

Hamlet

By William Shakespeare

A Shakespeare in the Ruins Study Guide
May 2019

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Introduction

**To sum up:
your father, whom you love, dies,
you are his heir,
you come back to find that hardly was the corpse cold
before his young brother popped on to his throne and into his sheets,
thereby offending both legal and natural practice.
Now why exactly
are you behaving in this extraordinary manner?**

These few lines spoken by Rosencrantz to Guildenstern in Tom Stoppard's modern absurdist play, *Rosencrantz And Guildenstern Are Dead*, just about cover it all.

Well, not really, of course, but they do get to the heart of Hamlet's main problem. They don't, however, explain the Ghost. And that becomes another problem because even though it looks like Hamlet's father, how can Hamlet be sure it really *is* his father? Perhaps it's just a demon in disguise, trying to "play" Hamlet and use him as a tool to create chaos in the very orderly Elizabethan world...

Hamlet is "the first of [Shakespeare's] great tragedies" (Wood 222), and it has everything: "plot, action and speed; intrigue, love and murder" (Wood 239). An uncut theatrical presentation can take up to four-and-a-half hours, but that was long for Shakespeare's audiences even in his own time. Get ready for some fast-paced action in this modern rendition of the play.

When we asked Rodrigo Beilfuss, the new Artistic Director of Shakespeare in the Ruins, a few questions regarding his cut of the *Hamlet* script, we received this insightful reply:

As you know, this script is our starting point, and things tend to shift as rehearsals begin and actors have ideas and input, and then the true process of collaboration starts.

But what I can tell you right now is this: it will be set in modern times, as in Now. But it will also feel a bit "post-apocalyptic" because costumes and set pieces (chairs and piles of junk and random debris) will allude to "the end of an era" -- jackets may be dirty, battered and somewhat "tired" looking. My whole concept is centered around Horatio as our chief story teller of the play, since in the text Hamlet asks him to remain alive and to tell his story. So, basically, our production of Hamlet IS the re-telling of the story of Hamlet -- it is the re-enactment of the tale of Hamlet. I wanted to explore that "meta" take on the play because Hamlet already is such a meta-theatrical, self-aware, text.

There are numerous allusions to actors and the art of theatre in the play, and Hamlet himself "performs madness" in order to get to the truth of things. This is Shakespeare's first truly experimental piece, written at the very middle point of his career, and it opened up all sorts of possibilities for what was to come. I wanted to explore that very sharp sense of theatricality with this edit of the script.

I also wanted an indigenous actor to play Horatio because I wanted an actor from here, from this land, who had a true connection to this place. And, in our production, the ruins of the monastery are indeed the ruins of a collapsed European empire (Denmark); and in these ruins, Horatio and a band of actors gather to tell the story of what happened there; of how this kingdom collapsed.

That is, essentially, in a nutshell, our concept for this production.

And, so, we have a post-apocalyptic *Hamlet*, that is a performance of the story as retold by Horatio with some major cuts and reordering of scenes. The actor playing Hamlet is female, but her character apparently identifies as male. Ophelia still has to deal with a meddling parent, her mother, Lady Polonia. This is a topsy-turvy world in ruins. Corrupt forces have taken over the government. The new ruler feeds the people lies and most of his subjects are fooled. Only the chosen one, the hero of our tale, can attempt to do something about it, but he has doubts about himself, doubts about the Ghost, and doubts about whether it is worth it to stand up for truth and justice in a crumbling world.

In 1623 in his preface to the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's works, Ben Jonson wrote that Shakespeare was "not of an age, but for all time". The same may be said of the personality of Shakespeare's most complex character, Hamlet. He is such an enigmatic character that over the centuries he has been portrayed very differently in each age, including here, in Winnipeg, in 2019.

The play's the thing...

Enjoy the show!

Kenneth Clark & Pamela Lockman

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Reinventing and Reinterpreting *Hamlet*

Hamlet has been reinvented many times over the years, even multiple times in the late 16th and early 17th Centuries. Hamlet questions Guildenstern for presuming that he can "pluck the heart out of [Hamlet's] mystery". It is the mystery at the core of Hamlet's personality that allows for so many interpretations. If you ask now about whether the director should put gender issues at the centre, remember that all parts were played by men and boys in Shakespeare's time. If you wonder about cutting and reordering scenes, that, too, was common in Shakespeare's time. If you think about doing away with the division between Acts in the play, Shakespeare may not have made those divisions. If you think bringing the story forward in time so it relates to our own time is new, remember that is what Shakespeare did with Saxo Grammaticus's story.

As for making fools of those of us who try to "pluck the heart out [Hamlet's] mystery" we need to remind ourselves that the analysis of Hamlet begins in the play. The simplistic analysis of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is that it is frustrated ambition that is bothering Hamlet. To Polonius (or in our play Lady Polonia) it is unrequited love. The only deep analysis of Hamlet's personality in the play is his own in the soliloquies in which he examines his own self-doubt and failure to act. Indeed, he does seem to beat himself up in the soliloquies which overflow with angst and self-loathing.

It was Arthur Miller in his essay "Tragedy and the Modern Man" who insisted that the tragic hero in any tragic drama is struggling to regain one thing -- his personal dignity or self-respect even if he has to sacrifice his life to regain it. Again, consider the extent to which Hamlet regains dignity, nobility or self-respect by the end of SIR's production

Background, Sources and Texts

The original story of *Hamlet* was a retelling of events from Denmark in and around the year 1000. It was written by Saxo Grammaticus, a Dane writing in such polished Latin that he was known as "the grammarian" (from *Gesta Danorum* of Saxo Grammaticus written in about 1185 AD). In this early version of the story, the prince, Amleth, feigned madness and succeeded in carrying out his revenge against his wicked uncle Feng who had married Amleth's mother, Gerutha. The original Amleth destroyed his uncle's followers by using arson very effectively, but it is not the kind of action that would make him some kind of tragic hero to be revered in later centuries. For a detailed retelling of this tale by Saxo Grammaticus in an English translation see:

<https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/amleth.html>

The French author, Francois de Belleforest, in 1572 published his *Histoires Tragiques* in which he retold the story of Hamlet, drawing on Saxo Grammaticus but expanding the story. It was not translated into English until several years after Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was written.

One commonly accepted theory is that Shakespeare based his play on an earlier play, probably by Thomas Kyd, now referred to as the *Ur-Hamlet*. Unfortunately, although records indicate that this play was performed before Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was written in 1600 - 1601, we no longer have any copies in existence of the *Ur-Hamlet*. As is always the case with *Hamlet*, we find mystery at the core when we dig for answers.

When we visit the Shakespearesolved Blogspot we learn of the possible existence of four early *Hamlet* productions, which are all speculated to have been written Shakespeare.

In 1589, Thomas Nashe wrote of a **Hamlet** play, the text of which has not survived:

"English Seneca read by candle-light yields many good sentences, as Blood is a begger, and so forth; and if you entreat him fair in a frosty morning, he will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls of tragical speeches."

It is interesting that he mentions the many "tragical speeches" which would indicate that this version of **Hamlet** was as much a tragedy as the **Hamlet** we know today.

The famous theatre impresario Philip Henslowe wrote in his diary of a **Hamlet** in 1594.

Playwright Thomas Lodge wrote of another **Hamlet** in 1596: "the ghost which cried so miserably at the theatre, like an oyster-wife, Hamlet, revenge!"

It is interesting here that Lodge seems to make fun of this performance. Is it just professional jealousy, or could his mockery indicate that the play was not well-received by the audiences in 1596?

<http://shakespearesolved.blogspot.com/2014/07/did-shakespeare-write-hamlet-four-times.html>

Even today we are learning that the various surviving texts of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* have been conflated (mixed together) by editors over the years; that is, editors have examined the First Quarto, Second Quarto and First Folio editions and have put together what they think Shakespeare really meant where there are significant differences in the texts. The First Quarto (1603) is shorter than the others and in places the poetry seems less polished. Famously it reads "To be or not to be. Ay, that is the point". It has even been judgementally called the "Bad Quarto". On the other hand, its pace is much faster, and it makes Hamlet younger and more direct in his plans and actions. For our purposes, watch for a scene in the SIR production with Horatio and the Queen. It comes from this First Quarto. And the First Quarto is not divided into acts and neither is the Shakespeare in the Ruins *Hamlet* script.

The Second Quarto (1604-05) is the basis for most modern *Hamlet* texts. In the First Folio (1623), the first attempt at compiling all of Shakespeare's plays in one book was made and it also included a third version of the play, although not as complete as the Second Quarto. Most editors have examined this edition along with the Second Quarto in putting together their versions of the play. Early typesetters made plenty of errors and spelling was inconsistent, so the editors have had their work cut out for them. Here's an example from Hamlet's first soliloquy:

O that this too too (solid/sallied/sullied) flesh would melt

In the First and Second Quarto it reads "sallied".

In First Folio it reads "solid".

No where in Shakespeare's early texts does it read "sullied", but some editors have interpreted that "sullied" (tainted or contaminated) is the word represented by the variant spelling "sallied". Other editors have accepted the 1623 editors' decision to make it the more literal "solid" which then fits the metaphor of melting and evaporating. Be sure to listen closely to the SIR production to see which variant is used.

If you would like to see some of the early texts with the original spelling you can find them in many places. One reliable source is Internet Shakespeare Editions available through the University of Victoria:

<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/>

See below for the first page of the facsimile edition of the Second Quarto from the Internet Shakespeare Editions. If you go to the site you can look closely at the whole play with the early-modern spelling of Shakespeare's time.

Note on reading early Shakespeare texts: "Whofe there?" = "Who's there?"

Don't be fooled if what looks like the letter "f" is sometimes really an "s". It was used to imitate a fancy Italian Script. Still pronounce the f's or ff's as "S" when it is not really an "f". The funny thing is that they made the letter "s" when they wanted to, but thought the stylized S that is more like our f looked classy! Also, sometimes a "u" is represented as a "v" in the early texts and sometimes it is a "u". For example; "Stand and vnfold yourfelfe", illustrates both of these variations.



The Tragedie of
H A M L E T
Prince of Denmarke.

Enter Barnardo, and Francisco, two Centinels.

Bar. **VV** hose there?
Fran. Nay answere me. Stand and vnfolde your selfe,
Bar. Long liue the King,

Fran. *Barnardo.*
Bar. Hee.

Fran. You come most carefully vpon your houre,

Bar. Tis now strooke twelue, get thee to bed *Francisco,*

Fran. For this reliefe much thanks, tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at hart.

Bar. Haue you had quiet guard?

Fran. Not a mousettiring.

Bar. Well, good night:

If you doe meete *Horatio* and *Marcellus,*
The riuals of my watch, bid them make hast.

Enter Horatio, and Marcellus.

Fran. I thinke I heare them, stand ho, who is there?

Hora. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And Leedgemen to the Dane,

Fran. Giue you good night.

Mar. O, farwell honest souldiers, who hath relieu'd you?

Fran. *Barnardo* hath my place; giue you good night. *Exit Fran.*

B. *Mar.*

Hamlet's Uncertainty about the Ghost

When he first sees the Ghost, Horatio asks "*What art thou that usurp'st this time of night?*" By introducing the Ghost early in the story with multiple witnesses including the sceptic, Horatio, Shakespeare puts his finger on the pulse of England in his own time. It is a divided kingdom. The official religion in 1601 is The Church of England (Anglican Church), but England has been torn apart throughout the 16th Century as can be seen in the summary of the religious crises below. And if you are wondering what ghosts have to do with it, the answer is, everything.

Religious Crises of 16th Century Britain:

Henry VIII (r.1509-1547) In 1534 Henry breaks with Roman Catholic Church to form the Church of England with himself at the head instead of the Pope. Executes those who refuse the Oath of Supremacy including his friend Thomas More. Monasteries are seized by the crown; monks are drawn and quartered, but doctrine is not changed greatly.

Edward VI (r.1547-1553) As Edward was a child, influence fell to his uncle the Earl of Hertford (later Duke of Somerset) until 1552 when he was succeeded as Protector by the Earl of Warwick (later promoted to Duke of Northumberland). Both of these men promoted the more radical Protestantism that Henry VIII had kept at bay.

Mary I (r.1553-1558) Later known as "Bloody Mary" because she had approximately 300 leading Protestants executed in her desire to bring England back to Roman Catholicism. The burning at the stake of Protestant Bishops and Archbishop Cranmer added to her reputation. As the daughter of Henry VIII's first wife, her claim to the throne was based on the Roman Catholic position that Henry had no right to an annulment of his first marriage. Her marriage to Philip II of Spain made her unpopular and untrusted.

Elizabeth I (r.1558-1603) Re-established the Church of England. Doctrinally Elizabeth sought compromise in the Thirty-nine Articles. Her court was at the centre of the English Renaissance, but it was nevertheless a police state as far as Roman Catholics were concerned. Fear of a Roman Catholic uprising combined with the threat of Spanish invasion made persecution of Roman Catholics a matter of political as well as religious security. The execution of her Roman Catholic cousin Mary Queen of Scots (who may have plotted against her) was her greatest crisis, and the defeat of the Spanish Armada (invading Roman Catholics) in 1588, her greatest victory.

The following excerpts are from the book *Daemonologie* written in 1597 by the future King of England. When Queen Elizabeth I dies in 1603, he becomes James I of England. His ideas about ghosts are a clear explanation of the official view that ghosts are not to be considered the actual spirits of the dead, but demons or the devil in disguise:

Hovv Christian men ought to behaue themselues vvhen they see spirites, and first that they ought to haue a good courage, and to be stedfast in fayth.

First we ought to be of good courage without feare, being assured & constante in true faith. (James Stuart, *Daemonologie*, 191).

We ought, not without greate cause, to suspecte all Spirites, and other apparitions. For albeit God dothe vse the helpe and seruice of good Angels, for the perseruacion of his electe, yet notwithstanding in these our dayes they appeare vnto vs very seldome (196).

Enter into no communication with suche spirites, neither aske them what thou must giue, or what thou must doo, or what shal happen hereafter. Aske them not who they are, or why they haue presented them selues to bee seene or hearde. For if they be good, they will lyke it well that thou wylte heare nothing but the woorde of God: but yf they be wicked, they wyll endeuour to deceyue thee with lying (196).

Wee must not giue eare vnto them, muche lesse ought we to coniure them to tell vs the truth. God commaunded in his lawe, (as we haue oftentimes sayde before) that no man should enquire any thing of the dead (197).

So, according to the official Protestant view, ghosts might possibly be angels in disguise as a deceased person, but more likely they are evil so we should not enter into communication with them. As you will notice, Hamlet disobeys all of the rules of behaviour when it comes to talking to ghosts.

The Roman Catholic understanding is the exact opposite. The spirit may very well be a ghost from Purgatory, just as the ghost in *Hamlet* represents himself:

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 burned and purged away (1.5. 15-18).

Young Hamlet has been raised as a Roman Catholic, but educated at Wittenberg, the place where Martin Luther started the Protestant Reformation. References to the context of the Reformation abound in *Hamlet*, right down to the "Diet of Worms" reference in a joke about the deceased Polonius (in our case Lady Polonia). It was at that Imperial Diet where Martin Luther

was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church that Hamlet obliquely refers to when he says "*Your worm is your only emperor for diet*" (4.3.21). Hamlet has a dilemma that would have been shared by many in the Elizabethan audience. Their families had been Roman Catholic, their education under Elizabeth I was Protestant. Many were secretly still Roman Catholics although Roman Catholicism was officially illegal in England. The sceptics in the audience have had a voice in Horatio, but learn along with him in the play that "*there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in [their] philosophy.*" Hamlet is left to wonder if he should follow his early upbringing and his natural affections and accept that the ghost *is* his father's spirit telling him the truth. Or, should he follow his more recent Protestant education that a ghost is the devil assuming the form of his father and tempting him with lies to commit the most heinous of crimes, regicide; that is, the killing of the king? Could this be the rare case where an Angel intervenes on earth in the form of a deceased person? According to Stephen Greenblatt, "The richest and most complex exploitation of the theatrical capital Shakespeare found in ghosts is in *Hamlet*" (157).

Hamlet comes up with a clever way to test the "*conscience of the king*" in "The Play-within-the Play" so that he will have evidence of Claudius's guilt that is independent of the word of the ghost. One of the questions we asked SIR Artistic Director, Rodrigo Beilfuss, concerned the question of how genuine Hamlet's doubts about the reliability of the Ghost are in this production:

In terms of Hamlet having genuine doubts re: the nature of the Ghost . . . I believe Hamlet is very much uncertain, about many things -- that dilemma being one of them. Hamlet cannot help but feel a truly affectionate connection to the Ghost of his father, but because he is indeed doubtful, he decides to stage the play-within-the-play. But, yes, we will leave the "levels of uncertainty" for the actor to play with during rehearsals . . . I'm curious to see what we discover. (Rodrigo Beilfuss).

Early in the play the wise counselor, Horatio, cautions him not to follow the ghost out of a fear that it "*may assume some other horrible form and draw*" Hamlet "*into madness*". Watch closely

during the Shakespeare in the Ruins production to see if this concern about whether Hamlet trusts the ghost or not is evident.

Works Cited

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Greenblatt, Stephen. *Hamlet in Purgatory*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001.

James VI of Scotland [Stuart] later James I of England. *Daemonologie*. Originally printed in Edinburgh, 1597. Bodleian Library Oxford. Online PDF.

Note: Teachers may wish to refer to documents attached below. These have been enlarged for projection in the classroom.

1. POTENTIAL DESTINY OF THE SOUL AND GHOSTS

ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW	PROTESTANT VIEW
HEAVEN	HEAVEN
PURGATORY	
HELL	HELL

<p>GHOSTS ARE SOULS OF THE DECEASED RELEASED AT NIGHT FROM PURGATORY TO COMPLETE UNFINISHED BUSINESS ON EARTH NECESSARY FOR THEM TO GAIN PEACE AS A PART OF THE CLEANSING OF THEIR SOULS.</p>	<p>GHOSTS ARE PROBABLY DEMONS OR THE DEVIL IN DISGUISE TAKING THE FORM OF A DECEASED PERSON IN ORDER TO HAUNT A VICTIM AND DRAW HIM ON TO COMMIT HEINOUS CRIMES DISTURBING THE ORDER OF HIS OR HER MIND AND UNDERMINING THE ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE. OR, THE GHOST COULD BE AN ANGEL.</p>
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2. THOMAS MORE* ON GHOSTS from *The Supplication of Souls*

[A ghost is speaking explaining why visiting earth from Purgatory gives the spirit no rest from pain and is not an actual release from Purgatory]

“Our late wives so soon waxen wanton and, forgetting us their old husbands that have loved them so tenderly and left them so rich, sit and laugh and make merry and more too sometimes with new wooers, while our keepers in despite keep us there in pain to stand still and look on” (222).

. . .

“Many times would we then speak, if we could be suffered, and sore we long to say to her, “Ah, wife, wife, ywisse this was not covenant, wife, when ye wept and told me that if I left you to live by, ye would never wed again. We see our children too, whom we loved so well, pipe, sing, and dance, and no more think on their fathers’ souls than on their old shoes, save that sometimes commeth out ‘God have mercy on all Christian souls.’ But it commeth out so coldly and with so dull affection that it lieth but in the lips and never came near the heart” (222)

Source:

Thomas More, *The Supplication of Souls. The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Volume 7*, p. 222; as cited in Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001 p. 146.

*Thomas More, a devout Roman Catholic/Christian Humanist and scholar, was a defender of the doctrine of Purgatory in his book *The Supplication of Souls*. More was executed (beheaded) by his great friend, Henry VIII in 1535 when he refused to take the “Oath of Supremacy” whereby one rejected the authority of the Pope and recognized Henry VIII as the head of the Church of England.

3. THE SPIRIT THAT I HAVE SEEN MAY BE A DEVIL

Sixteenth Century English Protestant Writers and Theologians:

Miles Coverdale: “Let no man . . . be moved by these deceitful spirits, which as they say do appear unto men, and desire their help . . . Neither is it a wonder, if the devil can disguise himself in the form of a dead man, seeing he can transfigure himself into an angel of light” (475).

Source:

Miles Coverdale, *Remains*, ed. George Pearson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1846. p. 475.

Thomas Cranmer (circa1540): “[I]t is not the soul of the dead that saith , I am such a man’s soul, but the devil counterfeiteth the dead to deceive the living: for souls departed the body cannot walk here on earth . . . neither doth He [God] suffer any of the dead to come again hither” (43-44).

Source:

Thomas Cranmer, *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*, ed. John Hammond Cox. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1846. pp. 43-44.

4. Sigmund Freud *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900)

Source: Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Avon, New York: 1965

The play is built up on Hamlet's hesitations over fulfilling the task of revenge that is assigned to him; but its text offers no reasons or motives for these hesitations and an immense variety of attempts at interpreting them have failed to produce a result.

What is it, then, that inhibits him in fulfilling the task set him by his father's ghost? The answer, once again, is that it is the peculiar nature of the task. Hamlet is able to do anything—except take vengeance on the man who did away with his father and took that father's place with his mother, the man who shows him the repressed wishes of childhood realized. Thus the loathing which should drive him on to revenge is replaced in him by self-reproaches, by scruples of conscience, which remind him that he himself is literally no better than the sinner whom he is to punish. (299)

Note: We disagree, but many 20th century productions were built upon Freud's reasoning.

5. From: Harold Bloom. *Hamlet: Poem Unlimited*.
New York: Riverhead Books, 2003.

But for the ghost's second appearance, we wonder if Hamlet *would* murder Gertrude, as Nero executed his mother, Agrippina, who had poisoned her husband, another Claudius.

In the event he assuages his rage by manslaughter, skewering Polonius through a curtain, but the thrust is a displacement of his true will, which is to immolate Gertrude.

Despite the urgings of Freud, and of his hagiographer Ernest Jones, ***there are no traces of Oedipus in Hamlet*** [my emphasis] (54).

6. Quotations from the play showing Hamlet`s
uncertainty about the Ghost.

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
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. (1.4.39-44).

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? (1.4.69-74).

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. (2.2.610-615).

7. Here are James I's precepts for proper behavior when confronted by spirits.

Hobb Christian men ought to behaue themselues vvhen they see spirites, and first that they ought to haue a good courage, and to be stedfast in fayth.

First we ought to be of good courage without feare, being assured & constante in true faith. (James VI. 191)

We ought, not without greate cause, to suspecte all Spirites, and other apparitions. For albeit God dothe vse the helpe and seruice of good Angels, for the perseruacion of his electe, yet notwithstanding in these our dayes they appeare vnto vs very seldome (196).

Enter into no communication with suche spirites, neither aske them what thou must giue, or what thou must doo, or what shal happen hereafter. Aske them not who they are, or why they haue presented themselves to bee seene or hearde. For if they be good, they will lyke it well that thou wilt heare nothing but the woorde of God: but yf they be wicked, they wyll endeuour to deceyue thee with lying (196).

Wee must not giue eare vnto them, muche lesse ought we to coniure them to tell vs the truth. God commaunded in his lawe, (as we haue oftentimes sayde before) that no man should enquire any thing of the dead (197).

James Stuart. (King James VI of Scotland and in 1603, King James I of England) *Daemonologie*. 1597.

Characters

The Ghost	of Hamlet's father, previous King of Denmark and husband to Gertrude
Hamlet	Prince of Denmark, child of the late King Hamlet and Queen Gertrude
Queen Gertrude	Widow of King Hamlet, now married to Claudius
King Claudius	Brother to the late King Hamlet
Ophelia	Hamlet's (sometimes) love interest
Laertes	Ophelia's brother
Lady Polonia	Mother of Ophelia and Laertes, councillor to King Claudius
Horatio	Hamlet's friend and confidant
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern	Long-time friends of Hamlet, now taking orders from the King
Bernardo and Marcellus	Sentries, and friends of Hamlet and Horatio
Players	Traveling actors
Osric	A messenger of the court

Synopsis

Adapted from *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, edited by Barbara A. Mowatt and Paul Werstine. New York: Washington Square Press New Folger Edition, 1992 to fit Shakespeare in the Ruins' 2019 production.

On the guard's platform at Elsinore, Horatio waits with Bernardo and Marcellus to question a ghost that has twice before appeared. The Ghost, in the form of the late King Hamlet of Denmark, appears but will not speak. Horatio decides to tell his fellow student, Prince Hamlet, about the Ghost's appearance.

In an audience chamber in Elsinore, Claudius, the new king of Denmark, holds court. After thanking his subjects for their recent support, he gives Laertes permission to return to France but denies Hamlet's request to return to the university in Wittenberg. Hamlet, mourning for his father's death, is left alone to vent his despair at what he regards as his mother's all too hasty marriage to his uncle, Claudius. The audience learns that the marriage took place "within a month" of the former king's death. Horatio, Bernardo, and Marcellus arrive and tell Hamlet about the Ghost. Hamlet, aroused by the news, agrees to join them that night.

Laertes says good-bye to his sister, Ophelia, and tells her not to trust Hamlet's promises of love. Polonia joins them, sends Laertes off, then echoes Laertes's warning to Ophelia, finally ordering her not to see Hamlet again.

Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus are visited by the Ghost. It signals to Hamlet. Hamlet's friends try to stop him from following the Ghost, but Hamlet will not be held back.

The Ghost tells Hamlet a tale of horror. Saying that he is the spirit of Hamlet's father, he demands that Hamlet avenge King Hamlet's murder at the hands of Claudius. Hamlet, horrified, vows to "remember" and swears his friends to secrecy about what they have seen.

Ophelia is deeply disturbed by a visit she has just had from an apparently mad Hamlet. Polonia decides that Hamlet has become insane because Ophelia is refusing to see him.

Claudius and Gertrude set Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two boyhood friends of Hamlet, to spy on him to discover the cause of his apparent madness. Polonia continues to believe that Hamlet is mad for love. Claudius is not persuaded but agrees to join Polonia in spying on Hamlet.

Hamlet himself is confronted first by Polonia and then by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, whom he quickly identifies as Claudius's spies. As they talk, a company of touring actors enters. Hamlet persuades one of them to deliver a speech, and recognizes, to his shame, that he has shown less intensity in avenging his father's murder than the actor has done in performance. Hamlet hopes that, when the players

stage *The Murder of Gonzago* for the court, he can determine whether Claudius is guilty of King Hamlet's death.

With the cause of Hamlet's madness still in question, Polonia places Ophelia where she and Claudius can secretly observe a meeting between Ophelia and Hamlet. Hamlet is at first courteous to Ophelia, but suddenly he turns on her: he denies having loved her, asks where her father is, attacks womankind, and tells her she should enter a nunnery. (This section is often referred to as "The Nunnery Scene".) After Hamlet exits, Claudius decides that Hamlet's erratic behaviour is not caused by love and announces a plan to send Hamlet on an embassy to England. Polonia persuades Claudius to take no action until Gertrude talks with Hamlet after the play, which is scheduled for that evening.

Hamlet gives direction to the actors and asks Horatio to help him observe Claudius's reaction to the play, which includes many elements of Claudius's alleged seduction of Gertrude and murder of King Hamlet. At the moment that the Player King is murdered in his garden by his nephew, Claudius stops the play and rushes out. Hamlet is exuberant that the Ghost's word has been proved true. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern return to tell Hamlet that Claudius is furious and that Gertrude wishes to see Hamlet at once in her sitting room. Hamlet promises himself that he will not harm her, though he will "speak daggers."

Claudius orders Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to take Hamlet to England immediately. Polonia arrives to tell Claudius of her plans to spy on Hamlet's conversation with Gertrude. Left alone, Claudius reveals to the audience his remorse for killing his brother, and he tries to pray. Hamlet comes upon him kneeling and draws a weapon, but then stops to think that if he kills Claudius at prayer, Claudius will go to heaven. Hamlet decides to kill Claudius when the king is committing a sin so that Claudius will instead go to hell. After Hamlet leaves, Claudius rises, saying that he has been unable to pray.

In Gertrude's room, Polonia hides behind a tapestry. Hamlet's entrance so alarms Gertrude that she cries out for help. Polonia echoes her cry, and Hamlet, thinking Polonius to be Claudius, stabs him to death. Hamlet then verbally attacks his mother for marrying Claudius. In the middle of Hamlet's attack, the Ghost returns to remind Hamlet that his real purpose is to avenge his father's death. Gertrude cannot see the Ghost and pities Hamlet's apparent madness. After the Ghost exits, Hamlet urges Gertrude to abandon Claudius's bed. He then tells her about Claudius's plan to send him to England and reveals his suspicions that the journey is a plot against him, which he resolves to counter violently. He exits dragging out Polonius's body. (This is often referred to as the "Queen's Closet Scene".)

Gertrude reports Polonia's death to Claudius, who sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to find Hamlet and recover the body. Hamlet refuses to tell Rosencrantz and Guildenstern where he has put Polonia's body.

Hamlet is brought to Claudius, who tells him that he is to leave immediately for England.

Reports reach Gertrude that Ophelia is mad. Ophelia enters singing about death and betrayal. After Ophelia has gone, Claudius agonizes over her madness and over the stir created by the return of an angry Laertes. When Laertes breaks in on Claudius and Gertrude, Claudius asserts his innocence with regard to Polonia's death. The reappearance of the mad Ophelia is devastating to Laertes.

Claudius, in conversation with Laertes, gets a letter from Hamlet announcing the prince's return. Claudius enlists Laertes' willing help in devising another plot against Hamlet's life. Laertes agrees to kill Hamlet with a poisoned rapier in a fencing match. If he fails, Claudius will give Hamlet a poisoned cup of wine. Gertrude interrupts their plotting to announce that Ophelia has drowned.

Hamlet, returned from his journey, enters a graveyard with Horatio where a gravedigger is singing as he digs. Hamlet tries to find out who the grave is for and meditates on the skulls that are being dug up. A funeral procession approaches. Hamlet soon realizes that the corpse is Ophelia's. When Laertes in his grief leaps into her grave and curses Hamlet as the cause of Ophelia's death, Hamlet comes forward. He and Laertes struggle, with Hamlet protesting his own love and grief for Ophelia.

Hamlet tells Horatio how he discovered the king's plot against him and how he turned the tables on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Osric enters to ask, on Claudius's behalf, that Hamlet fence with Laertes. Hamlet agrees to the contest, despite his misgivings.

Hamlet is winning the match when Gertrude drinks from the poisoned cup that Claudius has prepared for Hamlet. Laertes then wounds Hamlet with the poisoned rapier. In the scuffle that follows, Hamlet forces an exchange of rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes. As Gertrude dies, Laertes, himself dying, discloses his and Claudius's plot against Hamlet. Hamlet kills Claudius. Before Hamlet dies, he asks Horatio to tell the full story that has led to these deaths and names Fortinbras heir to the Danish throne.

Before the Play...

Here are some questions and ideas for students to talk about in pairs or small groups, or to write about in a journal, and then to share in class if they (and you) are comfortable:

Do you believe in ghosts? People in Shakespeare's audiences did, but they couldn't be sure of whether the ghost was actually a loved one coming from Purgatory to warn them or to complete some unfinished business, or whether the ghost was a demon in disguise, trying to create chaos in the world for his boss, the devil. Can you imagine Hamlet's dilemma when the supposed ghost of his dead father tells him to "*revenge his foul and most unnatural murder*" (1.5.31)?

Imagine: You really like this boy, but your brother (or sister) has warned you that he has "other" things on his mind, and your mother or father has told you to return all his letters and gifts. What would you do?

Imagine: You really like this girl, but in order to continue your secret investigation into your father's death, you need to pretend that you're crazy and so you tell her that you never really loved her at all. What would you do?

Imagine: You are really, REALLY, **REALLY** mad at your mother for re-marrying so soon after your father's death, but your father's ghost has told you not to harm her. What would you do?

How much do the actions and behaviours of our parents influence and impact upon us?

This play has a lot to do with mortality and sense of self. Think about what those ideas mean, and keep them in mind as motifs as you watch the play.

After the Play...

1. Reflect on the experience of the theatre production. Was it what you expected? Were the characters as you imagined they would be? What are some of the changes you noticed between the performance and the text you read? Why do you think the director might have made these changes? If you had a chance to act in this production, which character(s) would you have liked to play? Why? If you were directing, would you have done anything differently?

2. Write a review. The theatre company *love* to receive feedback from students and their teachers. Address your letters to: Artistic Director, Shakespeare In The Ruins, Unit Y 300-393 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3G 3H6.
If you'd rather, send them by email to: ad@sirmb.ca

3. Read and discuss the poem. Might this relate to the way in which Hamlet sees the world?

The Second Coming WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

Source: *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (1989)

Found at <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43290/the-second-coming>

4. Stylistic Analysis. The soliloquies are perfect for writing essays of stylistic analysis. This is especially useful for those students who plan to take the Advanced Placement English Literature exam. This first one works especially well:

After reading the soliloquy below write an analysis in which you demonstrate how effectively stylistic devices convey the speaker's attitude and/or his meaning. Stylistic devices include: shifts in tone, imagery, figures of speech, contrast, repetition, diction, sentence structure, and other rhetorical techniques.

O, that this too too sullied flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God, God,
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable 5
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; 10
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, 15
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on, and yet, within a month—
Let me not think on't-- Frailty, thy name is woman!
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body, 20
Like Niobe, all tears; -- why she, even she, --
O God! a beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourn'd longer, -- married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules; within a month, 25
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married;-- O most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to good; 30
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue!

5. Follow up by looking at some of the online resources that are in this guide. Most of the textual sites are quite academic. The videos are a combination of serious (excerpts from films and interviews) and downright silly (ie, Rowan Atkinson and Hugh Laurie).

Resources Available Online

TEXTUAL LINKS

The following list of websites for finding primary and secondary documents is from the article, "Whose Ghost Is It, Anyway? Teaching Shakespeare Using Primary Documents" by Sheridan Steelman in the *English Journal* (published by National Council of Teachers of English, November 2018).

Folger Shakespeare Library (www.folger.edu/research-scholars) At this site be sure to check out Hamnet, Folgerpedia, LUNA, EMMO & EMED.

Shakespeare Documented: Online exhibition documenting Shakespeare in his own time (www.shakespearedocumented.org)

Chicago Shakespeare Theater: Teacher handbooks for each play; essays on Elizabethan England (www.chicagoshakes.com/education)

The National Archives UK: Primary documents, external links on documents on The Globe, Shakespeare's birthplace, and the plays (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/william-shakespeare/)

Shakespeare Documents: Collection of themed, excerpted documents on *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (www.Shakespearedocuments.info)

96 Incredibly Useful Links for Teaching and Studying Shakespeare: The documents include biographical, lesson plans, historical/cultural, articles, currency, quizzes, sonnet of the day (www.tinyurl.com/c6f5955)

Shakespeare Resource Center: Historical links; authorship debate; old, middle, early-modern, and modern language (www.bardweb.net/england.html)

VIDEO LINKS

There are many excerpts and related videos available on youtube and other internet sites. These are some of my favourites.

The nunnery scene with Kenneth Branagh
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PcUQyXNYe0>

The nunnery scene with Mel Gibson
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fO-wxlavDQI>

Henri Le Chat films - perhaps you have heard of them? Students and teachers will get a kick out of watching them after studying *Hamlet*. They all feature a cat who analyzes his melancholia. All the films are under 5 minutes, and this first one is only 2 1/2 minutes.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0M7ibPk37_U

David Tennant (Dr. Who) on playing Hamlet

https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-pty-pty_extension&hsimp=yhs-pty_extension&hspart=pty&p=david+tennant+hamlet+scenes+from+the+play#id=2&vid=190cc0d1e49792d329ae3eae01a021b&action=click

David Tennant's Coward soliloquy

https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-pty-pty_extension&hsimp=yhs-pty_extension&hspart=pty&p=david+tennant+hamlet+scenes+from+the+play#id=4&vid=c8e3a7cc5987a3e2be76c7bf55a57fdd&action=view

Hamlet (David Tennant) confronts his mother

https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-pty-pty_extension&hsimp=yhs-pty_extension&hspart=pty&p=david+tennant+hamlet+scenes+from+the+play#id=10&vid=4acc8954442d04f3f1196a07f11040a4&action=view

O what a rogue and peasant slave am I (David Tennant)

https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-pty-pty_extension&hsimp=yhs-pty_extension&hspart=pty&p=david+tennant+hamlet+scenes+from+the+play#id=28&vid=9669daae1746c3d55c23b44aaf4b7f37&action=view

David Tennant talking about Hamlet's "To be or not to be" monologue

https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-pty-pty_extension&hsimp=yhs-pty_extension&hspart=pty&p=david+tennant+hamlet+scenes+from+the+play#id=44&vid=88e1115755d98dd4810585a5ed0d87bc&action=view

David Tennant explains why Shakespeare still matters

https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-pty-pty_extension&hsimp=yhs-pty_extension&hspart=pty&p=david+tennant+hamlet+scenes+from+the+play#id=109&vid=d6a6b0453486c3f9d75c96ecf9f844c3&action=view

Rowan Atkinson and Hugh Laurie, a skit called "A Small Rewrite" about Shakespeare and Hamlet. This bit is quite old, but it still makes me laugh.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvaUwagX_uU

Reading the Play Aloud

Nothing takes the place of actually reading the play, and the best way for students to do this is to get up on their feet! However, if you don't have time to read it all, here are enough excerpts to get a really good sense of the story. These are taken directly from the Director's cut.

In this SIR production, the first speaker is Horatio, the story-teller from whose perspective we view all the action. Hamlet, Laertes, Gertrude and Claudius are already dead. The Prologue here is one of the very last speeches in the traditional version of the play.

PROLOGUE

HORATIO enters – he addresses the audience.

HORATIO

We here arrive / give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view (*the acting company gathers*)
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about / so shall you hear
Of carnal bloody and unnatural acts
Of accidental judgements casual slaughters
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause And in this outcome purposes mistook
Fallen on the inventors' heads / all this can I
Truly deliver...

Following the Prologue, the SIR cut includes these notes from the Director:

Change. We are partying at Wittenberg University. Horatio, Hamlet and Ophelia are besties. It's the world before darkness. It's loud and carefree...until we get the news of the Death of King Hamlet...the picture starts to dissolve...Hamlet runs away, followed by Ophelia...Horatio observes...music...a chorus "and will he not come again?" plays on...as Horatio changes bits of his costume in front of the audience...we are entering a different world - as he changes:

HORATIO

Let this old play be presently performed
Even while men's minds are wild lest more mischance
On plots and errors unfold
Let soldier's music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for Hamlet Prince of Denmark

At Elsinore, Marcellus, Bernardo and Horatio wait nervously to see if the ghost will appear.

MARCELLUS

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

HORATIO

It will not appear.

BERNARDO

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

Enter GHOST

MARCELLUS

Peace break thee off / look where it comes again

BERNARDO

Thou art a scholar / speak to it Horatio

MARCELLUS

Looks it not like the king? mark it Horatio

HORATIO

Most like

BERNARDO

It would be spoke to

MARCELLUS

Question it Horatio

HORATIO

What art thou that usurp'st this time of night
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark

Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee speak

MARCELLUS

It is offended

BERNARDO

See it stalks away

Stay / speak speak / I charge thee speak

The ghost bears a likeness to Old King Hamlet but cannot be made to speak. It disappears, leaving the three to wonder about what they really saw. And then it returns... but only briefly. They decide that young Hamlet must be told about this.

MARCELLUS

But soft / look 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 thou art privy to thy country's fate

Which happily foreknowing may avoid

O speak

BERNARDO

'Tis here

HORATIO

'Tis here

MARCELLUS 'Tis gone

Exit GHOST

HORATIO

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 it I pray and I this morning know

Where we shall find him most conveniently

There is a celebration at the palace, and all the main characters are in attendance. King Claudius behaves as if everything is right with the world. Hamlet, of course, does not agree.

KING CLAUDIUS

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him
Together with remembrance of ourselves
Therefore our sometime sister now our queen
The imperial jointress to this warlike state
Have we as 'twere with a defeated joy
With one auspicious and one dropping eye
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage
In equal scale weighing delight and dole
Taken to wife / nor have we herein barred
Your better wisdoms which have freely gone
With this affair along / for all our thanks /

After Claudius gives Laertes permission to leave Elsinore, Hamlet speaks up in a way that troubles his mother and step-father.

KING CLAUDIUS

Take thy fair hour Laertes / time be thine
And thy best graces spend it at thy will
But now my cousin Hamlet and my son

HAMLET

A little more than kin and less than kind

KING CLAUDIUS

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET

Not so my lord / I am too much in the sun

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Good Hamlet cast thy nighted colour off

And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark
Do not for ever with thy veiled lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust
Thou know'st 'tis common / all that lives must die
Passing through nature to eternity

HAMLET

Ay madam it is common

QUEEN GERTRUDE

If it be
Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET

Seems madam / nay it is / I know not 'seems'
'Tis not alone my inky cloak good mother
Nor customary suits of solemn black
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath
Together with all forms moods shapes of grief
That can denote me truly / these indeed seem
For they are actions that a man might play
But I have that within which passeth show
These / but the trappings and the suits of woe

KING CLAUDIUS

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature Hamlet
To give these mourning duties to your father
But you must know your father lost a father
That father lost lost his and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term
To do obsequious sorrow / but to persever
In obstinate condolment is a course
Of impious stubbornness / 'tis unmanly grief
A fault against the dead / a fault to nature
To reason most absurd whose common theme
Is death of fathers / we pray you throw to earth
This unprevailing woe and think of us
As of a father / for let the world take note
You are the most immediate to our throne
For your intent in going back to school
It is quite contrary to our desire
And we beseech you bend you to remain
Here / in the cheer and comfort of our eye

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Let not thy mother lose her prayers Hamlet

I pray thee stay with us go not to Wittenberg

HAMLET

I shall in all my best obey you madam

KING CLAUDIUS

Why 'tis a loving and a fair reply
Be as ourself in Denmark / madam come

Exeunt all but HAMLET

Hamlet is depressed. His father is dead and his mother quickly re-married his uncle. The world seems to be a rotten place. This is the first great soliloquy of the play, ending when Ophelia appears.

HAMLET

O that this too too solid flesh would melt
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon against 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 / 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 even she
O god a beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourned longer / married with my uncle
My father's brother / but no more like my father
Than I to hercules / within a month
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes
She married / o most wicked speed to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets
It is not nor it cannot come to good
But break my heart for I must hold my tongue

Before he leaves town, Laertes gives some advice to his sister, Ophelia, who he knows has been seeing Hamlet.

LAERTES

For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood
A violet in the youth of poetic nature
Forward / not permanent / sweet / not lasting
The perfume and suppliance of a minute / no more

OPHELIA

No more but so?

LAERTES

Think it no more
Perhaps he loves you now / but you must fear
His greatness weighed / his will is not his own
For he himself is subject to his birth
He may not as unvalued persons do
Choose for himself / for on his choice depends
The safety and health of this whole state
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain
If with too trusting ear you hear his songs
Or lose your heart or your chaste treasure open
To his unmastered importunity
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
While like a puffed and reckless libertine
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
And ignores his own advice

LAERTES I stay too long / but here my mother comes

Lady Polonia appears with some advice for her son.

LADY POLONIA

Yet here Laertes? aboard aboard for shame

There / my blessing with thee (*she gives him some money...*)
And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou character / give thy thoughts no tongue
Nor any unproportioned thought his act
Be thou familiar but by no means vulgar
Those friends thou hast and their adoption tried
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel
Beware of entrance to a quarrel but being in
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee
Give every man thy ear but few thy voice
Take each man's censure but reserve thy judgment
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy
But not expressed in fancy / rich not gaudy
Neither a borrower nor a lender be
This above all / to thine own self be true
And it must follow as the night the day
Thou canst not then be false to any man
Farewell / my blessing season this in thee

When Laertes has gone, Lady Polonia gets Ophelia to tell her about her relationship with Hamlet, then offers some advice.

LADY POLONIA

'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 mother of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me

LADY POLONIA

Affection pooh you speak like a green girl Do you believe his tenders as you call them?

OPHELIA

I do not know mother what I should think

LADY POLONIA

Marry I'll teach you / think yourself a baby
That you have taken these tenders for true pay
Which are not sterling / tender yourself more dearly
Or not to crack the wind of the poor phrase
Running it thus / you'll tender me a fool

OPHELIA

My lady he hath importuned me with love
In honourable fashion

LADY POLONIA

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 / in short Ophelia
Do not believe his vows / lord Hamlet
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
Look to it I charge you / come your ways

OPHELIA I shall obey mother

HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO catch up with **HAMLET**. They've been looking for him to tell him about the ghost they've seen.

HAMLET

I am very glad to see you / good even sir But what in faith make you from Wittenberg?

HORATIO

My lord I came to see your father's funeral

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

Indeed my lord it followed hard upon

HAMLET

Thrift thrift Horatio / the funeral baked meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables
My father / methinks I see my father

HORATIO

Where my lord?

HAMLET

In my mind's eye Horatio

HORATIO

I saw him once / he was a goodly king

HAMLET

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

HORATIO

My lord I think I saw him yesternight
Saw? who?

HORATIO

My lord the king your father

HAMLET

The king my father

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

For god's love let me hear

HORATIO

Two nights together had these gentlemen
Marcellus and Bernardo on their watch
Been thus encountered / a figure like your father
Appears before them / and with solemn march Goes slow by / I the third night kept the
watch
With them / and the apparition came
I knew your father / these hands are not more like

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 honoured lord 'tis true

Saw you his face?

HORATIO

A countenance more in sorrow than in anger

HAMLET

I will watch tonight
Perchance 'twill walk again

HORATIO

I warrant it will

HAMLET

If it assume my noble father's person
I'll speak to it though hell itself should gape
I'll visit you / so go your ways till night

Exeunt all but HAMLET

HAMLET

I fear some foul play / would the night were come
Till then sit still my soul / foul deeds will rise

Exit HAMLET

The king and queen are worried about Hamlet's behaviour, and they enlist the help of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two childhood friends, to find out what's going on.

KING CLAUDIUS

Welcome dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern
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 what he was / I entreat you both
That being of so young days brought up with him

To draw him on to pleasures and to gather
So much as from occasion you may glean
Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus
That opened lies within our remedy

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Good Guildenstern he hath much talked of you
And sure I am two friends there are not living
To whom he more adheres / if it will please you
To show us so much gentry and good will
As to expend your time with us awhile
For the supply and profit of our hope
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king's remembrance

ROSENCRANTZ

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

GUILDENSTERN

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

KING CLAUDIUS

Thanks Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Thanks Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son

GUILDENSTERN

Heavens make our presence and our practices
Pleasant and helpful to him

QUEEN GERTRUDE Ay amen

HAMLET, HORATIO, MARCELLUS and BERNARDO are gathered to wait for the ghost to reappear. It does not disappoint them.

HORATIO Look my lord it comes

HAMLET

Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned
I'll call thee Hamlet royal dane king father / O answer me / say why is this? wherefore?
What should we do?

Ghost beckons HAMLET

HORATIO

It beckons you to go away with it

MARCELLUS

But do not go with it

BERNARDO

Do not my lord

HAMLET

Why what should be the fear?

HORATIO

What if it tempt you toward the summit of the cliff
And there assume some other horrible form Which might deprive your sovereignty of
reason And draw you into madness?

HAMLET

It waves me still

MARCELLUS

You shall not go my lord

HAMLET

Hold off your hands

HORATIO

Be ruled / you shall not go

HAMLET

My fate cries out (*in the struggle Hamlet grabs a gun from one of the guys*) By heaven
I'll make a ghost of him that stops me
I say away / get thee away / go / go

Hamlet and the ghost are alone, and the ghost tells him a horrifying story.

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

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

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 it that I with wings as swift

As meditation or the thoughts of love
May sweep to my revenge

GHOST

Now Hamlet hear
'Tis given out that sleeping in my orchard
A serpent stung me / so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abused / but know thou noble youth
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown

HAMLET

O my prophetic soul my uncle

GHOST

Ay that incestuous that adulterate beast
With witchcraft of his wit with traitorous gifts
O wicked wit and gifts that have the power
So to seduce / won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen
But brief let me be / sleeping within my orchard
My custom always of the afternoon
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole
With juice of cursed poison in a vial
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leprous distilment whose effect
Holds such an enmity with the state of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body
Thus was I sleeping by a brother's hand
Of life of crown of queen at once dispatched
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin
O horrible o horrible most horrible
If thou hast nature in thee bear it not
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest
But howsoever you pursue this act
Taint not thy mind / nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught / leave her to heaven
Adieu adieu Hamlet remember me

Exits GHOST

Hamlet swears to avenge his father's death.

HAMLET

O all you host of heaven o earth what else?
Hold hold my heart / remember thee
Ay thou poor ghost while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe / remember thee
Yea from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records
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 damned villain
Meet it is I set it down
That one may smile and smile and be a villain
At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark
So uncle there you are / now to my word
It is adieu adieu remember me
I have sworn't / so be it

Hamlet's buddies return and ask about the encounter with the ghost.

MARCELLUS

How is't my noble lord?

HORATIO

What news my lord?

HAMLET

O wonderful

HORATIO

Good my lord tell it

HAMLET

It is an honest ghost that let me tell you
And now good friends give me one poor request

HORATIO

What is it my lord? we will

HAMLET

Never make known what you have seen tonight

HORATIO MARCELLUS BERNARDO

My lord / we will not / no

HAMLET

Nay but swear

GHOST (OFF)

Swear

HORATIO

O day and night but this is wondrous strange

HAMLET

And therefore as a stranger give it welcome
There are more things in heaven and earth Horatio
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy / but come
Here as before never so help you mercy
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself
As I perchance hereafter shall think it meet
To put an antic disposition on
That you at such times seeing me never shall
With arms encumbered thus or this headshake
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase
That you know aught of me / this not to do

HORATIO MARCELLUS BERNARDO

I swear

HAMLET

Rest rest perturbed spirit
The time is out of joint / o cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right

Exits HAMLET

HORATIO

He waxes desperate with imagination.

MARCELLUS

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark

Ophelia is obviously upset and approaches her mother.

LADY POLONIA

How now / Ophelia / what's the matter?

OPHELIA

O mother mother I have been so affrighted

LADY POLONIA

With what in the name of god?

OPHELIA

Lord Hamlet

Pale as his shirt / his knees knocking each other

And with a look so piteous in purport

As if he had been loosed out of hell

To speak of horrors he comes before me

LADY POLONIA

Mad for thy love?

OPHELIA

My lady I do not know

But truly I do fear it

LADY POLONIA

What said he?

OPHELIA

He took me by the wrist and held me hard

Then goes he to the length of all his arm

And with his other hand thus o'er his brow

He falls to such perusal of my face

As he would draw it / long stayed 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 of doors he went without their help

And to the last bended their light on me

LADY POLONIA

Come go with me / I will go seek the king
This is the very ecstasy of love
I am sorry
What have you given him any hard words of late?

OPHELIA

No my good lady but as you did command
I denied his access to me

LADY POLONIA

That hath made him mad / o I am sorry
This must be known / come go we to the king

Exeunt.

Lady Polonia is sure she has the answer to Hamlet's unusual behaviour, and she takes Ophelia with her to see the king and queen.

LADY POLONIA

I assure my good liege
I hold my duty as I hold my soul
And I do think that I have found indeed
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy

KING CLAUDIUS

O speak of that that do I long to hear

QUEEN GERTRUDE

I doubt it is no other but the main
His father's death and our overhasty marriage

LADY POLONIA

My liege and madam to expostulate
What majesty should be what duty is
Why day is day night night and time is time
Were nothing but to waste night day and time
Therefore since brevity is the soul of wit
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes
I will be brief / your noble son is mad Mad call I it for to define true madness What is't
but to be nothing else but mad?
But let that go

QUEEN GERTRUDE

More matter with less art

LADY POLONIA

Madam I swear I use no art at all
Mad let us grant him then / and now remains
That we find out the cause of this effect
Or rather say the cause of this defect
For this effect defective comes by cause
Thus it remains and the remainder thus / Perpend
I have a daughter / have while she is mine
Who in her duty and obedience mark
Hath given me this / now gather and surmise

Reads

'To the celestial and my soul's idol the most beautified Ophelia'
That's an ill phrase a vile phrase 'beautified' is a vile phrase but you shall hear thus

Reads

'In her excellent white bosom'

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Came this from Hamlet to her?

LADY POLONIA Good madam stay awhile / I will be faithful

Reads

'Doubt thou the stars are fire
Doubt that the sun doth move
Doubt truth to be a liar
But never doubt I love
O dear Ophelia I am ill at these numbers
I have not art to reckon my groans but that
I love thee best o most best believe it / adieu Thine evermore most dear lady whilst this
machine is to him Hamlet'

This in obedience hath my daughter shown me

KING CLAUDIUS

But how hath she received his love?

LADY POLONIA

What do you think of me?

KING CLAUDIUS

As of a lady faithful and honourable

LADY POLONIA

I would fain prove so / but what might you think
When I had seen this hot love on the wing
What might you think? no I went round to work
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak
'Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy star
This must not be' and then I precepts gave her
That she should lock herself from his resort
Receive no tokens / she took my advice
And he repulsed fell into a sadness
Then into a fast thence into a weakness
And into the madness wherein now he raves

Claudius and Gertrude are not totally convinced of Polonia's explanation, so they agree to a scheme concocted by Polonia to find out for sure.

As Hamlet draws near, Ophelia and her mom hide and observe.

Hamlet is distraught.

HAMLET

To be or not to be that is the question
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them? to die to sleep
No more and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to / 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd / to die to sleep
To sleep perchance to dream / ay there's the rub
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil
Must give us pause / there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time
The oppressor's wrong / the proud man's contumely
The pangs of despised love / the law's delay
The insolence of office and the spurns

That patient merit of the unworthy takes
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would burdens bear
To grunt and sweat under a weary life
But that the dread of something after death
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveller returns puzzles the will And makes us rather bear those ills we have Than
fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry

Lady Polonia and Ophelia surprise Hamlet and the situation is quite awkward.

HAMLET

Have you a daughter?

LADY POLONIA

...I have my lord

HAMLET

Let her not walk in the sun / conception is a blessing but not as your daughter may
conceive /
Friend look to it

LADY POLONIA

How say you by that? still harping on you Ophelia
He is far gone far gone / and truly in my youth
I suffered much extremity for love very near this / I'll speak to him again /
What do you read my lord?

HAMLET

Words words words

LADY POLONIA

What is the matter my lord?

HAMLET

Between who?

LADY POLONIA

I mean the matter that you read my lord

HAMLET

Slanders ma'am for the satirical rogue says that You shall grow old as I am if like a crab
you could go backward

LADY POLONIA

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

HAMLET

Into my grave

LADY POLONIA Indeed that is out of the air

To Ophelia

How pregnant sometimes his replies are / a happiness that often madness hits on / we
will leave him and contrive the means of meeting between him and you / my honourable
lord I will most humbly take my leave of you

HAMLET

You cannot ma'am take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal (*here he
finally looks at Ophelia*)
Except my life / except my life / except my life

LADY POLONIA

Fare you well my lord

HAMLET These tedious old fools

ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN show up. Hamlet is suspicious of their intentions.

HAMLET

What's the news?

ROSENCRANTZ

None my lord but that the world's grown honest

HAMLET

Then is doomsday near / but your news is not true let me question more in particular / what have you my good friends deserved at the hands of fortune that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN

Prison my lord?

HAMLET

Denmark's a prison

ROSENCRANTZ

Then is the world one
A goodly one in which there are many confines
wards and dungeons / Denmark being one of the worst

ROSENCRANTZ

We think not so my lord

HAMLET

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

ROSENCRANTZ

Why then your ambition makes it one / 'tis too narrow for your mind

HAMLET

O god I could be bounded in a nut shell and count myself a king of infinite space were it not that I have bad dreams / but in the beaten way of friendship what make you at Elsinore?

ROSENCRANTZ

To visit you my lord / no other occasion

HAMLET

Beggar that I am I am even poor in thanks but I thank you / were you not sent for? is it your own inclining? is it a free visitation? Come deal justly with me come come nay speak

GUILDENSTERN

What should we say my lord?

HAMLET

I know the good king and queen have sent for you

ROSENCRANTZ

To what end my lord?

HAMLET

That you must teach me

ROSENCRANTZ

[*Aside to GUILDENSTERN*] What say you?

HAMLET

If you love me hold not off

GUILDENSTERN

My lord we were sent for

Hamlet explains why they were sent for.

HAMLET

I will tell you why / I have of late but wherefore I know not lost all my mirth / forgone all custom of exercises and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile promontory / this most excellent canopy the air look you this brave o'erhanging firmament / this majestic roof fretted with golden fire / why it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours / what a piece of work is a man / how noble in reason how infinite in faculty / in form and moving how express and admirable / in action how like an angel / in apprehension how like a god / the beauty of the world / the paragon of animals / and yet to me what is this? quintessence of dust / man delights not me / no nor woman neither though by your smiling you seem to say so

**The PLAYERS come to Elsinore, and Hamlet could not be more delighted!
Hamlet has the Player King perform a favourite speech.**

HAMLET

You are welcome masters welcome all /

I am glad to see thee well / welcome good friends / what my young lady and mistress? / o my old friend / (*Hamlet notices how alike the Player King and the Ghost are...*) we'll have a speech straight / come give us a taste of your quality / come a passionate speech

PLAYER KING

What speech my lord?

HAMLET

I heard thee speak me a speech once but it was never acted / 'twas Aeneas tale To
Dido and especially where he speaks Of Priam's slaughter / if it live in your memory
Begin at this line / let me see let me see 'the rugged Pyrrhus he whose sable arms
Black as his purpose did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse
With blood of fathers mothers daughters sons
Baked and impasted with the parching streets
With eyes like carbuncles the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks'
So proceed you

PLAYER KING

'Anon he finds him
Striking too short at Greeks / unequal matched
Pyrrhus at Priam drives / in rage strikes wide
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerved father falls / but now his sword
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam seemed in the air to stick
So as a painted tyrant Pyrrhus stood
And like a neutral to his will and matter
Did nothing
But as we often see before 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 roused vengeance sets him new a-work
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour forged for proof eterne
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam
Out out thou strumpet fortune / all you gods
In general synod 'take away her power

Exit POLONIUS with all the Players but the Player King, of whom Hamlet has a special request.

HAMLET

Dost thou hear me old friend / can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

PLAYER KING

Ay my lord

HAMLET

We'll have it tomorrow night / you could for a need study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines which I would set down and insert in it / could you not?

PLAYER KING

Ay my lord

HAMLET Very well

Exit PLAYER KING

Alone once again, Hamlet wrestles with the opposing forces of desire for revenge and uncertainty. However, with the help of the Players, the truth about the role of Claudius in King Hamlet's death will be discovered.

Now I am alone

O what a rogue and peasant slave am I

Is it not monstrous that this player here

But in a fiction in a dream of passion

Could force his soul so to his own conceit

That from her working all his visage waned

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 appal the free

Confound the ignorant and amaze indeed The very faculties of eyes and ears / yet I

A dull and muddy-mettled rascal peak

Like John-a-dreams unpregnant of my cause

And can say nothing / no not for a king Upon whose property and most dear life A damned defeat was made / am I a coward?

Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?

Ha / I should take it for it cannot be

But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall

To make oppression bitter / bloody bawdy villain

Remorseless treacherous lecherous kindless villain

Why what an ass am I / this is most brave

That I the son of a dear father murdered
Must like a whore unpack my heart with words
And fall a-cursing like a very drab
Fie upon't foh / about my brain / I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that suddenly
They have proclaimed their malefactions
I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle / I'll observe his looks
I'll tent him to the quick / if he but blench
I know my course / the spirit that I have seen
May be the devil and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape yea and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy
As he is very potent with such spirits
Abuses me to damn me / I'll have grounds
More relative than this / the play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king

Hamlet is not the only one with a secret plan. Claudius, Gertrude and Polonia are still trying to discover whether Ophelia's rejection of Hamlet is the cause of Hamlet's melancholy. They decide to send Ophelia out so that Hamlet will "accidentally" stumble upon her. The King and Polonia will be watching from a hiding place.

LADY POLONIA

Ophelia walk you here / read on this book

Exit CLAUDIUS and POLONIA, hiding...

Enter HAMLET

HAMLET

The fair Ophelia / nymph in thy orisons
Be all my sins remembered

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

I humbly thank you well well well

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

No not I
I never gave you aught

OPHELIA

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

HAMLET

Are you honest?

OPHELIA

My lord?

HAMLET

Are you fair?

OPHELIA

What means your lordship?
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 / 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 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 we are arrant knaves all / believe
none of us Go thy ways to a nunnery / where's your mother?

OPHELIA

At home my lord

HAMLET

Let the doors be shut upon her that she may play the
fool no where but in her own house / farewell

OPHELIA

O help him / you sweet heavens
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

OPHELIA

O heavenly powers / restore him

HAMLET

I have heard of your paintings too well enough / god has given you one face and you
make yourselves another / go to I'll no more on't / it hath made me mad / I say we will
have no more marriages / those that are married already all but one shall live / the rest
shall keep as they are / to a
nunnery go

Exit HAMLET

OPHELIA

O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown
The courtier's soldier's scholar's eye tongue sword
The expectancy and rose of the fair state
The glass of fashion and the mould of form
The observed of all observers quite quite down
And I of ladies most deject and wretched
That sucked the honey of his music 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
To have seen what I have seen see what I see

Lady Polonia is convinced that Hamlet's problem is due to being rejected by Ophelia. The king is not so sure.

LADY POLONIA

It shall do well but yet do I believe The origin and commencement of his grief Sprung
from neglected love / how now Ophelia?
You need not tell us what lord Hamlet said
We heard it all / my lord do as you please
But if you hold it fit to show his grief
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
And I'll be placed so please you in the ear
Of all their conference / if she find him not
To England send him or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think

KING CLAUDIUS

It shall be so
Madness in great ones must not unwatched go

Following the script prepared by Hamlet, the Players perform for KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, POLONIA, OPHELIA and the audience in general...

PLAYER KING

Full thirty years have passed and summers green
And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands

PLAYER QUEEN

So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done
But woe is me you are so sick of late
So far from cheer and from your former state

PLAYER KING

'Faith I must leave thee love and shortly too
My operant powers their functions cease to do
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind
Honoured beloved and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou-

PLAYER QUEEN

-O confound the rest
Such love must needs be treason in my breast
In second husband let me be accurst
None wed the second but who 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

PLAYER KING

I do believe you think what now you speak
But what we do determine oft we break
Purpose is but the slave to memory
Of violent birth but poor validity
What to ourselves in passion we propose
The passion ending doth the purpose lose The world is not for ever / 'tis not strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change

PLAYER QUEEN

Nor earth to me give food nor heaven light
Sport and repose lock from me day and night
If once a widow ever I be wife

Player King sleeps / Player Queen moves away

HAMLET

Madam how like you this play?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

The lady doth protest too much methinks

KING CLAUDIUS

What do you call the play?

HAMLET

'the mousetrap'

PLAYER 3 approaches

PLAYER 3

Thoughts black hands apt drugs fit and time agreeing
Thou mixture rank of midnight weeds collected
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted thrice infected
Thy natural magic and dire property
On wholesome life usurp immediately

Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears

CLAUDIUS rises and leaves

Confusion. Horatio and Hamlet have a moment.

HAMLET

Didst perceive?

HORATIO

Very well my lord

Lady Polonia is sent to tell Hamlet that the Queen wants to see him.

HAMLET

God bless you lady

LADY POLONIA

My lord the queen would speak with you and
presently

HAMLET

Then I will come to my mother by and by

LADY POLONIA

I will say so

HAMLET

'By and by' is easily said
Leave me / friends

Exeunt all but HAMLET

HAMLET

Soft / now to my mother
O heart lose not thy nature
Let me be cruel / not unnatural
I will speak daggers to her but use none

**Lady Polonia reports to the King that Hamlet is going to visit the Queen.
When he is alone, the King speaks his true thoughts and feelings.**

Hamlet approaches near the very end of his soliloquy, and considers taking action based upon what he observes. Never knowing that Hamlet was there, Claudius finishes his thoughts after Hamlet leaves.

LADY POLONIA

My lord he's going to his mother's closet
Behind the wall I'll convey myself
To hear the process / fare you well my liege
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed
And tell you what I know

KING CLAUDIUS Thanks my dear lady

Exit POLONIA

O my offence is rank / it smells to heaven
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't
A brother's murder / pray can I not
Though inclination be as sharp as will
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent
And like a man to double business bound
I stand in pause where I shall first begin
And both neglect / what if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? whereto
serves mercy But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer but this two-fold force
To be forestalled ere we come to fall
Or 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 possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder
My crown mine own ambition and my queen
May one be pardoned and retain the
offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law / but 'tis not so above /
There is no shuffling there / the action lies
In his true nature and we ourselves 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 can not repent?
O wretched state / o bosom black as death

O limed soul that struggling to be free
Art more ensnared / 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

Enter HAMLET

HAMLET

Now might I do it / now he is praying
And now I'll do it / and so he 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
O this is hire and salary not revenge
When he is drunk asleep or in his rage
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed
At gaming swearing or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in it
Then trip him that his heels may kick at heaven
And that his soul may be as damned and dark
As hell whereto it goes / my mother stays
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days

Exit

KING CLAUDIUS

My words fly up / my thoughts remain below
Words without thoughts never to heaven go

Before Hamlet arrives, Lady Polonia hides so that she can observe the meeting between Hamlet and Gertrude.

(Note: this is one of my favourite scenes and found it impossible to edit. PL)

HAMLET

Now mother what's the matter?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Hamlet thou hast thy father much offended

HAMLET

Mother you have my father much offended

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Come come you answer with an idle tongue

HAMLET

Go go you question with a wicked tongue

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Have you forgot me?

HAMLET

No by the cross not so
You are the queen / your husband's brother's wife

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
Help help

LADY POLONIA

[coming forth] Madam-

Hamlet kills Polonia.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

O me what hast thou done?

HAMLET

Thou wretched rash intruding fool farewell

QUEEN GERTRUDE

O what a rash and bloody deed is this

HAMLET

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

QUEEN GERTRUDE

As kill a king

HAMLET

Ay lady 'twas my word

QUEEN GERTRUDE

What have I done that thou darest wag thy tongue In noise so rude against me?

HAMLET

Look here upon this picture and on this
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers
See what a grace was seated on this brow
A combination and a form indeed
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man
This was your husband / look you now what follows Here is your husband / like a
mildewed ear Blasting his wholesome brother / have you eyes? Could you on this fair
mountain leave to feed And batten on this moor? have you eyes?
You cannot call it love for at your age
The hey-day in the blood is tame / it's humble And waits upon the judgment / and what
judgment Would step from this to this?
O shame where is thy blush?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

Nay but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed
Stewed in corruption honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty

QUEEN GERTRUDE

O speak to me no more
These words like daggers enter in mine ears
No more sweet Hamlet

HAMLET

A murderer and a villain
A vice of kings

QUEEN GERTRUDE

No more

HAMLET A king of shreds and patches

Enter GHOST

Save me and hover o'er me with your wings
You heavenly guards / what would your gracious figure?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Alas he's mad

GHOST

Do not forget / this visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose
But look / amazement on thy mother sits
Speak to her Hamlet

HAMLET

How is it with you lady?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Alas how is it with you
O gentle son whereon do you look?

HAMLET

Do you see nothing there?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Nothing at all / yet all that is I see

HAMLET

Nor did you nothing hear?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

No nothing but ourselves

HAMLET

Why look you there look
My father in his habit as he lived
Look where he goes even now

Exit GHOST

QUEEN GERTRUDE

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

HAMLET

Ecstasy?
My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time
And makes as healthful music / it is not madness
That I have uttered / confess yourself to heaven
Repent what's past / avoid what is to come

QUEEN GERTRUDE

O Hamlet thou hast cleft my heart in twain

HAMLET

O throw away the worser part of it
And live the purer with the other half
Good night / but go not to mine uncle's bed
Assume a virtue if you have it not
Refrain tonight
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence / the next even easier
Once more good night / for this same lady
I do repent / but heaven hath pleased it so
I will bestow her and will answer well
The death I gave her / so again good night
I must be cruel only to be kind
One word more good lady

QUEEN GERTRUDE

What shall I do?

HAMLET

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
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 GERTRUDE

Be thou assured if words be made of breath
And breath of life I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me

HAMLET

I must to England you know that?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

I had forgot / 'tis so concluded on

HAMLET

There's letters sealed and my two schoolfellows
Whom I will trust as I will adders fanged
They bear the mandate / let it work
This lady shall set me packing
I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room
Mother good night / indeed this counsellor
Is now most still most secret and most grave
Who was in life a foolish prating knave
Come ma'am to draw toward an end with you
Good night mother

The King asks Queen Gertrude about her encounter with Hamlet. What she tells him makes him very uneasy, and he comes up with a new plan and gives some new directions to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

KING CLAUDIUS

Where is your son?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Ah my good lord what have I seen tonight

KING CLAUDIUS

What Gertrude? how does Hamlet?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Mad as the sea and wind when both contend
Which is the mightier / in his lawless fit
Whips out his weapon and kills the unseen
Good lady Polonia

KING CLAUDIUS

O heavy deed
His liberty is full of threats to all To you yourself to us to every one Where is he gone?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

To draw apart the body he hath killed
He weeps for what is done

KING CLAUDIUS

Gertrude come away
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch
But we will ship him hence / friends both
Go seek him out speak fair and bring the body Into the chapel / I pray you haste in this

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

Come Gertrude we'll call up our wisest friends
And let them know both what we mean to do
And what's untimely done / o come away
My soul is full of discord and dismay

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have failed in the efforts to get Hamlet to them where Polonia's body is hidden. Now the King comes to try to get the information.

KING CLAUDIUS

Now Hamlet / where's Polonia?

HAMLET

At supper

KING CLAUDIUS

At supper where?

HAMLET

Not where she eats but where she is eaten / a certain convocation of politic worms are
now at her /
We fat all creatures else to fat us
And we fat ourselves for maggots

KING CLAUDIUS

Where is Polonia?

HAMLET

In heaven / send hither to see / if your messenger find her not there seek her in the
other place yourself / but indeed if you find her not within this month you shall nose her
as you go up the
stairs / and into the lobby

KING CLAUDIUS Go seek her there

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

HAMLET

She will stay till you come

KING CLAUDIUS

Hamlet / this deed for thine especial safety
Which we do tender as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done must send thee hence
With fiery quickness / therefore prepare thyself
For England

HAMLET

For England

KING CLAUDIUS

Ay Hamlet

HAMLET

Good

KING CLAUDIUS

So is it if thou knew'st our purposes

HAMLET

I see an angel that sees them / but come for
England / farewell dear mother

KING CLAUDIUS

Thy loving father Hamlet

HAMLET

My mother / father and mother is man and wife / man and wife is one flesh / and so my
mother / come for England

Exit HAMLET

KING CLAUDIUS

And England thou mayst not coldly set
Our sovereign process which imports at full
By letters agreeing to that effect
The present death of Hamlet / do it England

With the death of her mom, Ophelia loses her sense of reality. Laertes has heard the news, and he comes home to face the King.

KING CLAUDIUS

O this is the poison of deep grief it springs All from her mother's death / o Gertrude
Gertrude
When sorrows come they come not single spies
But in battalions

Enter LAERTES

LAERTES

Where is this king? Give me my mother

He pulls out a weapon and points it at the King

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Calmly good Laertes

KING CLAUDIUS

Let him go Gertrude / speak man

LAERTES

Where is my mother?

KING CLAUDIUS

Dead

QUEEN GERTRUDE

But not by him

KING CLAUDIUS

Let him demand his fill

LAERTES

How came she dead? I'll not be juggled with
I'll be revenged most thoroughly for my mother

KING CLAUDIUS

Good Laertes why now hear me speak
That I am guiltless of your mother's death
And am most sensible in grief for it

Enter OPHELIA with HORATIO

LAERTES

O heat dry up my brains / tears seven times salt
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye
Dear maid kind sister sweet Ophelia

OPHELIA

Fare you well my dove
There's rosemary that's for remembrance / pray love
remember / and there is pansies that's for thoughts

And will she not come again?
And will she not come again?
No no she is dead
Go to thy death-bed
She never will come again
And he is gone he is gone
And we cast away moan
God have mercy on his soul

Exit

LAERTES

Do you see this / o god?

KING CLAUDIUS

Laertes I must commune with your grief
Be you content to lend your patience to us
And we shall jointly labour with your soul To give it due content / I pray you come *Exit*

CLAUDIUS and LAERTES

The King gets some very bad news when Osric delivers a letter to him from Hamlet, who was supposed to die in England. Now he and Laertes must come up with another plan.

OSRIC

Letters my lord / from Hamlet

KING CLAUDIUS

Leave us (*Osric does...*)

Reads

'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 recount the occasion
of my sudden and more strange return hamlet'

LAERTES

Know you the hand?

KING CLAUDIUS

'Tis Hamlet's character

LAERTES

It warms the very sickness in my heart
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth
'Thus diest thou'

KING CLAUDIUS

What would you undertake
To show yourself your mother's son in deed More than in words?

LAERTES

To cut his throat in the church

KING CLAUDIUS

Revenge should have no bounds / but good Laertes
We will bring you two in sport together
And wager on your heads / he being remiss
Will not peruse the weapons / you may choose
A tool unblunted and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your mother

LAERTES

I will do it
And for that I will anoint my weapon
There is a poison that I bought in France
So mortal that but dip a knife in it
Where it draws blood no antidote exists

KING CLAUDIUS

Let's further think of this / 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 his use whereon but sipping
If he by chance escape your poisoned tool
Our purpose may hold there

Their discussions are interrupted when Gertrude appears, with sad news about Ophelia.

KING CLAUDIUS

How now sweet Queen

QUEEN GERTRUDE

One woe doth tread upon another's heel
So fast they follow / your sister's drowned Laertes

LAERTES

Drowned / o where?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

There is a willow grows aslant a brook
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crow-flowers nettles daisies and long purples
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them
There on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang an envious sliver broke
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook / her clothes spread wide
And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes
As one incapable of her own distress
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element / but long it could not be
Till that her garments heavy with their drink
Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death

LAERTES

Too much of water hast thou poor Ophelia
And therefore I forbid my tears / adieu my lord
I have a speech of fire that fain would blaze

Exit LAERTES

KING CLAUDIUS

How much I had to do to calm his rage
Now fear I this will give it start again

In this SIR version of the Gravediggers scene, Hamlet notices some strange likenesses between the two Gravediggers and people close to him who are no longer alive.

The graveyard.

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

That skull had a tongue in it and could sing once Whose grave's this sir?

GRAVEDIGGER 1

Mine sir

Hamlet notices an uncanny resemblance between Gravedigger 1 and his father...

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

GRAVEDIGGER 1

You lie out on't sir and therefore it is not yours

HAMLET

What man dost thou dig it for?

GRAVEDIGGER 1

For no man sir

HAMLET

What woman then?

GRAVEDIGGER 1

For none neither

HAMLET

Who is to be buried in't?

GRAVEDIGGER 1

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

HAMLET

How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

GRAVEDIGGER 1

Of all the days i' the year I came to't that day
that young Hamlet was born / he that is mad and sent into England

HAMLET

How came he mad?

GRAVEDIGGER 2

Very strangely they say

Hamlet notices an uncanny resemblance between Gravedigger 2 and Polonia...

HAMLET

How strangely?

GRAVEDIGGER 2

Faith even with losing his wits

HAMLET

Upon what ground?

GRAVEDIGGER 2

Why here in Denmark / we have been sexton here man and woman thirty years

GRAVEDIGGER 1

Here's a skull now / this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years

HAMLET

Whose was it?

GRAVEDIGGER 1

A pestilence on him for a mad rogue
This same skull sir was Yorick's skull / the king's jester

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 /
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?
Now get you to my mother's chamber and tell her Let her paint an inch thick to this
favour she must come / make her laugh at that / to what base looks we may return
Horatio

Hamlet's thoughts are interrupted when a funeral procession for Ophelia enters. He is overcome when he discovers it is Ophelia. There is a brief fight between Hamlet and Laertes in Ophelia's grave. After Laertes leaves with the other mourners, Hamlet explains to Horatio how he managed to escape being put to death in England, and he also confides his feelings of regret for breaking his friendship with Laertes.

HAMLET

Sir in my heart that was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep

HORATIO

That is most certain

HAMLET

There's a divinity that shapes our ends
Rough-hew them how we will /
I found royal knavery Horatio / an exact command
That on the supervise no leisure bated
My head should be struck off

HORATIO

Is it possible?

HAMLET

I devised a new commission / wrote it fair
That the bearers should be put to sudden death

HORATIO

So Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead?

HAMLET

They are not near my conscience /
But I am very sorry good Horatio
That to Laertes I forgot myself

Osric enters to tell Hamlet about the wager made by the King on a fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes. Hamlet does not refuse the challenge.

OSRIC

My lord his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head /
sir this is the matter The king sir hath laid that in a dozen passes between yourself and
Laertes 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 accepts the challenge, but Horatio has his doubts.

HORATIO

You will lose this wager my lord

HAMLET

I do not think so / I shall win at the odds
There's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow If it be now 'tis not to come / if it be
not to come it will be now if it be not now yet it will come the readiness is all / let be

As they prepare to begin the match, Hamlet offers apologies to his former friend, Laertes.

HAMLET

Give me your pardon sir / I've done you wrong
This presence knows and you must needs have heard
How I am punished with sore distraction
What I have done
That might your nature honour and exception
Roughly awake I here proclaim was madness

LAERTES

I am satisfied in nature
Whose motive in this case should stir me most
To my revenge / but in my terms of honour
I 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

King Claudius has acted on his plan to assure Hamlet's demise. One cup of wine has been poisoned, as well as Laertes' sword. However, things do not go according to the King's plan.

OSRIC

Look to the queen there

HORATIO

They bleed on both sides / how is it my lord?

OSRIC

How is it Laertes?

HAMLET

How does the queen?

KING CLAUDIUS

She swoons to see them bleed

QUEEN GERTRUDE

No no the drink the drink / O my dear Hamlet
The drink the drink / I am poisoned

GERTRUDE dies

HAMLET

O villainy / let the doors be locked Treachery / seek it out

LAERTES

It is here Hamlet / Hamlet thou art slain
No medicine in the world can do thee good
In thee there is not half an hour of life
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand
Unblunted and envenomed / the foul practice
Hath turned itself on me / thy mother's poisoned
I can no more / the king the king's to blame

HAMLET

Then venom to thy work

Stabs KING CLAUDIUS

Follow my mother

KING CLAUDIUS dies

LAERTES

Exchange forgiveness with me noble Hamlet
Mine and my mother's death come not upon thee
Nor thine on me

Dies

Barely alive, Hamlet speaks his last words to Horatio, who then speaks the last words of the play.

HAMLET

Heaven make thee free of it / I follow thee
Wretched queen adieu / I am dead Horatio
Thou livest / report me and my cause aright
Absent thee from felicity awhile
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story / the rest is silence

Dies

HORATIO

Now cracks a noble heart /
O let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about / so all shall hear
Of carnal bloody and unnatural acts
Of accidental judgments casual slaughters
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause
And in this conclusion purposes mistook
Fallen on the inventors' heads / all this can I
Truly report / good night sweet prince
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest

Horatio observes. The cast gathers around him as we saw at the top of the play.