there on stage self-consciously.]

<p>ACTOR 7: Thoughts black—</p>	<p>HAMLET: Madam, how like you this play?</p>
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QUEEN: The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

HAMLET: O, but she'll keep her word.

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

HAMLET: No, no! They do but jest, poison in jest; no offence i' the world.

KING: What do you call the play?

HAMLET: *The Mousetrap*. 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 of that? Your Majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not.

ACTOR 7: Thoughts black—

HAMLET: This is one Lucianus, nephew to the King.

[During the following conversation, ACTOR 7, growing desperate to focus attention on himself again, creeps up on ACTOR 4, takes off his crown and kisses it.]

OPHELIA: You are a good 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 mistake your husbands.—Begin, murderer. Leave thy damnable faces and begin.

[ACTOR 7 breaks character to bow to HAMLET.]

Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

ACTOR 7: 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.

[ACTOR 7 pours the imaginary poison into ACTOR 4's ears. ACTOR 4 opens his eyes in mute horror upon ACTOR 7 and mimes a horrible death. The KING stands, and the rest of the court, absorbed in the play, is a bit slow to react.]

OPHELIA: What means this, my lord?

HAMLET: Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief. 'A poisons him i' th' garden for's estate. His name's Gonzago. The story is extant, and written in very choice Italian; you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

OPHELIA: The King rises.

HAMLET: What, frightened with false fire?

QUEEN: How fares my lord?

POLONIUS: Give o'er the play.

KING: Give me some light. Away!

POLONIUS: Lights, lights, lights!

[House lights. ACTOR 7 and ACTOR 4 break character in confusion. ACTOR 2 runs on and joins the others in bowing to the KING. Exit the KING, QUEEN and POLONIUS, who beckons OPHELIA to follow with a quick glance, which she obeys. ACTORS 2, 4 & 7, in despair, exit a different way. ACTOR 2 becomes ROSENCRANTZ. ACTOR 4 becomes GUILDENSTERN.]

HAMLET: Would not this, sir, get me a fellowship in a cry of players?

HORATIO: Half a share.

HAMLET: A whole one, I. 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!

For if the King like not the comedy,
Why then, belike he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music!

[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 marvelous distempered.

HAMLET: With drink, sir?

GUILDENSTERN: No, my lord, rather with choler.

HAMLET: Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to the doctor, for for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into 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: *[losing his temper]* Then thus she says: your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

[A beat.]

HAMLET: 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: And do still, by these pickers and stealers.

ROSENCRANTZ: Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper?

HAMLET: Sir, I lack advancement.

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

HAMLET: Ay, sir—

[Enter ACTOR 7, with a recorder.]

O, a recorder. Let me see. Will you play upon this pipe?

GUILDENSTERN: My lord, I cannot.

HAMLET: I pray you.

GUILDENSTERN: Believe me, 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 finger 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, you cannot play upon me.

[Enter POLONIUS.]

God bless you, sir!

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

[HAMLET points out a random audience member.]

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

POLONIUS: By th' mass, and 'tis, like a camel indeed.

HAMLET: Methinks it is like a weasel.

POLONIUS: It is backed like a weasel.

HAMLET: Or like a whale.

POLONIUS: Very like a whale.

HAMLET: Then will I come to my mother by and by.

POLONIUS: I will say so.

HAMLET: "By and by" is easily said.

[Exit POLONIUS.]

—Leave me, friends.

[Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, ACTOR 7 and, last, at a nod or signal from

HAMLET, HORATIO. ACTOR 7 becomes LAERTES.]

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawning, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood,

[HAMLET draws his sword.]

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.

[HAMLET lowers his sword and exits.]

Scene 3. *[The castle.]*

[Enter the KING, ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

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

ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN: We will haste us.

[Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN as POLONIUS enters.]

POLONIUS: My lord, he's going to his mother's closet.
Behind the arras I'll convey myself
To hear the process. I'll warrant she'll tax him home,
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'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: 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 cursèd 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?

[The KING kneels.]

And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardoned 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 possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardoned and retain th' 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 compelled,
 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 cannot repent?

[The KING stands.]

O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
 O limèd 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.

[The KING kneels again and prays as HAMLET enters, still with his sword out.]

HAMLET: Now might I do it pat, now 'a is a-praying,
 And now I'll do't. And so 'a goes to heaven,
 And so am I revenged. That would be scanned.
 A villain kills my father, and for that
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send
 To heaven.
 Why, 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 seasoned for his passage?
 No.
 Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent.
 When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
 Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed,
 At gaming a-swearing, or about some act
 That has no relish of salvation in't—
 Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
 And that his soul may be as damned and black
 As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays.
 This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

[HAMLET exits.]

KING: My words fly up, my thoughts remain below.
 Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

[The KING rises heavily and exits. The KING becomes the GHOST.]

Scene 4. *[The Queen's private chamber.]**[Enter the QUEEN and POLONIUS.]*

POLONIUS: 'A 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 screened and stood between
 Much heat and him. I'll silence me even here.
 Pray you, be round with him.

QUEEN: I'll warrant you; Fear me not. Withdraw; I hear him coming.	HAMLET: <i>[Within.]</i> Mother, mother, mother!
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[POLONIUS hides. HAMLET enters.]

HAMLET: Now, mother, what's the matter?

QUEEN: Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET: Mother, you have my father much offended.

QUEEN: Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET: Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

[The QUEEN notices the sword.]

QUEEN: Why, how now, Hamlet!

HAMLET: What's the matter now?

QUEEN: Have you forgot me?

HAMLET: No, by the rood, not so:

You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife,

And, would it were not so, you are my mother.

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

[HAMLET grabs hold of her and makes her sit.]

HAMLET: Come, come, and sit you down. You shall not budge.

You go not till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you!

QUEEN: What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?

Help, ho!

POLONIUS: *[Hidden]* What, ho! Help! Help!

HAMLET: How now? a rat?

Dead for a ducat, dead!

[HAMLET stabs POLONIUS in his hiding place again and again as the QUEEN screams. POLONIUS dies.]

QUEEN: What hast thou done?

HAMLET: Nay, I know not. Is it the king?

QUEEN: O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAMLET: A bloody deed—almost as bad, good Mother,

As kill a king and marry with his brother.

QUEEN: As kill a king?

HAMLET: Ay, lady, it was my word.

[HAMLET reveals POLONIUS' corpse.]

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

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

QUEEN: No more.

[The GHOST appears at the window with his palms upon the glass.]

HAMLET: A king of shreds and patches—

[HAMLET sees the GHOST. During the following lines, he approaches the window and presses his palms upon the glass, mirroring his father.]

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

QUEEN: Alas, he's mad!

[The GHOST, still visible, without moving, possesses HAMLET.]

GHOST & HAMLET: Do not forget. This visitation

Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
 But look, amazement on thy mother sits.
 Speak to her, Hamlet.

[The possession ends. HAMLET breaks free of the window to turn to the QUEEN.]

HAMLET: How is it with you, lady?

QUEEN: Alas, how is't with you,

That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
 And with th' incorporal air do hold discourse?
 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 conjoined, preaching to stones,
 Would make them capable.—Do not look upon me;
 Lest with this piteous action you convert
 My stern effects. Then what I have to do
 Will want true colour; tears perchance for blood.

QUEEN: To whom do you speak this?

HAMLET: Do you see nothing there?

QUEEN: Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

HAMLET: Why, look you there! look how it steals away!

My father, in his habit as he lived!

[The GHOST vanishes from the window.]

QUEEN: This is the very coinage of your brain:

This bodiless creation ecstasy
 Is very cunning in.

HAMLET: Ecstasy!

My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time
 And makes as healthful music. It is not madness
 That I have uttered. Bring me to the test,

And I the matter will reword, which madness
 Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
 Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
 That not your trespass but my madness speaks.

QUEEN: O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

HAMLET: O, throw away the worser part of it,
 And live the purer with the other half.
 Good night—but go not to my uncle's bed.
 Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
 That monster custom, who all sense doth eat,
 Of habits evil, 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 tonight;
 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 entertain the devil, or throw him out,
 With wondrous potency.—For this same lord,
 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: 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 damned 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.

QUEEN: 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: This counselor
 Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
 Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
 I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room.
 Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.
 Good night, mother.

[Exit HAMLET, dragging the corpse of POLONIUS, who then becomes the GENTLEMAN. The QUEEN begins to cry.]

ACT IV

(36lines/2:15min)Scene 1. *[The castle.]*

[Enter the KING.]

QUEEN: Ah, my good lord, what have I seen tonight!

KING: What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

QUEEN: 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: O heavy deed!

[From the following line until his speech at the end of Scene 3, the pressure of the KING's anxiety and rage mounts second by second.]

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 answered?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrained, 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: To draw apart the body he hath killed;
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure.

KING: 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!

[Enter ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN.]

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragged him.
Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ & 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 the KING and QUEEN.]

Scene 2. *[The castle.]*

[Enter HAMLET.]

ROSENCRANTZ: <i>[Within]</i> Hamlet!	GUILDENSTERN: <i>[Within]</i> Lord Hamlet!
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HAMLET: What noise? Who calls on Hamlet? 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.

[HAMLET runs out the front door, pursued by ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN.]

Scene 3. *[The castle.]*

*[Enter the KING, with a hardbacked portfolio, paper and pen, deliberating what to
write.]*

KING: 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, th' offender's scourge is weighed,

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 bestowed, my lord,
 We cannot get from him.

KING: But where is he?

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

KING: Bring him before us.

ROSENCRANTZ: Ho! Bring in the lord.

[Enter GUILDENSTERN, restraining HAMLET. He releases him but stands close by. The KING faces off with HAMLET; for the first time, both know exactly what the other knows, and the following is as much a performance for ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN as for each other. Nonetheless, the KING is in high dudgeon.]

KING: Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAMLET: At supper.

KING: At supper? Where?

HAMLET: Not where he eats, but where 'a 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: Alas, alas!

HAMLET: A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

KING: What dost thou mean by this?

HAMLET: Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

KING: Where is Polonius?

HAMLET: In heaven. Send thither to see. If your messenger find him not there, seek him i' th' 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: Go seek him there.

HAMLET: 'A will stay till you come.

[Exit ROSENCRANTZ.]

KING: 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,
 Th' associates tend, and everything is bent
 For England.

HAMLET: For England?

KING: Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET: Good.

KING: 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: 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!

[HAMLET exits, beckoning GUILDENSTERN to follow, who looks to the KING for guidance.]

KING: Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard.

Delay it not; I'll have him hence tonight:

Away! For everything is sealed and done

That else leans on th' affair. Pray you make haste.

[Exit GUILDENSTERN, running after HAMLET. At the speed of speaking, the KING begins to write.]

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.

[This is the peak of the KING's passion.]

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.

[The KING seals the letter and exits.]

Scene 4. *[A plain in Demark.]*

[Full house lights. The CAPTAIN rises from the audience.]

CAPTAIN: *[Formally]* At-ten-tion! *[Persuasively]* Upon your feet, men! Upon your feet! The Prince himself comes for inspection, and let him not find us, as the slander goes, a list of lawless resolute, sharked up for food and diet. Up! Rise! Stand tall!

[The AUDIENCE stands. The CAPTAIN goes at attention. Enter FORTINBRAS. He walks the length of the AUDIENCE, inspecting them, nodding to the straightest soldiers.]

FORTINBRAS: Go, Captain, from me greet the Danish king.

Tell him that by his license 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 *[at full voice]* I will do't, my lord.

[The CAPTAIN salutes and begins to exit fast, but FORTINBRAS' rebuke slows him.]
FORTINBRAS: Go softly on.

[FORTINBRAS nods to a few of his men and gestures the AUDIENCE to their seats; he then exits one way as, the other way, ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN enter, on either side of HAMLET, and meet the departing CAPTAIN, who at first seems eager to end the conversation and go. ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN continue on, and nearly exit on the other side of the stage, but pause there to look back expectantly at HAMLET]

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 nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

HAMLET: Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?

[The CAPTAIN pauses and drops his voice.]

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 garrisoned.

HAMLET: Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats

Will not debate the question of this straw.

This is th' 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 bye you, sir.

[The CAPTAIN exits.]

ROSENCRANTZ: Will't please you go, my lord?

HAMLET: I'll be with you straight. Go a little before.

[Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN.]

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 godlike reason

To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be

Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple

Of thinking too precisely on th' event—

A thought which, quartered, 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 puffed,
 Makes mouths at the invisible event,
 Exposing what is mortal and unsure
 To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
 Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great
 Is not to stir without great argument,
 But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
 When honor's at the stake. How stand I then,
 That have a father killed, a mother stained,
 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
 Which is not tomb enough and continent
 To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

*[Enter ROSENCRANTZ, now carrying the Second Intermission sign, and
 GUILDENSTERN, to either side of HAMLET.]*

ROSENCRANTZ: Will't please you go, my lord?

GUILDENSTERN: You must along.

*[GUILDENSTERN leads HAMLET offstage. Before he follows them, ROSENCRANTZ
 sets up the sign for the*

SECOND INTERMISSION.]

Scene 5. *[The castle.]*

[ROSENCRANTZ becomes the RUSTIC. GUILDENSTERN becomes the SEXTON. The GENTLEMAN enters to remove the Second Intermission sign. As he gets it offstage, the QUEEN hurries on, with the GENTLEMAN following her.]

QUEEN: I will not speak with her.

GENTLEMAN: She is importunate, indeed distract.
Her mood will needs be pitied.

QUEEN: What would she have?

GENTLEMAN: She speaks much of her father, things in doubt
That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshapèd use of it doth move
The hearers to collection; they yawn at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts.
'Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

QUEEN: Let her come in.

[Exit the GENTLEMAN.]

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.

[Enter OPHELIA, with her blouse off, in a white, modest bra: the effect should be of a failed attempt at sexual provocation, in which the onlookers—the audience—are embarrassed rather than aroused. The rest of her is unkempt and unclean. The GENTLEMAN follows her on helplessly with the discarded blouse, with which, somewhere during the following exchange, he attempts to blanket OPHELIA—ineffectually, as she shrugs it off. The GENTLEMAN then stands awkwardly by, averting his eyes. OPHELIA's madness needs to be real recognizable madness—nothing pretty about it—it should be as scary and sudden and sad as patients in asylums. She needs to be abruptly changing, always, one moment weeping, the next screaming, the next a good girl, the next grabbing her breasts or crotch or striking some pathetic pose she imagines as sultry. If this scene isn't terrible and depressing for the audience, hard to watch, we've failed.]

OPHELIA: Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN: How now, Ophelia?

OPHELIA: 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.

O, ho!

QUEEN: Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPHELIA: Say you? Nay, pray you, mark.
[Sings.] White his shroud as the mountain snow,
 Larded all with sweet flowers
 Which bewept to the grave did not go
 With true love showers.

[Enter the KING.]
 QUEEN: Alas, look here, my lord.

KING: How do you, pretty lady?

OPHELIA: Well, God dild you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be.

KING: Conceit upon her father.

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

[Sings.] Tomorrow 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 donned his clothes,
 And dupp'd the chamber door,
 Let in the maid, that out a maid
 Never departed more.

KING: 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."

He answers:

"So would I 'a' done, by yonder sun,
 An thou hadst not come to my bed."

KING: 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 would lay him i' th' 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.

[OPHELIA exits.]

KING: Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you.

[Exit the GENTLEMAN.]

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 huggermugger to inter him; poor Ophelia
 Divided from herself and her fair judgment;
 Last, and as much containing as all these,
 Her brother is in secret come from France,
 And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
 With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
 Wherein necessity, of matter beggared,
 Will nothing stick our person to arraign
 In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
 Like to a murd'ring piece, in many places
 Gives me superfluous death.

[The RABBLE of offstage voices consist of Actors 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10 & 11. The voices aren't synchronized but an angry mess of syllables, distant at first but growing louder and closer.]

QUEEN: Alack, what noise is this? KING: Attend, where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door. <i>[Enter the GENTLEMAN, with a rifle.]</i> What is the matter? GENTLEMAN: Save yourself, my lord. The ocean, overpeering of his list, Eats not the flats with more impiteous 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, They cry "Choose we! Laertes shall be king!" Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds, "Laertes shall be king! Laertes king!" QUEEN: <i>[outraged]</i> How cheerfully on the false trail they cry! O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs! KING: The doors are broke.	RABBLE: Choose we! Laertes shall be king! Laertes shall be king! Laertes king! Choose we! Laertes shall be king! Laertes shall be king! Laertes king! Choose we! Laertes shall be king! Laertes shall be king! Laertes king! Choose we! Laertes shall be king! Laertes king! Choose we! Laertes shall be king! Laertes king! Choose we! Laertes shall be king!
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[LAERTES, armed with a rifle, throws open the door, the unseen RABBLE behind him. The GENTLEMAN takes aim at him, waiting for a signal from the KING.]

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

RABBLE: No, let's come in.

LAERTES: I pray you give me leave.

RABBLE: We will, we will.

LAERTES: I thank you. Keep the door.

[LAERTES closes the door behind them and takes aim at the KING.]

—O thou vile king,

Give me my father!

[The QUEEN rushes to hold LAERTES, interposing herself between him and the KING.]

QUEEN: 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 unsmirch'd brow
 Of my true mother.

KING: What is the cause, Laertes,

That thy rebellion looks so giantlike?
 Let him go, Gertrude. Do not fear our person.
[The KING signals the GENTLEMAN to lower his weapon.]
 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.
[The QUEEN releases LAERTES.]
 Speak, man.
 LAERTES: Where is my father?
 KING: Dead.
 QUEEN: But not by him.
[The QUEEN again holds LAERTES.]
 KING: Let him demand his fill.
[The QUEEN again releases him.]
 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 throughly for my father.
 KING: Good Laertes,
 If you desire to know the certainty
 Of your dear father, is't writ in your revenge
 That swoopstake you will draw both friend and foe,
 Winner and loser?
 LAERTES: None but his enemies.
 KING: Will you know them then?
 LAERTES: To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms
 And like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,
 Repast them with my blood.
 KING: Why, now you speak
 Like a good child and a true gentleman.
 That I am guiltless of your father's death,
 And am most sensibly in grief for it,
 It shall as level to your judgment 'pear
 As day does to your eye.
[Enter OPHELIA, dancing, perhaps soiled or filthy since we last saw her.]
 LAERTES: How now? Who's that?

<p>OPHELIA: <i>[Sings.]</i> They bore him barefaced on the bier Hey non nony, nony, hey nony And on his grave rained many a tear— Fare you well, my dove! You must sing “A-down a-down, and you call him a-down-a.” O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter. They say ‘a made a good end. <i>[Sings.]</i> And will he not come again? And will he not come again? No, no, he is dead, Go to thy deathbed, He never will come again.</p> <p> His beard was as white as snow, All flaxen was his poll. He is gone, he is gone, And we cast away moan. God ‘a’ mercy on his soul! And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God bye you.</p>	<p>LAERTES: Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!</p> <p>O heavens! is't possible a young maid's wits Should be as mortal as an old man's life? By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight, Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May, Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge, It could not move thus.</p>
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[OPHELIA exits. The KING signals for the QUEEN and the GENTLEMAN to follow her, and they exit too. OPHELIA becomes OSRIC.]

LAERTES: Do you see this, O God?

KING: Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
 Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
 Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
 And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.
 If by direct or by collateral hand
 They find us touched, we will our kingdom give
 To you in satisfaction; but if not,
 Be you content to lend your patience to us,
 And we shall jointly labor 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: So you shall;
 And where th' offence is let the great axe fall.

[The KING turns off the nearby light, and he and LAERTES remain frozen in place in the darkness.]

Scene 6. *[The castle.]*

[HORATIO enters a different part of the stage, holding a sealed letter, and reading an opened one.]

HORATIO: “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 valor, 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 letter 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. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England. Of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.”

[Exit HORATIO.]

Scene 7. *[The castle.]*

[The KING turns the light on again. Throughout this scene, the KING verbally and perfectly manipulates LAERTES' moods, never losing control of the situation until

LAERTES' final outburst over his sister's death.]

KING: Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
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, greatness, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirred up.

KING: The Queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks, and for myself
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—

LAERTES: And so have I a noble father lost;
A sister driven into desp'rate 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: I loved your father, and we love ourself,
And that, I hope, will teach you—

[Enter the GENTLEMAN, with a letter.]

How now!

What news?

GENTLEMAN: My lord, from Hamlet.

[The GENTLEMAN hands the KING the letter.]

KING: From Hamlet?

Who brought this?

GENTLEMAN: Sailors, my lord.

KING: Leave us. Go!

[Exit the GENTLEMAN. The GENTLEMAN becomes the PRIEST. The KING breaks the seal and begins to read.]

“High and mighty, you shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. Tomorrow 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: 'Tis Hamlet's character. “Naked!”

And in a postscript here, he says “alone.”

LAERTES: I am 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 did'st thou.”

KING: If it be so, Laertes,

Will you be ruled by me?

LAERTES: Ay, my lord;

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

KING: To thine own peace. If he be now returned

As checking at his voyage, 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 practice

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: It falls right.

You have been talked of since your travel much,

For art and exercise in your defence,

And for your rapier most especial.

Now, out of this—

LAERTES: What out of this, my lord?

KING: Laertes, was your father dear to you?

Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,

A face without a heart?

LAERTES: Why ask you this?

KING: Not that I think you did not love your father,

But that I know love is begun by time,

Which 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' th' 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' th' church!

KING: No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;
 Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
 Will you do this? Keep close within your chamber.
 Hamlet returned shall know you are come home.
 We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
 Varnish your fame; in fine, bring you together
 To wager on your heads. He, being remiss,
 Most generous, and free from all contriving,
 Will not peruse the foils; so that with ease,
 Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
 A sword unbated, and, in a pass of practice,
 Requite him for your father.

LAERTES: I will do't:
 And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.
 I bought an unction of a mountebank,
 So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
 Where it draws blood, no cataplasm so rare,
 Collected from all simples that have virtue
 Under the moon, can save the thing from death
 That is but scratched withal. I'll touch my point
 With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
 It may be death.

KING: But yet if this should fail,
 And that our drift look through our bad performance.
 'Twere better not assayed. Therefore this project
 Should have a back or second, that might hold
 If this did blast in proof. Soft! let me see.
 When in your motion you are hot and dry,
 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 the QUEEN suddenly, perhaps sobbing or at the dead end of sobbing.]

—But stay, what noise?

QUEEN: One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
 So fast they follow. Your sister's drowned, Laertes.

LAERTES: Drowned! O, where?

QUEEN: There is a willow grows aslant a brook,

That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream:
 There with fantastic garlands did she make
 Of crowflowers, 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 pendant boughs her crownet weeds
 Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliver broke,
 When down her weedy trophies and herself
 Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
 And mermaidlike awhile they bore her up,
 Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds,
 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,
 Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
 To muddy death.

LAERTES: Alas, then she is drowned?

QUEEN: Drowned, drowned.

[LAERTES begins to weep.]

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 o' fire, that fain would blaze,
 But that this folly drowns it.

[LAERTES rushes out to exit.]

KING: Let's follow, Gertrude;
 How much I had to do to calm his rage!
 Now fear I this will give it start again.

[Exeunt the KING and QUEEN after LAERTES.]

ACT V

Scene 1. *[A churchyard.]*

[Enter the SEXTON and the RUSTIC, with a spade. During the following conversation, they arrange furniture in whatever fashion necessary to simulate the grave. The grave needs to be out-of-the-way, so it can be left in place till the end of the show: two couches pushed together might do nicely.]

SEXTON: Is she to be buried in Christian burial when she wilfully seeks her own salvation?

RUSTIC: I tell thee she is. Therefore make her grave straight. The crowner hath sate on her, and finds it Christian burial.

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

RUSTIC: Nay, but hear you, Goodman Delver—

SEXTON: 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.

RUSTIC: But is this law?

SEXTON: Ay, marry, is't—crowner's quest law.

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

SEXTON: Why, there thou say'st. And the more pity that great folk should have count'nance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even-Christen.—Come, my spade.

[The RUSTIC hands the spade to the SEXTON.]

There is no ancient gentlemen but gard'ners, ditchers, and gravemakers. They hold up Adam's profession.

RUSTIC: Was he a gentleman?

SEXTON: He was the first that ever bore arms.

RUSTIC: Why, he had none.

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

RUSTIC: *[enormously pleased with his own cleverness]* The gallowsmaker, for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

SEXTON: I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows does well. But how does it well? it does well to those that do ill. Now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church. Argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.

RUSTIC: Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

SEXTON: Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

RUSTIC: *[has a great idea]* Marry, now I can tell.

SEXTON: To't.

RUSTIC: *[loses his confidence]* Mass, I cannot tell.

[Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance. From here to the end of the play, we see a changed HAMLET from earlier in the play—more confident, even and aloof; the actor never again makes eye contact with the audience or shares with them, as though possessed of some answer or secret he declines to share.]

SEXTON: Cudgel thy brains no more about it, and when you are asked this question next, say “a grave-maker.” The houses he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee in, and fetch me a stoup of liquor.

[Exit the RUSTIC. The SEXTON begins to dig.]

<p>SEXTON: <i>[Sings]</i> In youth when I did love, did love, Methought it was very sweet To contract <i>[grunts]</i> the time for <i>[grunts]</i> my behove, O, methought there <i>[grunts]</i> was nothing <i>[grunts]</i> meet.</p> <p>But age, with his stealing steps Hath clawed me in his clutch, And hath shipped me into the land, As if I had never been such.</p> <p>A pickaxe 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.</p>	<p>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. I will speak to this fellow.</p>
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HAMLET: —Whose grave's this, sir?

SEXTON: Mine, sir.

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

SEXTON: You lie out on't, sir, and therefore 'tis not yours. For my part, I do not lie in't, 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.

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

HAMLET: What man dost thou dig it for?

SEXTON: For no man, sir.

HAMLET: What woman then?

SEXTON: For none neither.

HAMLET: Who is to be buried in't?

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

HAMLET: How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

SEXTON: Of all the days i' th' year, I came to't that day that our last King Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

HAMLET: How long is that since?

SEXTON: 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?

SEXTON: Why, because he was mad. 'A shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

HAMLET: Why?

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

HAMLET: How came he mad?

SEXTON: Very strangely, they say.

HAMLET: How strangely?

SEXTON: Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

HAMLET: Upon what ground?

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

HAMLET: How long will a man lie i' th' earth ere he rot?

SEXTON: Faith, if 'a be not rotten before he die (as we have many pocky corsers nowadays that will scarce hold the laying in) 'a will last you some eight year or nine year.

[The SEXTON brings up a skull.]

Here's a skull now hath lien you i' th' earth three and twenty years.

HAMLET: Whose was it?

SEXTON: A whoreson mad fellow's it was. Whose do you think it was?

HAMLET: Nay, I know not.

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

HAMLET: This?

SEXTON: 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 rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? Your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning? Quite chapfall'n? Now, get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come. Make her laugh at that.

[The SEXTON has finished his digging, and exits.]

—Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HORATIO: What's that, my lord?

HAMLET: Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' th' 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 'a find it stopping a bung-hole?

HORATIO: 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

HAMLET: No, faith, not a jot, as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to 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 turned to clay,

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.

O, that that earth which kept the world in awe

Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!

[Enter the PRIEST, and, in procession, the corpse of OPHELIA, only her face visible within her cerements, carried on a wooden stretcher by the RUSTIC and the SEXTON, followed by LAERTES, the KING and the QUEEN.]

Here comes the King, the Queen. Who do they follow?

And with such maimèd rites? This doth betoken

The corse they follow did with desp'rate hand

Fordo it own life. 'Twas of some estate.

Couch we awhile and mark.

[HAMLET and HORATIO retire to a hiding spot.]

LAERTES: What ceremony else? What ceremony else?	HAMLET: That is Laertes, A very noble youth. Mark.
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PRIEST: Her obsequies have been as far enlarged

As we have warranty. Her death was doubtful,

And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
 She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
 Till the last trumpet. For charitable prayers,
 Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her.

LAERTES: Must there no more be done?

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 minist'ring angel shall my sister be
 When thou liest howling!

HAMLET: What, the fair Ophelia?

QUEEN: Sweets to the sweet! Farewell.

[The QUEEN scatters flowers upon OPHELIA's corpse.]

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife.
 I thought thy bride bed to have decked, sweet maid,
 And not have strewed thy grave.

LAERTES: O, treble woe

Fall ten times treble on that cursèd 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.

[LAERTES leaps into the grave.]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
 Till of this flat a mountain you have made
 T' o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head
 Of blue Olympus.

[HAMLET comes forward.]

HAMLET: What is he whose grief
 Bears such an emphasis, whose phrase of sorrow
 Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand
 Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
 Hamlet the Dane.

[LAERTES leaps upon HAMLET and they grapple.]

LAERTES: The devil take thy soul!

HAMLET: I prithee take thy fingers from my throat,

For have I in me something dangerous,

Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand.

KING: Pluck them asunder.

QUEEN: Hamlet! Hamlet!

All.: Gentlemen!

HORATIO: Good my lord, be quiet.

[HORATIO, the SEXTON and the RUSTIC separate HAMLET and LAERTES.]

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

QUEEN: O my son, what theme?

[The KING and QUEEN both stand by LAERTES, restraining him.]

<p>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? 'Swounds, show me what thou' 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? What is the reason that you use me thus? I loved you ever. But it is no matter.</p>	<p>KING: O, he is mad, Laertes. QUEEN: For love of God forbear him!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">This is mere madness; And thus a while the fit will work on him. Anon, as patient as the female dove When that her golden couplets are disclosed, His silence will sit drooping.</p>
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[HAMLET shakes off HORATIO and exits.]

KING: I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.

[HORATIO bows, and exits after HAMLET.]

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.

[The QUEEN starts after them ineffectually and the KING speaks in confidence to LAERTES.]

Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech.
 We'll put the matter to the present push.
 This grave shall have a living monument.

[The KING raises his voice to address everyone.]

An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;
 Till then in patience our proceeding be.

[Exeunt the KING, the QUEEN, LAERTES, the PRIEST, the SEXTON and the RUSTIC. The PRIEST becomes the GENTLEMAN. The SEXTON becomes MARCELLUS. The RUSTIC becomes BARNARDO.]

(247lines/15:26min)Scene 2. *[A churchyard.]*

[Enter HAMLET and HORATIO to another part of the stage.]

HAMLET: Our indiscretion sometime serves us well,
 When our deep plots do pall, and that should learn us
 There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
 Rough-hew them how we will.

HORATIO: That is most certain.

HAMLET: Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting
 That would not let me sleep. Up from my cabin,
 My sea gown scarfed about me, in the dark
 Groped I to find out them, had my desire,
 Fingered 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—
 Ah, royal knavery!—an exact command,
 That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,
 No, not to stay the grinding of the ax,
 My head should be struck off.

HORATIO: Is't possible?

HAMLET: Being thus benetted round with villains,
Or I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play. I sat me down,
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair:
An earnest conjuration from the King,
As England was his faithful tributary,
That on the view and knowing of these contents,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving time allowed.

HORATIO: How was this sealed?

HAMLET: Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Folded the writ up in the form of th' other,
Subscribed it, gave't th' impression, placed it safely,
The changeling never known. Now the next day
Was our sea fight, of which thou knowest already.

HORATIO: [*uneasily*] 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 incensèd points
Of mighty opposites.

HORATIO: Why, what a king is this!

HAMLET: Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon—
He that hath killed my king, and whored my mother,
Popped in between th' election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such coz'nage—is't not perfect conscience
To quit him with this arm? And is't not to be damned
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's 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 favors.

[*OPHELIA rises from the grave and throws off her burial cerements, revealing her new costume underneath; she pulls out a foppish hat and sets it, at a jaunty angle, upon her head and becomes OSRIC.*]

But sure the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a tow'ring passion.

HORATIO: Peace, who comes here?

[OSRIC doffs his hat for a florid bow.]

OSRIC: Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

HAMLET: I humbly thank you, sir.

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

HAMLET: I will receive it 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.

OSRIC: It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

[OSRIC puts on his hat.]

HAMLET: But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion.

OSRIC: Exceedingly, my lord;

[OSRIC takes off his hat.]

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

HAMLET: I beseech you, remember.

[HAMLET motions him to put on his hat.]

OSRIC: Nay, in good faith; 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. I know you are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—I mean, sir, for his weapon. The King, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has impawned, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards.

HAMLET: Why is this all impawned, as you call it?

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

HAMLET: How if I answer no?

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

HAMLET: Sir, I will walk here in the hall. If it please his Majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me. Let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the King hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

OSRIC: Shall I deliver you e'en so?

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

[OSRIC gives an even more florid bow.]

OSRIC: I commend my duty to your lordship.

HAMLET: Yours, yours.

[HAMLET motions for OSRIC to put on his hat, which OSRIC does, then exits.]

HORATIO: This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

HAMLET: 'A did comply, sir, with his dug before 'a sucked it.

[Enter the GENTLEMAN.]

GENTLEMAN: My lord, his Majesty sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

HAMLET: If the King's fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

GENTLEMAN: The King and Queen and all are coming down.

HAMLET: In happy time.

GENTLEMAN: The Queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

HAMLET: She well instructs me.

[The GENTLEMAN bows and exits.]

HORATIO: You will lose this wager, my lord.

HAMLET: I do not think so. Since he went into France I have been in continual practice. I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart. But it is no matter.

HORATIO: Nay, good my lord—

HAMLET: It is but foolery.

HORATIO: If your mind dislike anything, obey it. I will forestall their repair hither and say you are not fit.

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

[Enter the KING, the QUEEN, LAERTES, OSRIC, with a pair of rapiers, the GENTLEMAN, with a tray of cups, MARCELLUS, with a rifle, and BARNARDO, with a rifle.]

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

[HAMLET approaches the KING, who puts HAMLET's hand into LAERTES' hand.]

HAMLET: Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong,

But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.

Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts

That I have shot my 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 honor
I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation
Till by some elder masters of known honor
I have a voice and precedent of peace
To keep my name ungored. But till that time
I do receive your offered 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' th' darkest night,

Stick fiery off indeed.

LAERTES: You mock me, sir.

HAMLET: No, by this hand.

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

[During the following conversation, OSRIC moves immediately to LAERTES and presents him with a certain rapier; the two men exchange a swift, significant glance.

OSRIC then delivers the remaining rapier to HAMLET.]

HAMLET: Very well, my lord.

Your grace has laid the odds o' th' weaker side.

KING: I do not fear it, I have seen you both;

But since he's bettered, we have therefore odds.

—Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.

—If Hamlet give the first or second hit,

Or quit in answer of the third exchange,

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. So, come, begin.

[HAMLET and LAERTES have squared off for the duel, with OSRIC as the referee.]

—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: Stay, give me drink.—Hamlet, this pearl is thine.

Here's to thy health.

[The KING drops a pearl into the cup of wine.]

—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't.

KING: Our son shall win.

QUEEN: He's fat, and scant of breath.

[The QUEEN snatches the poisoned chalice from the tray and goes over to HAMLET.]

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

The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

HAMLET: Good madam!

KING: Gertrude, do not drink.

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

[The QUEEN drinks from the poisoned cup. The KING watches with a sick expression; perhaps he sits down.]

HAMLET: I dare not drink yet, madam—by and by.	LAERTES: My lord, I'll hit him now.
QUEEN: Come, let me wipe thy face. <i>[The QUEEN wipes HAMLET's face.]</i>	KING: I do not think't. LAERTES: And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

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

LAERTES: Say you so? come on.

[They play.]

OSRIC: Nothing, neither way.

LAERTES: Have at you now!

[LAERTES scratches HAMLET; then, in scuffling, they exchange rapiers.]

KING: Part them. They are incensed.

HAMLET: Nay, come—again!

[HAMLET stabs LAERTES, who falls as the QUEEN collapses.]

OSRIC: Look to the Queen there, ho!

HORATIO: They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

OSRIC: How is't, Laertes?

LAERTES: I am justly killed with mine own treachery.

HAMLET: How does the Queen?

KING: She sounds to see them bleed.

QUEEN: No, no, the drink, the drink! O my dear Hamlet!

The drink, the drink! I am poisoned.

[The QUEEN dies.]

HAMLET: O villany! Ho! Let the door be locked.

Treachery! seek it out.

LAERTES: It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain;

No med'cine in the world can do thee good.

In thee there is not half an hour's life.

The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,

Unbated and envenomed. The foul practice

Hath turned itself on me. Lo, here I lie,

Never to rise again. Thy mother's poisoned.

I can no more. The King, the King's to blame.

HAMLET: The point envenomed too?

Then, venom, to thy work.

[HAMLET stabs the KING.]

OSRIC & GENTLEMAN: Treason! Treason!

KING: O, yet defend me, friends. I am but hurt.

[OSRIC screams and exits. BARNARDO moves to defend the KING, but MARCELLUS stops him. HORATIO holds the GENTLEMAN at bay as HAMLET forces the KING to drink from the poisoned chalice.]

HAMLET: Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damnèd Dane,

Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?

Follow my mother.

[The KING dies. HORATIO pries the poisoned cup from HAMLET's grasp.]

LAERTES: He is justly served.

It is a poison tempered by himself.
 Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.
[HAMLET moves to take his hand once again.]
 Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
 Nor thine on me!

[LAERTES dies.]

HAMLET: Heaven make thee free of it!
[HAMLET collapses but HORATIO catches him and gently lowers him to the floor.]
 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.
[HORATIO lifts the poisoned cup to his lips.]
 I am more an antique Roman than a Dane.
 Here's yet some liquor left.

HAMLET: As th'art a man,
 Give me the cup. Let go. By heaven, I'll ha't!
*[HAMLET and HORATIO struggle for the cup, but HAMLET prevails as HORATIO
 surrenders and begins to weep.]*

O God, 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. O, I die, Horatio!
 The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit.

*[Enter OSRIC, excited and confused, trying to speak as though a court existed to hear his
 announcement.]*

OSRIC: Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland!
[HAMLET laughs.]

HAMLET: Then I do prophesy the election lights
 On Fortinbras. He has my dying voice.
 So tell him, with th' occurrents, more and less,
 Which have solicited—the rest is silence.
[HAMLET dies.]

HORATIO: Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet Prince,
 And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.
*[From the back of the audience, the CAPTAIN leads FORTINBRAS onto the stage.
 MARCELLUS and BARNARDO train their rifles on them, but FORTINBRAS is
 unflustered and unimpressed. MARCELLUS and BARNARDO lower their guns.]*

