

# Hamlet

## As Performed by the People's Theater of Beijing

Gravedigger 1: Okay, here's a question for you. Let's see if you know the answer.

Gravedigger 2: Hmm...okay. Ask away.

Gravedigger 1: What kind of people do you think have the most work to do?

Gravedigger 2: Uh...

*(Both men laugh.)*

Gravedigger 1: Can't answer, eh? Well, okay then—*(addresses the audience)* I'll tell you folks: farmers and gravediggers.

Gravedigger 2: Really?

Gravedigger 1: Yeah. Um...let me ask you another question.

Gravedigger 2: Okay, let's hear it!

Gravedigger 1: Who builds stuff that's stronger than anything made by shipwrights, masons, or carpenters?

Gravedigger 2: What would that be? Oh, the gallows! The gallows are still firm even after a thousand people have been on them. *(laughs)*

Gravedigger 1: Wow, I never realized you could be funny. Yes, the gallows definitely have their use—especially when it comes to criminals. *(addresses the audience)* For instance, they would be perfectly fitting for him right now. *(gestures to Gravedigger 2)* Ah, you dare to say that the gallows are built more solidly than a chapel. Well, I'll give you another chance, and if you can answer quickly and get it right, I'll let you take a break.

Gravedigger 2: You're serious?

Gravedigger 1: I am.

Gravedigger 2: Oh, well, I think I have the answer!

Gravedigger 1: Let's hear it!

Gravedigger 2: Oh...um...I still can't think of it! Can you believe that?

Gravedigger 1: Hm. I should smash your melon of a head, you stupid ass. Still no idea? Okay, *(addresses audience)* I'll go ahead and tell you folks. The answer is still us gravediggers!

Gravedigger 2: Really?

Gravedigger 1: Yeah, because you can stay in the houses we build until the end of the world.

Gravedigger 2: Really?

Gravedigger 1: Yeah. Hey, go get me a bottle of wine.

Gravedigger 2: Really? Oh, okay...a bottle of wine...

Claudius: My brother King Hamlet has only recently left us, and we should mourn his passing. Every corner of the kingdom ought to express their grief. But, being moved by the conflict that exists between our reason and our feelings, though we mourn him with the utmost sobriety, we cannot neglect our present necessities. Thus do I take my former sister-in-law, presently the queen, and join with her as husband and wife.

*(crowd applauds)*

This is certainly a mixture of sorrow and joy. The funeral bell sounded a gladsome note, and a dirge has echoed through the wedding ceremony. Nevertheless, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for gracing us with your support on this occasion.

I would also like to speak to you all about the situation with Fortinbras of Norway. With my brother the king gone, Fortinbras supposes that our nation must be crumbling, and he seeks to attack us in our weakness! He has repeatedly requested that we relinquish the lands that his father legally ceded to my brother the king. I have already written a letter to Fortinbras's uncle, asking him to please curb his nephew's conspiring ambitions. Take this letter to the noble king of Norway at once!

Servant: Yes, Your Highness!

Claudius: Laertes! I'm told you have a request. Come, tell me what it is! I am sure it is reasonable.

Laertes: Your Highness, please permit me to return to France. It has been an honor to return home for Your Highness's coronation, but now that my duties are done, my heart has turned to France once again, so I seek Your Highness's graces.

Claudius: Has your father approved this?

Polonius: Well, Your Highness, after his repeated requests, I have reluctantly assented.

Claudius: Make sure to make good use of this opportunity, Laertes. The time is yours to do with it as you will. I hope that you exhibit your talents.

*(exit Laertes and Polonius)*

Claudius: Hamlet! My nephew—no, my son!

Hamlet: *(to audience)* With him, I'm closer than a relative, but still more remote than a stranger on the street.

Claudius: Why are you always shrouded in these clouds of melancholy?

Hamlet: Oh no, Highness; I have actually been in the sun too long.

Gertrude: My beloved Hamlet, cast off this dreary demeanor and treat the King of Denmark as you would a friend. You cannot keep casting your eyes forever downward, searching in the yellow dust for your father. As you know, all that lives shall also die, and all must go from mortality to eternity. This is the most common of things.

Hamlet: The most common!

Gertrude: Even so, how is it that you seem so disconsolate?

Hamlet: Seem! No. Mother, here's how it is: my wearing of the customary black funeral cloak, my tears that will not be contained, my dreary demeanor, and all of my other manifestations of grief...none of these can sufficiently express what I feel in my heart. This is all on the surface, and anyone could put on such an act! But what really resides in my heart is far beyond these manifestations. All of this is just the trappings of woe.

Claudius: Hamlet, this filial piety you show is indicative of your natural goodness, and it is worthy of praise. However, you should also know that your father also lost his father, and his father lost his as well. We the living do have a span of time in which we must mourn out of filial piety, but to immerse ourselves in it inextricably is a form of hubris. Such behavior is also contrary to manly dignity, because reason maintains that the death of fathers is something all must face, from the very first father who died to the one who has now passed, such that reason is constantly crying out to us that

this cannot be changed. Therefore, I hope that you will cast off this vain sorrow and look upon me as your father. I will give you everything—no less than what the most affectionate father would give to his son! As for you returning to Wittenberg to attend the university, I feel that this is completely contrary to our wishes. We hope that you will give us some joy and comfort by staying here, that you may play your part as the prince and as our son!

Gertrude: My good son, please do not let your mother's earnest hopes come to nothing! We hope that you will stay, and not return to Wittenberg.

Hamlet: I will do my best to obey.

Claudius: Now this is an encouraging answer! (*Aside.*) This amiable obedience from Hamlet fills my heart with joy! Beloved wife!

Gertrude: Your Majesty!

Claudius: In commemoration, every time the King of Denmark raises his cup today, let there be a gun salute whose sound penetrates the clouds above! Let Heaven receive this terrestrial thunder with a response in kind! Let us celebrate!

(*Exit Gertrude and Claudius.*)

Hamlet: Oh, that this thoroughly polluted body could dissolve and disappear, reduced to nothing but dew! Oh, that the Eternal God had never set down His commandment prohibiting suicide! This is a barren garden that has long been full of dead flowers and weeds, though the tangerines still grow! My father! Comparing the two of them is like comparing an angel to a demon! He loved my mother so much that he would not even let a breeze from heaven irritate her face. And my mother's longing for his love was like when one fasts, only to hunger for sustenance all the more. But before even one month has passed! O frailty, thy name is woman! Just a short month ago, as my father was being buried, she cried like a professional mourner. But she went and married before her mourning clothes even began to show signs of wear, with her face still swollen from weeping! She married my father's younger brother—my uncle! But that man is nothing like my father! Oh, my mother! Even a beast with no reason would mourn longer than you have! There is nothing good in it, and nothing good will come of it! But let my heart break, for I must keep my mouth shut.

Horatio: Bless you, my prince!

Marcellus: My prince!

Hamlet: Horatio!

Horatio: Oh! (*Laughs.*)

Hamlet: (*Laughs.*) Horatio, my old schoolmate!

Horatio: My prince!

Hamlet: But why are you not at Wittenberg?

Horatio: I simply wanted to take a bit of a vacation, my prince.

Hamlet: You are not one prone to distraction and truancy! Now what is the reason for which you have come? Speak!

Horatio: I came to attend your father's funeral.

Hamlet: I think you have come to attend my mother's wedding!

Horatio: This is true, my prince. There was too little time between the two events.

Hamlet: Thrift! Thrift, Horatio! The extra soup and rice from the funeral feeds the wedding guests. I would rather have seen my most hated foe in heaven than live to see such a day! It seems that I see my father! With my soul's eyes...

Horatio: I have seen your father, my prince. He was a good king.

Hamlet: I shall never look upon such a man again!

Horatio: My prince, I think that I saw him last night.

Hamlet: Saw whom?

Horatio: Your father! The king!

Hamlet: My father the king?

Horatio: Do not be startled, but I will tell you this strange thing. Marcellus can help...

Marcellus: It is true, my prince!

Hamlet: What happened? What happened? Quickly, tell me!

Horatio: Marcellus and his friend Bernardo were keeping watch at midnight.

Hamlet: Ah!

Horatio: For two nights in a row they saw a man like your father, decked in panoply. He appeared before them, and then he walked right by them. Once they told me of this strange thing, I went on watch with them on the third night. At midnight, the spirit

appeared. Everything was exactly as they had described! I knew your father, and that spirit looked like very much like him. No, it *was* your father!

Hamlet: Where?

Marcellus: On the watchman platform, Highness!

Hamlet: Did you speak with him?

Horatio: I spoke, but he did not reply. There was a moment when he raised his head as if he had something to say something to me, but that was when the rooster crowed with the rising of the sun. When he heard the crowing of the rooster, he vanished away.

Hamlet: This is too strange!

Horatio: I swear it is true! We felt that it was our duty to tell you!

Hamlet: Yes, yes. You say he was decked in panoply?

Horatio and Marcellus: Yes, yes!

Hamlet: From head to foot?

Horatio and Marcellus: Yes, my prince!

Hamlet: Did you see his face clearly?

Horatio: His face seemed more sad than angry.

Hamlet: I wish I had been there at the time!

Horatio: Had you been there, you would have definitely been afraid!

Hamlet: Yes, yes. That's most likely true. Horatio, if you yet to tell these things to anyone else, I ask you to maintain this silence. Whatever you do, don't speak of this inadvertently! I will repay you for this! Okay, I will see you tonight on the platform!

Horatio and Marcellus: We serve you, prince!

Hamlet: My father's spirit has appeared in the likeness of my father. This is troubling! Oh, that night would fall earlier! I will wait silently. All sins will be revealed in their due time—though they be buried in the earth!

Laertes: My belongings are already on the ship! Goodbye, my sister! As long as men are served by good winds and boats are coming and going, do not sleep until you have sent me word of your welfare.

Ophelia: You still doubt me?

Laertes: As for Hamlet and his flirting and fawning...you should look at it only as the type of impulsive and trifling matter indicative of the young. It matures quickly, but withers easily. It is sweet, but it is not permanent – a moment of joy and fragrance, and no more than that.

Ophelia: Is it no more than that?

Laertes: It's no more than that. You see, a person's development is not limited to the growth of his stature and muscles alone; it is also about the expansion of his mind and soul. Perhaps he loves you now—honestly and truly loves you—but you must bear in mind that, due to his position, his will is not his own. He is dominated by his lineage. He cannot simply make decisions as a common person would, because his decisions also affect the stability of his nation. You need to consider it all again. Suppose you were to completely believe his sweet words and lose your heart to him. Or suppose that, under his grieved supplications, you were to open your treasure trove of innocence to him, then your reputation would suffer great harm! So take care. It is best to be cautious and alert when making decisions. Even if there is no temptation from the other side, the disposition of youth will cause one to start down an evil road.

Ophelia: I will bear this good counsel in remembrance. But, good brother of mine, do not be as some wicked pastors, who would point out for me the route to heaven even while they themselves wander in moral limbo and forget their own proverbs!

Laertes: You do not need to worry about that. We've talked for too long; Father is coming.

Polonius: Hm.

Laertes: Father is coming! Father, a second farewell means a double portion of blessings!

Polonius: How is it that you are still here, Laertes? Quickly, board the boat! Everyone is waiting for you. What nerve! Oh, um...I give you my blessing! And I have a few words of counsel that I hope you will engrave upon your heart. Do not simply say whatever crosses your mind; you always want to carefully consider your words first. Always seek accord with others, but take care that you are not too accommodating. Bind yourself to your friends with steel bands. But don't simply...don't simply become mutually dependent with everyone you meet. Take care not to quarrel with

others. But, in the event of a dispute, you must make it clear to the parties involved that you will not be insulted. Take care to listen to everyone's viewpoints, but only express your opinions to a select few. Value everyone's opinion, but maintain your right to decide. Use your resources to buy yourself fine clothing, but avoid outrageous styles, because your clothes do in fact manifest your inner qualities. Do not borrow money from others, and do not lend money to others. Lending will lead to a loss of wealth and of spirit, while borrowing will make you forget to be thrifty. But most importantly, be true to yourself. Thus, as the night is known from the day, you will be unable to defraud any man. Goodbye then. I hope that my blessing will have an effect on your heart.

Laertes: This is my goodbye, father. Ophelia, remember what I told you.

Ophelia: Your words have already been locked within my memory. I entrust the key into your care.

Laertes: Goodbye!

Ophelia: Goodbye!

Polonius: Ophelia, what has he said to you?

Ophelia: Prior to your words, we were just...discussing His Highness Hamlet.

Polonius: Oh? Hahaha! Your older brother is very considerate. I have heard that you have often been with His Highness Hamlet. If this is true, then I must tell you, Ophelia, that you do not yet understand what you, being my daughter, ought to do in this situation. Whatever has occurred between you and Hamlet, please tell me truthfully.

Ophelia: Father, His Highness Hamlet has confessed his love to me many times recently.

Polonius: Confessed his love? Hahaha! You talk as if you were a naïve child who has never faced this kind of danger before. And do you believe these confessions of his?

Ophelia: I do not know what to think, Father.

Polonius: Well, alright then. Let me teach you. You really are a naïve child. You have taken these feigned affections to be sincere devotions. You should place a steeper price on yourself. Otherwise, you will make me the object of public jest!

Ophelia: But Father, the manner of his supplications has been very sincere indeed!

Polonius: That's right – it is only the *manner*!

Ophelia: He has employed virtually every oath to prove his love!



Polonius: A snare! It's all a snare! I know that, in the burgeoning of passion, one may find it possible to speak any oath! These fires give more light than heat, and as soon as they have passed out of the mouth, they are extinguished. You cannot regard this as a real fire! I wish you would not make your maidenly face so apparent. In short, I must say that I do not approve of you going to be with Hamlet whenever occasion permits. Do you understand?

Ophelia: I will do as you say.

Polonius: Good. Now, take care.

(Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus on the watch tower.)

Hamlet: What time is it?

Horatio: Nearly twelve o'clock, Highness!

Marcellus: No, the hour has already struck, Highness!

Hamlet: Has it? How could I have missed it?

Horatio: The ghost will be appearing soon!

*(There is a loud sound, and all three squat down in fear.)*

Horatio: What is going on, Highness?

Hamlet: The king is holding a banquet for the whole city tonight. Each time he downs a cup of fine wine, they celebrate it with drums and trumpets.

Horatio: Is this a custom?

Hamlet: It is. But, even though I have been familiar with it since childhood, I think there is more dignity in breaking it than in following it! This type of custom has drawn many nations' criticism. They call us drunkards and carousers, and our many great exploits are overlooked. Such is often the case. Regardless of one's holiness in other areas, if there is any imperfection in a man, he will still be slandered by the world.

Horatio: Highness! He is here!

Hamlet: May the angels protect us! *(Puts hand on chest.)* Whether you be a friendly spirit or a sinister demon, whether you bring the peaceful winds of heaven or the dark winds of hell, whether your intentions are good or ill, I must speak with you if only because of the suspicions that your shape has stirred up in me! *(Breathes nervously.)* I call you Father! King! Honored King of Denmark! *(Breathes fiercely.)* Tell me. Tell me. Do not leave me in regret for the rest of my life! Tell me, why is it that your old bones do not rest in peace? Why has the grave spat you up again? Your dead body, decked in armor and standing in the moonlight, makes the night seem ghastly and causes us to tremble in fear. What is the meaning of it? What would you have us do?

Horatio: Highness! He is reaching out to you, as if to say something to you alone.

Marcellus: Whatever you do, don't go, Highness!

Hamlet: He says nothing, but I must go.

Marcellus: Highness! No, don't go, Highness!

*(Horatio and Marcellus take hold of Hamlet.)*

Hamlet: ...My life is not worth a penny to me. As for my soul, that is as eternally indestructible as any ghost, so how could he possibly harm me?

Horatio, Marcellus: Highness!

Hamlet: He is beckoning to me. I must go!

Horatio, Marcellus: You cannot go!

*(The three get into a struggle.)*

Hamlet: No! My destiny is crying out to me! It makes every blood vessel in my body as hard as a minister's.... Release your hands! Release your hands or, I swear to Heaven, whoever pulls on me again, I will make a ghost of him!

*(Horatio and Marcellus release him.)*

Hamlet: Walk. I will follow you!

Horatio: The devil has seized control of his mind and made him reckless! Denmark, unspeakable events are about to occur! I fear this portends a great misfortune that will befall this country.

*(Horatio and Marcellus retreat, leaving Hamlet alone with the ghost.)*

Hamlet: To what place are you leading me? Speak, or I will not continue on!

Ghost: I am the spirit of your father. If you ever loved your dear father, then you must convey his murderous wrath for him.

Hamlet: Murderous wrath?

Ghost: Listen, Hamlet. As I slept in the garden, according to my daily custom, your uncle took advantage of my indiscretion and crept in. He carried a small bottle of hemlock juice, took an intoxicating chemical and poured it into my ear. Thus, as I was sleeping, I lost my crown and my queen.

Hamlet: My uncle and stepfather, my presentiments of you were true!

Ghost: If you have natural affections, do not be silent, and do not let that which belongs to Denmark to become accessory to incest and perfidy. However you exact revenge, do not harm your mother; she will receive Heaven's judgment. Now, I seem to smell the morning air. Good bye, now. Goodbye, Hamlet. Remember me. Remember me!

*(The Ghost leaves, and Hamlet shakes his head.)*

Hamlet: O heavenly hosts! And what else? Shall I cry for hell's aid as well?... Oh, all of my sinews and bones, do not suddenly grow old, but support my body!... I remember you! Yes, I remember you! Wretched spirit. As long as **(transcription is probably incorrect)**, I remember you. I remember you! I remember you! I will wipe away all trivial, stupid thoughts, leaving only the memory of your fate to inhabit my mind. May Heaven lock it there... *(Hamlet cries.)* Sinful woman. Traitor! Traitor! On your face, you make as if...you're one who smiles on the surface, but in your bones, you are a murderous traitor! This is how Denmark is! Ah, Uncle, I have you now! Now I will bear in mind my motto, and that is: "I remember you! I remember you!" I have sworn! I have sworn!

Horatio: Highness! Highness!

Marcellus: Your Highness Hamlet!

Hamlet: Strange...

Horatio: What is it, Majesty? What has happened, Highness?

Hamlet: So strange. So very strange.

Marcellus: My lord, tell us.

Hamlet: No, no. You would leak the information.

Horatio, Marcellus: No, we would not leak the information!

Hamlet: Who on Earth would believe you two? Can you really keep a secret?

Horatio, Marcellus: (*Both men raise their hands and swear.*) Heaven is our witness,  
Highness!

Hamlet: The traitors of Denmark are truly depraved!

Horatio: We don't need a ghost to crawl out of the grave to tell us that!

Hamlet: Yes, yes, yes. This is true. This is true. Come, come, come. There is no need to talk nonsense. Come, don't talk nonsense. Go and take care of the things you want to do and know you should do. I hope that everyone has their own actions and responsibilities...and as for me, I...I shall go pray!

Horatio: Highness, these words of yours are incredibly confusing to us.

Hamlet: My words have offended you. I apologize. I apologize. I apologize from the bottom of my heart!

Horatio: We said nothing of offense.

Hamlet: Horatio, the offense is not a small one! As for that ghost, that was definitely a spirit of the deceased! But I must tell you, as for your desire to know what has happened, I must ask you not to ask too many questions! Come, my friends, and let me make a humble petition.

Horatio: Speak, and we will certainly do as you ask, Highness.

Hamlet: Do not speak of tonight's events to anyone else!

Horatio: I swear in good conscience!

Marcellus: I also swear in good conscience, Highness!

Hamlet: I think you should truly swear it!

Horatio, Marcellus: We have already sworn, Highness!

Hamlet: That doesn't count! Place your hands on my sword and swear it!

Horatio: I swear...

Marcellus: I swear...

Hamlet: Do not tell anyone of what has transpired tonight!... You under the ground, do you say so as well? Oh, you didn't hear it. Come. You under the ground, speak! Speak! Hurry up, say it!

Horatio: Hurry up and say what, Highness?

Hamlet: Do not tell anyone of tonight's events! Ah, haha! You move so fast across the ground! Ah, come here, you two! Place your hands on my sword, and swear that you will not tell anyone what has transpired tonight. Wow, now you've run over there! Don't run, don't run, don't run! I can hear you. I can hear you. I can hear you. I can hear you...

Horatio: This is unbelievable!

Hamlet: Horatio, how is it that you regard this as something so unbelievable when it is not so? There are many things in Heaven and Earth of which science has not yet even dreamed! My good friends, in the days to come, I may pretend to be insane, but when that happens, and when I start to exhibit some very strange actions, you cannot let on that you know I have a secret! Come, with Heaven as witness, swear!

Horatio: I swear!

Marcellus: I swear!

Hamlet: Peace then, troubled spirit. Friends! I trust you, but whatever happens, you must remember to keep your mouths closed as tight as a bottle!

Horatio, Marcellus: Yes, Highness!

Hamlet: Alright, go...go. This is a crazed and chaotic time. It is my misfortune to come into this world, but I must bear up the burden of this responsibility that the universe has accorded to me. *(Hamlet runs off stage.)*

*(Gravedigger 1 Rings a Bell)*

Gravedigger 2: Ah. Hahahaha! Wow! Hello?

Gravedigger 1: Hello?

Gravedigger 2: Hello?

Gravedigger 1: Hello!

Gravedigger 2: Hello! It doesn't work.

Gravedigger 1: Alright. Hey, do you know?

Gravedigger 2: Huh?

Gravedigger 1: We have some new work.

Gravedigger 2: Really?

Gravedigger 1: That woman...what was her name? Ophe...Ophelia.

Gravedigger 2: Oh.

Gravedigger 1: Now, if it's clear that she has committed suicide, how can she be given a Christian burial?

Gravedigger 2: Stop talking nonsense, and let's get to work! You should listen to the undertaker—she should be allowed to enjoy this type of treatment!

Gravedigger 1: I tell you, she was just sick of life. There can't be any other reason.

Gravedigger 2: Ah, have you heard...?

Gravedigger 1: Hear me out first. Okay, you be the water—

Gravedigger 2: Really?

Gravedigger 1: —and I will be she.

Gravedigger 2: Oh.

Gravedigger 1: Now, if I were to jump over to where you are and drown, then it doesn't matter what way you put it, that's definitely intentional.

Gravedigger 2: Right.

Gravedigger 1: But if you were to flow over here and drown me, then suicide would not even be an issue, right?

Gravedigger 2: Really?

Gravedigger 1: And if a person can still bear to live, then she won't decide to intentionally cut her life short.

Gravedigger 2: Okay, let me say it. If she were not of a wealthy family, there is no way she would be allowed to enjoy this type of treatment!

Gravedigger 1: Well said!

Gravedigger 2: Hmm.

Gravedigger 1: In these days, the rich have more freedom to jump off a bridge into the river than we common folk do.

Gravedigger 2: Oh, hahahaha...

Ophelia: Father! Father! Father! I am so scared!

Polonius: What is it?

Ophelia: I was in my bedroom sewing, and His Highness Hamlet ran in with his shirt unbuttoned and no hat on his head! His socks were covered in mud, and he had no garters. His face was just as white as his shirt, and his knees were knocking together. His face looked so miserable, as if he had just escaped from hell and wanted to tell others of its horrors.

Polonius: Was he crazed with love?

Ophelia: Father, I do not know! Perhaps!

Polonius: What did he say?

Ophelia: He held my hand tightly, and then he pulled on my arm, putting his hand on his forehead. He stared me dead in the face, as if I were looking at a painting of him. He stood in this way for a long time, and then, he lightly shook my arm. He nodded his head up and down three times, and then he heaved a sigh as if he carried a great burden. It seemed that his life was about to end with his whole body exploding. After that, he let me go and turned away, but his head was still turned back toward me. It was as if he could find his way without even looking, because his eyes were still locked on me even as he walked out the door.

Polonius: He truly is crazy from frustrated love! Have you said anything to him recently that made him embarrassed?

Ophelia: No, Father! I have only followed your directions, refusing to accept his letters and not receiving his visitation.

Polonius: This is what has driven him mad! Well, I need not doubt anymore! I always thought that he was only toying with you, but I now repent! Daughter, come see the king with me! If this kind of thing goes unreported, it will lead to trouble!

*(Both run down off stage.)*

Rosencratz, Guildenstern: Majesty!

Claudius: Welcome, welcome, dear Rosencrantz, dear Guildenstern. We bade you come with such haste because we missed you so, but more importantly, we have something for which we need to request your services. You have probably already heard of Hamlet's recent change. Whether it be his spirit or his appearance, he is quite different from before. If the reason for his madness is anything other than the death of his father, we have not been able to guess. You two have grown up with him, and you know his temperament, so we have expressly requested that you come and abide with us a few days. While you are here, we hope that you can come to understand what personal matters are plaguing him of which we are unaware. That way, we will be able to find the appropriate medicine for this ailment!

Gertrude: You two are Prince Hamlet's best friends. No one else on Earth is trusted so much by him. If you two are willing to abide here for a time, then you will enjoy the deep appreciation of the royal court of Denmark.

Rosencrantz, Guildenstern: Thank you! Thank you!

*(Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exit.)*

Polonius: *(Pretending to cough.)* My king! Mistress! Were I to lecture you at length about the majesty of kings, the duty of ministers, the dayness of the day, the nightness of the night, and the timeliness of time, that would be an utter waste of day, night, and time. Since brevity is the soul of wisdom, I will then speak in a more simple manner. Your noble son, he...is mad. Ah, I say that he is mad because I am sure that he truly is mad. Thus shall I prove him to be mad...

Gertrude: A little less artifice, please, with a little more fact.



Polonius: Yes, Mistress. I employ no artifice. I say he has gone mad because this is evident. It is evident because he has truly gone mad. So, since we know that he has truly gone mad, let us find the true reason for his madness. Now, I have reached a conclusion, and that conclusion is...hahaha, I have a daughter, and because she is so dutiful and filial, she has told me this. Would you like to know what is written on this? Ahem, "To that fey idol of my soul, the resplendent Ophelia." This is a crude word. Hm. I think "resplendent" is a bit crude. Hm. But let me continue, "May these few lines of poetry remain in your most excellent white breast."

Gertrude: Hamlet wrote this to her?

Polonius: My mistress, please be patient. I will read every word and every line of it:

*Doubt thou the stars are fire,  
Doubt that the sun doth move,  
Doubt truth to be a liar,  
But never doubt I love.*

*As long as I live, dear lady, I shall be yours.*

Signed, *Hamlet*. Hahahahaha! This letter was given to me by my beloved daughter. Besides this, she has told me of the time, place, and manner in which all of his professions of love have taken place. Hahahahaha!...

Claudius: And how has he responded to him?

Polonius: Majesty, what do you think of me?

Claudius: You are a loyal man of integrity.

Polonius: I hope it is so! Majesty, if I were to be indifferent to such amorous events unfolding before me, what would you think then? Dear Mistress, what would you think? No, no, no, no. I could not behave thus. I said to my daughter, "Hamlet is a noble, and not to be sought by one such as you. Such things ought not to be!" My beloved daughter obeyed my exhortation, not associating with him, and not accepting his gifts. He, being rejected, thus proceeded to become distant, his body being weakened day by day, his demeanor becoming more and more distant day by day, finally developing into this...madness...for which we all mourn.

Claudius: Is this the reason?

Polonius: I think...

Gertrude: I think...this quite possibly is the reason!... My poor son...now he approaches, reading a book!

Polonius: Please, Majesties, hide, and I will go speak with him!

*(Claudius and Gertrude exit.)*

Polonius: Prince Hamlet, how are you?

Hamlet: Well, well, well, well.

Polonius: Do you still know me, Highness?

Hamlet: Ah! Yes, I know you, I know you. My friend, my friend, I know you! You are a fishmonger.

Polonius: Not I, Highness.

Hamlet: Then I wish you were an honest man!

Polonius: Honest, Highness?

Hamlet: For every ten thousand men on Earth, only one is honest.

Polonius: Oh, this is very true, Highness.

Hamlet: If the sun can raise maggots in a dog's corpse, then the sun is a...god that kisses carrion. Hey, do you have a daughter?

Polonius: Ah, I do, Highness.

Hamlet: Do not let her walk in the sun. Pregnancy is a blessing from God, ??? So...take care. Take care. Take care.

Polonius: Aha, do you see? He continues to speak of my daughter. But he did not recognize me just now, and he said I was a fishmonger! It's apparent that his madness is already very serious! Hmm. But when I was young, I suffered from a lovesick madness that was only a bit less severe than this! Ah, Highness, what are you reading?

Hamlet: Um...words, words, words.

Polonius: What does it say there?

Hamlet: Between whom?

Polonius: I mean this book you are reading...

Hamlet: A mess of slanders, sir! (*Hamlet places the book into Polonius' hands.*) Ah, this satirical fellow says that, um, old men have ash-white beards, faces covered in wrinkles, eyes full of gunk that makes them look especially foolish, trembling legs...

Polonius: What!

Hamlet: Sir, even though I believe one hundred percent of this, I still think that writing it in a book, at times,

Polonius: Yes yes yes!

Hamlet: Sir! You ought to be as young as we are!

Polonius: Yes! Yes!

Hamlet: Even though you can walk backward just like a crab!

Polonius: Though he speaks madly, he speaks wisdom! Ah, Highness, do you not want to stay out of the cold?

Hamlet: I go to my grave.

Polonius: Well, there is no draft in there! I ought to hurry and set up my daughter to come see him. Well, my prince, I must ask your forgiveness, for I must depart...

Hamlet: Sir, sir, sir! I do not approve of bestowing anything on you of which I am so willingly bereft. Except my life, except my life, except my life...

Polonius: Goodbye, Highness!

*(Polonius exits.)*

Hamlet: What a boring old fool!

Guildenstern: Hey! My dear prince!

Rosencrantz: Hahaha! My noble prince!

Hamlet: What! Oh, hello, my good friends!

Rosencrantz, Guildenstern: Highness!

Hamlet: So, are you two doing well?

Rosencrantz: Oh, we are idling life away. Wasting one day at a time!

Guildenstern: Yes, Highness. We are happy in that we are blessed marginally! We are not quite the button on Lady Luck's hat.

Hamlet: Neither are you the soles of her shoes.

Rosencrantz: Right, Highness!

Hamlet: That means you are at her waist, or at her breast...

Rosencrantz: Highness, we know that you are very familiar with women.

Hamlet: He is in the secret parts of Lady Luck...hahaha, she is such a whore!

*(All three men laugh.)*

Hamlet: So, do you have any news? Come, news, news...

Rosencrantz: Not much, Highness. We just think that the world has become honest!

Hamlet: Then the end of the world is near! Let me ask another question. How did you offend Lady Luck so badly that she dumped you here in this prison?

Guildenstern: What? Prison, Highness?

Hamlet: Yes! Denmark is a prison!

Rosencrantz: Is the world a prison then?

Hamlet: One great prison! Within it, there are cells, wards, and dungeons. Denmark is the worst one!

Rosencrantz: But we do not think it so, Highness.

Hamlet: Of course you do not think so. Because there is no real division of right and wrong in the world; all such discrimination is the product of human thought. And to me, Denmark is a prison!

Rosencrantz: That is because your ambition is too great. Denmark cannot contain the fullness of your spirit.

Hamlet: Let us return to the castle. I have no time to idle away with you two about such trivialities.

Rosencrantz, Guildenstern: I will accompany you, Highness!

Hamlet: (Coughing lightly.) We have been friends for many years. Now tell me honestly, what are you doing here?

Rosencrantz: Oh, we are just here to...see visit you. That's all.

Guildenstern: That's right.

Hamlet: Just to visit? ??? I am a beggar with no capital to show my gratitude. Did you come of your own accord? Or were you sent by someone else? Speak, speak, speak, speak, speak.

Guildenstern: What would you have us say, Highness?

Hamlet: Say whatever you want, as long as it's not nonsense! In your eyes, ??? I know you were sent by the good king and the good queen! Right? Speak!

Rosencrantz: Why do you say that?

Hamlet: If you love me, then tell the truth!

Guildenstern: Uh, yes, Highness. We were sent.

Hamlet: (*Claps hands.*) Alright, let me explain your reasons for coming for you, lest you leak a secret and go back to a bitter welcome! (*Whispering.*) We don't know what has been wrong with Hamlet recently; he has lost all interest, ???, his attitude has become particularly depressed, as if this world of ten thousand growing things were a bald and barren hill. It is as if this firmament which hangs over all life were but a mass of filthy miasma. (*Gestures to audience.*) You, lovely woman, tell me what a great masterwork Man is. How noble is he in reasoning, how magnificent in faculty, how beautiful in bearing, how elegant in manner, and how angelic in his actions! In wisdom, he is like a god! The paragon of creation, and the master of all...but in my eyes, what is this dust-elemented creature? Men do not interest me. Women do not interest me either. But I see your thoughts in that smile of yours...

Rosencrantz: Oh, we have no thoughts on this, Highness.

Hamlet: Why did you laugh when I said that men do not interest me?

Rosencrantz: Well, if that is the case...then how boring your Highness will find the actors to be!

Actors: Highness! Highness! Highness! Oh, Highness! Oh, Highness!

Hamlet: Oh! Hey, hey hey! How could you ignore me so?

Polonius: They are the greatest actors in the world! It doesn't matter if it is...tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-history, history-pastoral, new opera, or old opera, they can do it all, hahaha!

Hamlet: Let's give him a huzzah!

Actors: Huzzah!

Polonius: Oh, oh, hahaha!

Hamlet: Ah, so how are you? How are you? Is the acting life supporting you well? I know that acting...

Hamlet and Actors: Makes no money!

Hamlet: Come, let us be as the French falcon—seeing something, we will immediately fall upon it. Lets have some lines to test your skills!

Actors: Okay!

Hamlet: Let's hear something rousing and fervent!

Actor 1: What piece would my lord like to hear?

Hamlet: Ah, I've heard you read a piece that was never performed. It was the story told by Aeneas. If you cannot start from there—

Actor 2: The king was engaged in bitter battle!

*(Hamlet and Actor 2 clap.)*

Actor 2: Okay!

*(Actor 2 performs.)*

Actor 1: The king was engaged in bitter battle! ???

*(Actor 1 and Actor 2 fight.)*

Actor 1: Though the attack was fierce, our king was not slain. No, but beneath that tempest of swords...our feeble old king was blown over...

Polonius: Highness, Highness! This is too long; don't perform it!

Hamlet: Annoying! Annoying! This fellow likes to hear trendy tunes and crass stories. Anything else puts him to sleep...now, on to the queen!

Actor 1: Ah, the queen! That devoted queen, her face covered in tears, her feet unshod, ran through flames. She saw Pyrrhus expeditiously dispatching foes, cutting her husband's limb! Her wailing could make the stars weep and grieve all the gods!

Polonius: Oh, look, his complexion has changed! His eyes are full of tears! Highness, could we stop here?

Hamlet: That is enough, that is enough. You can perform the rest for me later.  
Polonius!

Polonius: Ah, Prince Hamlet!

Hamlet: Go with them, and take good care of them! Whatever you do, do not neglect them at all!

Polonius: Oh, yes, yes, yes!

Hamlet: Do not forget that they epitomize this era. Remember that. Otherwise, you will get a vile epitaph after you die. And, in life, you will be ridiculed for their hunger.

Polonius: I understand, Highness! Don't worry! Don't worry!

Hamlet: Sirs, go with him!

Polonius: Come with me, come with me!

Hamlet: Hello, my friend. I would like to add a piece to your performance tomorrow. Do you think you will be able to memorize it?

Actor 1: Certainly, Prince Hamlet!

Hamlet: Good! (*Actor 1 leaves.*) Now I am alone. I am such a useless villain and a fool! Such a simple plot, and look at how moved that thespian was! I am such a useless villain! My noble father has been murdered, his spirit urging me to seek vengeance, but I am acting like nothing more than a prostitute. Just a prostitute, doing nothing but shout abuses and grumble away! Ah, my brain! My brain should be quicker! My brain should hurry and come up with a plan! I hear that, in seeing a play, a sinner will often have his conscience moved by an arranged scenario, and he will immediately seek restitution for his sins. I shall have those actors perform a scenario for my uncle that is very similar to how my father met his fate. From the side, I shall observe his expression. If he is uneasy at all, then I know what I must do! This play will be my snare prepared especially for him. I will force him to reveal the concealed secrets of his heart!

(*Actor rings bell.*)

Gravedigger 1: Look, this thing may have once been a politician, one very skilled at perpetrating gigantic frauds. Hmm, and maybe he was a venerable statesman—a scholar—every day...how to say it...indomitably faithful to his people, performing no shortage of grand deeds for the common folk. Regardless, though, there was still that particular case in which he, lacking caution, fell into my hole! Heaven has immeasurable winds and clouds, but as for us common folk, ruling over heaven and earth is nothing compared to managing our own selves, seeing to it that we can eat and that our families don't go hungry.

*(Spotlight.)*

Polonius: Ophelia! Ophelia! Stroll around here and wait for the prince to come, okay? Oh, yes, read this book too. The prince will not suspect anything as long as you are assiduously reading. Take it. Take it! *(Ophelia takes the book.)* Okay, now walk around here! Let's wait here, Your Majesty! *(Softly.)* Ophelia, walk!

*(Enter Hamlet.)*

Hamlet: Existence or annihilation? Existence or annihilation? Existence or annihilation? It is a question that must be considered. It is a question worth considering! It is a question that must be considered! Is it nobler to silently bear the poisonous blade of Fate or to stand and oppose it—thus ending this boundless suffering? To die, to sleep, and completely disappear. If this long slumber really can make an end of the wounds to the spirit and the attacks to the body, then that is truly the greatest, most tantalizing of all possible outcomes. To die is to sleep, but to sleep is also to dream! And here lies the obstacle! Once we have cast off the shackles of this world, what dreams will we have in the days after death? This is enough to cause us to hesitate in ignorance! This doubt is enough for us to prefer to forget our ideals and cling to life! Now, if life can be bought and sold for but the price of a knife, who would want to bear the whips and spurns of the world, the abuse of the oppressor, the indifference of the haughty, the hopelessness of love, or the tyranny of rulers! Existence or annihilation? Annihilation or existence? It is not a matter of fearing the days to come after death, but fearing that mysterious country from which no traveler has ever returned. This fear is what paralyzes our will, making us prefer to endure the torment we see before us rather than encounter that unknowable suffering. This mass of misgivings makes cowards of us all. The brilliance of resolution is overcast by a gray layer of thought! Plans of great foresight come to naught! This is a question worth considering! A question that must be considered! Ophelia, Ophelia! Ophelia, beautiful Ophelia! Ophelia...

Ophelia: Has my lord been well lately?

Hamlet: Quite well, thank you. I am quite well!



Ophelia: Highness, I have been meaning to return the gifts you have given me, but...oh, please take these!

Hamlet: I have never given you anything.

Ophelia: Highness, you did give these to me, and you said many sweet and endearing words that made them particularly precious! But now that the giver of the gift has had a change of heart, the gift, though precious, has lost its value. Take these, Highness!

Hamlet: Are you chaste?

Ophelia: My lord!

Hamlet: Are you beautiful?

Ophelia: What is my lord's meaning?!

Hamlet: If you are really both chaste and beautiful, it would be best not to let your chastity associate with your beauty!

Ophelia: Could beauty and chastity find any better lover than each other?

Hamlet: Beauty can make chastity lascivious, and chastity can reform beauty! (*Hamlet walks toward Ophelia.*) I once loved you.

Ophelia: Yes, Highness! You made me believe that you loved me.

Hamlet: I have never loved you!

Ophelia: Then I am truly destitute.

Hamlet: You should never have believed it! Because chastity cannot edify our sinful nature! (*Hamlet knocks book out of Ophelia's hands.*) Ah, ah, ah, what are you reading, what are you reading! To the nunnery with you! Do you really want to bring even more sinners into the world? Take me, for example. I am not great sinner, am I? Yet the wrongs I have committed are enough to make me wonder why my mother ever gave birth to me to begin with! My list of sins is so long that not even I can remember them all. I cannot even imagine them all, let alone have time to take them and...

(*Ophelia cries out pitifully.*)

Hamlet: (*Laughs.*) Ah...why do villains like us still slink around between heaven and earth? We are nothing but a bunch of God-damned slanderers! Hey, hey, hey, hey.

*(Motions for Ophelia to come over.)* Come, come. *(Holds Ophelia.)* And where is your father?

Ophelia: He is at home!

Hamlet: Close him up there so that he can keep his foolishness there! What, would you like to get married? For your dowry, I will give you a curse! Even if you are faithful as ice and pure as snow, may you still be slandered by the world! Nun, nun, nun... Oh, so you definitely want to get married! Well, you had better marry a fool, because intelligent men know how you all turn them into monsters! I also know how you women paint yourselves up. God gave you a face, damn it, but you make another for yourselves! You moan and sigh, make pretenses, and make up new names for the creatures God created. I've had enough. I cannot take any more...ah, don't say any more about marriage. As for those who are already married, let them all remain so—except for one. But as for the yet unmarried, may they never marry! *(Lowers voice.)* To the nunnery with you. *(Laughs.)* To the nunnery! To the nunnery! *(Exits.)*

Ophelia: What a noble heart has come to ruin! I am the most dejected of all women. I once breathed in the sweetness of his melodious vows, but now, I see that his reason has become as a string of beautiful silver bells that are out of tune. That unparalleled spring has withered away in madness. Oh, how miserable am I! *(Exits.)*

Claudius: Love! His temperament has nothing at all to do with being in love! Even though some of the things he said were incoherent, they were not mad ramblings! With all that nonsense, he was saying that there is something weighing on his heart! I fear this will lead to some sort of trouble! To avert an incident, I have decided to let him go to England. What do you think?

Polonius: Majesty, I still believe his madness is the result of love. I have a good idea—tonight, let the queen be alone with him. Let the queen try to get news from him. If the queen cannot get anything from him either...then, as you said, let him go to England.

Claudius: Alright then! Madness among the noble and great must not go unheeded!

Hamlet: You are the one I felt impressed to select because you can adjust your intellect and emotions to fit in such a way. Listen, Horatio. I have added a story to the performance we are having for the king tonight. This story is very similar to what I told you about my father's death. I ask you to focus on my uncle with all of your might. Once the performance is done, if he has not revealed any clues about his sins, that will prove that the spirit we saw was nothing but a demon. You must watch him.

I will also focus on his face with all of my faculties. We will make a judgment on him after the performance!

Horatio: Do not worry, Highness!

Hamlet: Look, they have arrived! I must assume my part as the silly man. Have a seat!

Horatio: Alright.

*(Everyone claps, and Claudius enters with others.)*

Claudius: Oh, Hamlet, how are you? Have you been well?

Hamlet: Quite well. I live the chameleon's life. I drink sweet flattery and air, and the taste of the fat chicken you all eat cannot compare! Hahaha...

Claudius: Nothing you have said is relevant, Hamlet.

Hamlet: That was not my intention.

*(Everyone laughs.)*

Hamlet: That was not my intention. That was not my intention...

Gertrude: Come, my good son. Come, and sit beside your mother the queen.

Hamlet: No, good mother! Here is an item much more enchanting. Miss, might I lay my head in your arms?

Ophelia: Oh, no, Highness.

Hamlet: Oh, no, no. I mean to say, um, my head. My head in your lap.

Ophelia: Very well, Highness.

Hamlet: Do you think my intentions vulgar?

Ophelia: No, Highness.

Hamlet: Wow, it is fun to put one's head between a girl's thighs, hahaha...

Ophelia: My lord seems quite pleased!

Hamlet: Oh yes, I am pleased indeed. And why should we not be pleased? Since God loves to jest so much, we... Well, look at how happy my mother is! And my father has only been dead for two hours now!

Ophelia: Oh, no! It has been four months already!

Hamlet: That long?! Does not everyone say that a great man's memory should last half a year?

Claudius: Um, Hamlet, is the play ready to start now?

*(Hamlet claps his hands as a sign.)*

Actors 1 and 2: Today, we shall perform a tragedy. If we do not perform it well, there is a reason!

Hamlet: Hey! Is this the opening? Or have I gone blind?

Ophelia: Is this going to be short?

Hamlet: Yes. As short as the love of a woman.

Actor 1: Oh, since love united us so harmoniously, the sun and the moon have already circled through thirty springs and autumns. Oh, let us walk through another thirty springs and autumns. Oh, my love, soon I will leave you. I will leave you here in this bustling city to be honored by the people, and perhaps you may marry another virtuous man.

Actor 2: I am not so fickle as that!... Unless I were an adulteress bent on murder. Should I ever become another man's wife, may I drown in anguish in this life and the next!

Hamlet: And what if she breaks her oath?

Actor 2: Oh, my love! I am touched that you would undertake such a heavy vow!  
*(Yawns.)* My mind is drifting, my love. I think I shall sleep for a bit.

Actor 1: Mother, oh, mother! Do you like this play?

Gertrude: I think this woman's oath is too severe!

Hamlet: No, no, no! She will keep her oath!

Claudius: What kind of a romance is this? Hm? Is there anything offensive in it?

Hamlet: Oh, no, not at all. It is just for fun. A king gets poisoned, but there's not anything to be concerned about there.

Claudius: What is this play called?

Hamlet: It's called *The Mousetrap*. The name is metaphorical.

Ophelia: My lord, could you explain to me what is going on?

Hamlet: Shh! Shh! Shh! This is Lucianus. He is the king's nephew.

Actor: (*Offstage.*) With a black heart and a swift hand, a good opportunity is never lost! Take advantage of those who are inattentive, and strike while you can. (*Laertes stands, switching roles.*) Carry your poison, chant a curse, work your sorcery, and annihilate this life...

Actor 1: (*Cries out unintelligibly.*)

Hamlet: To usurp the throne, this villain has poisoned the king in the garden! This story has been preserved well. It was written in fine Italian!

Polonius: Oh... (*Laughs.*)

Ophelia: The king has stood!

Polonius: He has been frightened. Stop the play!

Gertrude: Are you well, my lord?

Claudius: Torches! Torches! Light the torches!!!

All: Light the torches!

Hamlet: Let the wounded beast weep. If there is not a mother deer giving birth, some people sleep well, some cannot sleep. That is how backwards and chaotic this world is!

Actor: Highness! Highness!

Hamlet: Have the bats flown?

Actor: No, not yet.

Hamlet:

Actor:

Hamlet: Music! Music! (*To audience.*) If the king does not like this play, that just shows he has no appreciation for fine things. Music! Music!

Guildenstern: Highness! Highness! I have something to tell you.

Hamlet: Come, say what you want. Give me the whole history of it.

Guildenstern: After the king watched the play...

Hamlet: Did he get drunk?

Guildenstern: No, he was very angry!

Rosencrantz: Very angry!

Hamlet: If you were clever, you would go fetch his physician! Then he would be even angrier!

Guildenstern: And your mother?

Rosencrantz: Your mother?

Hamlet: My mother...

Guildenstern: Highness, if you will give me a suitable answer, I will relate your mother's will to you.

Hamlet: Oh, no no no no no! I cannot give you a suitable answer, because my mind is a mess. Okay, I will say as much as my mother wants me to say...now, what is wrong with my mother?

Rosencrantz: Your mother was quite shocked by your behavior.

Hamlet: Ah! One can be such a wonderful son that he shocks his mother. And what else besides this?

Rosencrantz: She wants you to come see her in her bedroom before you retire.

Hamlet: I must obey her will. Do you two have something else to say?

Rosencrantz: Highness, what vexes your heart and disturbs your mind so? If you are not willing to tell us your worries, they will entrap you.

Guildenstern: Yes, Highness!

Hamlet: I need to take a step back and address something with you. Why do you insist on spying on the secrets of my heart? It seems you are leading me into a snare.

Guildenstern: Highness, if we have offended you in any way, that is only because our love and respect for you is exceedingly deep.

Rosencrantz: That is right.

Hamlet: Hm. Can you play the flute?

Guildenstern: No!

Rosencrantz: He cannot, Highness!

Hamlet: Play the flute for me!

Guildenstern:

Rosencrantz: He really cannot!

Hamlet: I beseech you! Lie! Come, come, come...place your hands on the holes in the flute, and use your mouth to blow! You will blow a beautiful sound out of it!

Guildenstern: Highness, I cannot play the note because I do not have the proper skill!

Hamlet: Well, now you know! Oh? You want to peep in on the secrets of my heart? You want to play notes on me, from my lowest note to my highest? Well, you cannot even play a note with your nose.

Polonius: Highness!

Hamlet: What is it now?

Polonius: The queen requests your presence for a moment.

Hamlet: (*Sadly.*) You, you, you...look at the sun-colored cloud, shaped like a camel.

Polonius: Aha! Yes, it really is shaped like a camel!

Hamlet: Like a mole!

Polonius: Yes, the arched back makes it look like a mole!

Hamlet: It is even more like a whale!

Polonius: It is definitely a whale! Ha ha ha...

Hamlet: Very well, I will go see my mother now.

Polonius: Alright, I will go tell her.

Hamlet: It is easy to say “quickly.” (*All hesitate.*) Go. Leave! Leave!

Polonius: My good mistress, I ask you to please be firm with him! His recent behavior has been appalling!

Gertrude: Go now, I can hear him coming!

Polonius: Yes, I will hide right here then.

Hamlet: Mother, what do you want with me?

Gertrude: Hamlet, you have egregiously offended your father.

Hamlet: Mother, you have egregiously offended my father!

Gertrude: Come, come, come. Do not respond to me in such an absurd manner!

Hamlet: Do not question me in such an absurd manner!

Gertrude: What is it?

Hamlet: What is what?

Gertrude: Could it be that you have forgotten who I am?

Hamlet: No! I swear on the cross that I have not forgotten you are the wife of the brother of the husband of the queen. You are also my mother, though it seems otherwise...

Gertrude: Very well! I will go and leave you to speak with those who are capable of it!

Hamlet: Stop! Do not move! I will use a mirror to let you look at yourself – let you see your own soul!

Polonius: Help! Help! Quickly, come help!

*(Hamlet stabs Polonius with his sword.)*

Gertrude: *(Fearfully.)* Hamlet, do you have any idea what you have done?!

Hamlet: I don't know. Could this be a king?!

Gertrude: Such a recklessly cruel act!



Hamlet: A recklessly cruel act?! Good mother, it is just as wicked as killing a king and marrying his brother!

Gertrude: Killing a king?!

Hamlet: Yes, that is what I said!

Polonius: Oh, I am a dead man.

Hamlet: (*Sadly.*) That unlucky, bumbling, meddling idiot! Do you now know why meddling is so dangerous?! (*To Gertrude.*) Do not ring your hands! I will wring your heart! If your heart were not made of iron and stone, I would pierce right through it with these hands!

Gertrude: What wrong have I done to compel you to behave like an angry serpent toward me?

Hamlet: Your actions slander chastity, make virtue a hypocrite, and make the bond of marriage as empty as a gambler's oath. And the world, for grief of such actions, is cast over with veil of darkness, as if the Day of Judgment has come!

Gertrude: What could be so bad...that you would speak in such a fearsome manner?

Hamlet: Look at this painting, and look at the one you have there. This one looks so valiant and handsome, showing the world that he is a paragon for the male sex! This is your former husband. And now look at that one! That is your current husband, with the form of a tuft of moldy grass! Do you still have eyes?! You...you left this high mountain, and now you live off of the wilderness? (*Gertrude screams.*) Aha! Perception, yes, perception is something you do have, of course. Otherwise, you would not have taken action. Of course, your perception has become numb; otherwise, you would not be able to avoid lunacy... Your eyes have been mesmerized by a devil, and by this, he has deceived you. Why do you still speak of shame when you should be casting off all inhibitions and mounting a full assault? Ice and snow will both melt. Even...

Gertrude: Hamlet, please, say no more. Your words pierce my ears like knives. You make me see the sins of my soul that cannot be scrubbed clean.

Hamlet: A murderer. A demon. (*Painfully.*) Heavenly spirits, save me. Let me cover my head with my wings. If the dark spirits of hell do not disperse, how can I cry out or speak? You have not come to castigate your child. Do not waste his time and affections. Has he set your brilliant entreaty aside, delaying the great work he is meant to perform? Don't say it, don't say it...

(*A voice rises.*)

Ghost: ...you must have...the determination to continue. The weakest people receive the greatest charges... Go make her speak, Hamlet!

Hamlet: Mother, are you alright?

Gertrude: My good son, are you alright? Why do you stare at nothing and mumble at emptiness? May cool calmness pour forth from that flame of insanity.

Hamlet: Look! His face!

Gertrude: What are you looking at?

Hamlet: His face is such a pale white. Looking at this expression, even if his only suffering were the passage of empty time, that would still be stirring! Oh, do not look at me like that! That expression of yours will shake my will, and tears will be shed for you instead of blood!

Gertrude: To whom are you speaking?

Hamlet: Do you not see anything?

Gertrude: I do not see anything! And if there were something, I would see it!

Hamlet: And you do not hear anything either?

Gertrude: There is only the two of us speaking here.

Hamlet: My father! He is wearing the clothes he wore in life, and he is heading for the door this moment! (*Mumbling to himself.*) He has left. He has left. He has left...

Gertrude: My son, that is a vision in your mind! When in a frenzy, one will often experience such hallucinations!

Hamlet: In a frenzy?! No! Mother! My pulse, like yours, is beating at a normal rate. I am not talking about a hallucination! If you do not believe, I can relate to you everything he just said word-for-word! A madman could not recall things so clearly! Mother, I... Admit your sins to Heaven! Do not think that the things I have said come of madness and do not really address your faults... Admit your sins to Heaven. Confess. Beware the future. Do not put fertilizer on the weeds, or they will spread particularly quickly! Because in this evil time, even righteousness must ask a pardon of wickedness! She must bow and kneel, beseeching wickedness to accept her well-intentioned counsel.

Gertrude: Hamlet, your words break my heart in two!

Hamlet: Well, then cast away the wicked half! The half that is left will bring some peace to your spirit... (*Weeps.*)

Gertrude: Hamlet!

Hamlet: Mother! (*Crying angrily.*) Do not lie in my uncle's bed! Even if you have already fallen, you must learn to be a chaste woman! Though habit is a devil that can cause people to cast off their shame, it can also become an angel. If you are only willing to forsake wickedness for righteousness, subtle methods can help you to cast off evil and do good! If you could just restrain yourself tonight, afterward, you would know that the effort necessary for such restraint is not too difficult, and you would slowly grow accustomed to it! Please let me say good night to you once more. When you are ready to receive the blessings of Heaven, I beg you to bless me as well!

Gertrude: Hamlet, what option have you left me? What should I do?

Hamlet: Whatever you do, do not do as I just said. You had better let that porcine king drill your bed once again, pinching your cheek, letting you call him pet names, and giving you a bunch of vile temptations. Then he can take his fingers and caress your neck. That way, you will tell him everything you know, to the last pin and rag. Because what beautiful, intelligent, faithful queen would hide such conspicuous and shocking things from a toad, a bat, or a castrated tomcat?! Tell him everything. Do not believe in the ideal. Do not keep secrets.

Gertrude: Don't worry. If speech comes from breath, and breath comes from life, I only need to keep one breath in order to keep your secret.

Hamlet: My dear, must I go to England?

Gertrude: It is already decided.

Hamlet: The proclamations have been sent. The king will certainly have me taken by my schoolmates. As for those two fellows, I should be constantly wary of them as I would with a pair of venomous snakes! Ha! But I will test their patience. It's great when those who fire the first shot get blasted! Mother, I regret that I killed that old man in a moment of recklessness. But this is the will of Heaven – to punish me with his death even while punishing him by my hand. On the one hand, Heaven allows me to receive its condemnation, and yet, I also stand as Heaven's envoy! Misfortune has come, and an even greater calamity lies behind it! Good night, Mother!

Gertrude: Good night, Hamlet!

Guildenstern: Majesty!

Claudius: I have sent for Hamlet. I cannot allow him to stay close to me. He threatens me at every moment, and we cannot enforce the law on him. If I were to punish him, the people would only see the cruelty of my punishment, and they would not consider the grave crime he has committed. All things considered, I must let him go to England. Please make the necessary preparations.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: Yes, Majesty!

Rosencrantz: We will prepare immediately! The welfare of many commoners rests in Your Majesty's care. Your Majesty's cares are most godlike.

Guildenstern: Every commoner knows how to escape misfortune, and a king who bears great responsibilities should prevent sudden attacks. A king's single sigh will lead to the groaning of an entire nation, Majesty!

Claudius: Please depart as soon as possible. I must curb this public threat expeditiously!

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: Yes, Majesty!

Claudius: Hamlet, where is Polonius?

Hamlet: He went to dinner.

Claudius: To dinner?

Hamlet: Not where he eats, but where he is eaten. Right now, there is a whole swarm of skilled maggots gobbling him up. Yes, maggots are the world's greatest gourmets. We fatten up all sorts of creatures for our own enjoyment, but we fatten ourselves for the enjoyment of the maggots. A fat king and a scrawny beggar are simply two different items on the dinner table! We can take a maggot that has eaten king and catch a fish with it – and then eat that fish.

Claudius: What do you mean by that?

Hamlet: Nothing. I only mean to say that a king can go into the belly of a beggar and give it an inspection.

Claudius: Where is Polonius?

Hamlet: In Heaven. Send someone to find him! If you can't find him in one place, you can send someone to look elsewhere. If you haven't found him after a month, when you walk up the steps in the corridor, you will smell that waft of fragrant aroma!

Claudius: Hamlet, even though I am very grieved at what you have done, you must go to England immediately for your own safety.

Hamlet: Go to England?

Claudius: Yes, Hamlet.

Hamlet: Very well.

Claudius: I only hope that you understand my intentions.

Hamlet: I have already seen two angels who understand your intentions. Farewell then, ah, beloved mother.

Claudius: I am your most affectionate father!

Hamlet: No! My mother! Father and mother are husband and wife, and husband and wife are one flesh! Therefore, my beloved mother, farewell! Farewell! Off to England! Let's go!

Claudius: Stay with him. Make sure that he leaves our borders tonight!

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: Yes, Majesty!

Claudius: Esteemed King of England, if you fear my power and value my friendship, then do not neglect my will. In my letter, I have asked you to take Hamlet and kill him immediately. I must know that he is no longer in this world. Only then will this face be able to smile once again! (*Thinking.*) How shameful is my sin. From its emergence in the world, this sin has become the most ancient of curses – the sin of fratricide. I cannot pray, even though my desire to pray is just as strong as my will. This is just as when a person tries to do two things at once. Because he cannot confidently choose to do either first, he cannot help but do nothing! With my brother's warm blood having stained these hands, does Heaven not have any renewing rain to bring and wash them clean once more? Is it that the duty we incur under mercy is to bravely face our sins? Perhaps one purpose of prayer is to keep people from falling, while another is to exonerate sinners? That is why I must look to Heaven. My sin is committed, but how can I find atonement through prayer? It is impossible for me to ask God to forgive this murder! This is because, even now, I possess the very things that compelled me to act – my crown, this symbol of power, and my queen! Can a man both attain forgiveness and keep the spoils? In this fallen world, sin can make itself of no regard and bribery can betray the law, but it is not so in Heaven! There is no deception there; everything is transparent, and we will be judged according to all of our actions, words, and thoughts! So what is there to be done? Where is the loophole?! My heart is as black as death. Try to repent? But I do not wish to repent! What use is repentance? But I will still try! Repentance...repentance!!!

*(Marching.)*

Hamlet: Hey there! Whose army are you?

Soldier: We are the army of Norway!

Hamlet: Where are you headed?

Soldier: We are headed to a place called Poland!

Hamlet: Who is the general leading the troops?

Soldier: It's the king's nephew, the young Fortinbras.

Hamlet: Are you attacking the heart of Poland, or just the frontier?

Soldier: We...um... Okay, I'll tell it to you straight. We are going to take... (unclear)

Hamlet: *(Laughs.)* So the Poles are not defending it?

Soldier: No, they are prepared!

Hamlet: For a piece of worthless land? This is a conflict that will not be resolved even with the lives of two thousand men and twenty thousand ducats. This is purely because the nation is wealthy, though, in reality, it is beginning to decline. We simply cannot see its decay from the outside. Just look at these brave soldiers. A brilliant young prince leads the army – the thrum of a heroic heart drives his spirit, making him defy all unknowable outcomes. All for a piece of worthless land, then, they war against peril, fate, and death. True greatness is not rash action, but a kind of honor. It will contend fervently in the face of danger, even if it is only over a matter of a single straw. But what of myself? My father has been murdered, and my mother has been polluted. My reason and affections have both been (unclear), but I hesitate and lack all resolve. Depending on nature... Look, over twenty thousand men are marching calmly to their own graves for the sake of an empty reputation. In contrast, (unclear)? From this moment on, I shall forsake all hesitation, that bloody thoughts may fill my brain!

*(Woman's voice singing.)*

Ophelia: The street is full of people, but who is the girl's lover? A felt hat on his head and a staff in his hand, and a pair of straw sandals? Hahahaha... Girl! Dear girl! He is dead! You go...and don't come? Fresh flowers on his head, and a tombstone at his feet. Ah, Master is white as the snow on the mountains. Hehe! Fresh flowers cover his whole body...

Claudius: Beautiful Ophelia...

Ophelia: May God protect you! Shh...they say that the owl was transformed from a baker's daughter. We all know what we are now, but none of us know what we will become. May God be at your table.

Claudius: The death of her father has left her in a fantasy.

Ophelia: Shh! Don't bring that up again. None of us should bring that up again. Hey, hey, if anyone asks you, tell him this: "I'm in my gown and makeup, and I'm standing before your door, ready to be your sweetheart!" She was a maiden when she entered, but when she emerged, she had become a woman! (*Laughs.*)

Gertrude: Dear Ophelia!

Ophelia: Shh! No need to swear – I will finish the song soon. In the name of God, young men do not know shame. The rascals are so pushy! Ha! He said he promised to marry me!

Gertrude: How long has she been like this?

Ophelia: I hope all of this will end well. But when I realize they're going to put him in the icy-cold ground, I can't help but cry! (*Cries, then laughs.*) My big brother should definitely know about this! He should definitely know...ah, a carriage! Good night, ladies and gentlemen! Good night, good night! Ah, my fine carriage...he promised to marry me. (*Sings.*)

Claudius: This is all because of her father's death! The people are already talking about Polonius's sudden death! What unnerves me the most is that her brother has already secretly departed from France, and he will definitely blame me!

Gertrude: What is that sound outside? What is that noise?

Claudius: What is going on? My bodyguards? Tell them to protect the gate!

Laertes: Where is the king? Brothers, seal the gate for me!

Claudius: Laertes! For what cause have you incited rebellion?! Tell me!

Laertes: My father!

Claudius: He is dead!

Gertrude: He did not kill him!

Claudius: Let him have his say.

Laertes: How did he die? You cannot lie to me! No matter what happens in this life or the next, I will avenge the murder of my father!

Claudius: Laertes! For the sake of avenging your father, would you make no differentiation between friends and enemies?

Laertes: I only want to find my father's enemies!

Claudius: Do you know who your father's enemies are?

Laertes: As for his old enemies, I will open my arms and embrace them!

Claudius: Now you speak like a true gentleman!

*(Ophelia sings.)*

Ophelia: This is beautiful rosemary! For you! *(Gives some to the audience.)* Ah, haha! Okay! This is a pansy! And a funnel and a fennel! Maybe I should keep some for myself. I wanted to give you a few violets, but when Father died, they all withered away.

*(Ophelia and Laertes look at each other. He begins to move toward her.)*

Ophelia: Shh...

*(Ophelia sings as she leaves.)*

Laertes: I swear! I will make that villain pay for this in double! Little sister, rose of May...oh, God! Can it be that a young woman's reason is as frail under attack as an old man's body? *(Laertes weeps.)*

Claudius: Laertes, I will share this misfortune with you! Select some of your most trusted friends to choose between yourself and me. If they feel that I have engaged in any action that brought harm to your father, I will deliver up all that I possess as reparation. And if not, let us make an alliance, that we may catch this murderer!

Laertes: Alright, here's how it is! My father's death was quite suspicious, and his burial ceremony was very plain, with no honors from the knights, such that Heaven and Earth groaned with unease! I cannot but suspect foul play!

Claudius: And you can so do, because the offender must be prosecuted! Please, come with me! *(They go to another part of the castle.)* As you already know, the assassin who has murdered your father is also threatening my own life!



Laertes: So it appears. But why do you not take action and deal with such wicked deeds?

Claudius: There are two reasons for this. First, his mother the queen could not live a day without seeing him. Second, there is the fact that he is so beloved of the people. They will even say that the shackles would be a sort of honor for him. My arrow is too light; it cannot hit the target, but will blow back at me instead.

Laertes: Then my father's death is nothing! My sister's loss of reason is nothing...

Claudius: I am not a callous man! I loved your father! Look at this letter Hamlet has sent me: "Majesty, naked do I return to the land of your kingdom."

Laertes: Let him come.

Claudius: Laertes, do you truly love your father, or is this an act?

Laertes: How can you ask me such a thing?!

Claudius: I did not mean it in that way. Hamlet is returning now, and what will you do about it?

Laertes: I would tear his throat out in the chapel!

Claudius: If you truly want to do this, then stay at home and do not come out. Wait until Hamlet returns, and I will get a few people to praise your swordsmanship in front of him, encouraging him to spar with you. When you are sparring, have a dagger hidden, and you can avenge your father!

Laertes: Yes, and I can also put some poison on the sword, such that no panacea could save him!

Claudius: We need to come up with a more complete strategy. When you are sparring, you will certainly get thirsty. If he wants some water to drink, I can prepare a goblet of poisoned wine. In case he manages to escape your poisoned sword, if he just sips the wine, our objective will be accomplished all the same! What is that?!

Gertrude: Laertes. Laertes. Your sister Ophelia has drowned...

Laertes: Drowned?

*(Gertrude speaks as Ophelia.)*

Ophelia: By the brook, there is a slanting willow, and I went there by myself. I picked a bunch of fresh flowers. I wanted to make a fantastic wreath out of them. I wanted to put the wreath on the tree branch. But as I was climbing, the branch broke, and the

wreath and I fell into the water together. My clothes were torn off by the water, and for a little while, they floated in the water like a person. I didn't feel any pain at all. It was as if I lived in the water from the beginning. Slowly, my song not yet finished, my clothes filling with water, I sank...

Laertes: Drowned...

Ophelia: Shh...

Gertrude: Drowned. Drowned.

Laertes: Your body is submerged, good little sister of mine! I must hold back my tears, but... Majesty! There is a blazing speech I would make, but it is annihilated by these foolish tears! *(Wildly.)* Ophelia! *(Runs off stage.)*

Gravedigger 1: Hey, let me ask you something.

Gravedigger 2: About gravedigging?

Gravedigger 1: Let me ask you another question.

Gravedigger 2: About gravedigging?

Hamlet: Ah, sirs, for whom are you digging a grave?

Gravedigger 1: For ourselves.

Hamlet: I know you are the ones doing it. Is it a man or a woman?

Gravedigger 1: It is not a man, sir!

Hamlet: Oh, so it is a woman?

Gravedigger 1: It was a woman, but now it is a corpse!

*(Gravedigger 2 laughs.)*

Hamlet: This fellow speaks no ambiguity!... My God, how the world has changed in the last three years! How quickly the peasants' toes fall in love with the nobles' heels. Hey, how long have you been doing this for a living?

Gravedigger 1: Oh, since the day late King Hamlet defeated Fortinbras.

Hamlet: When did that occur?

Gravedigger 1: Every idiot in Denmark knows that. That was when our Highness Hamlet the Younger was born. But now, he has been sent to England.

Hamlet: Hey, hey, sir. Excuse me, excuse me. Could you please tell me why he went to England?

Gravedigger 1: He went crazy.

Hamlet: Crazy?

Gravedigger 1: He was sent there for treatment! But now, whether he was cured or not, it doesn't matter.

Hamlet: *(Laughs.)* Why not?

Gravedigger 1: Because the people there won't mind his mental condition. Everyone there is as crazy as he is.

*(Gravedigger 2 laughs.)*

Hamlet: Sir, could you answer a question for me please? Once a corpse has been buried in the ground, how long does it take for it to rot away?

Gravedigger 1: Oh, for that, you have to look at whether or not it started to rot before it was buried. For instance, those with the pox. If they've died of the pox, they are already hopelessly rotten. Your average person will take eight or nine years, whereas a tanner will last longer.

Hamlet: Oh, and why do tanners last longer than other people?

Gravedigger 1: His skin is tougher! *(Laughs.)* Ah, sir, do you see this thing? *(Lifts a skull.)* It has already been underground for twenty-three years.

Hamlet: Who is it? Do you two know him?

Gravedigger 1: Go on, guess who this fellow is!

Hamlet: I cannot.

Gravedigger 1: I hope every scourge there is befalls him. Once, he took a bottle of poisoned wine and poured the whole thing on my head. He was the king's jester, Yorick.

Hamlet: Oh, is it he?

Gravedigger 1: The same.

Hamlet: Oh, I know him. He was a witty fellow. Imaginative too. He carried me on his back a thousand times. Oh, it's terrible thinking about it. There were two thin lips here. I do not know how many times I kissed him. Do you still make jests? Can you still tell a joke to make everyone in the court hold their sides in laughter? There is one last joke at your expense. (*Addresses audience.*) Oho, my crestfallen friends, go to the women's quarters for me, and tell them that, even if their makeup is an inch thick, they will all end up just like him. (*Addresses skull.*) Tell them, and see if they laugh.

(*A bell rings.*)

Horatio: Highness, someone is coming.

Hamlet: It is the king, and the queen too. They are burying one of their people. Everything is so simple – it must be a suicide. Let us hide a while and see what transpires.

Laertes: What other rite is there to perform?

Hamlet: There is Laertes. He is a noble youth.

Laertes: That is fine. Everyone can put her down. May the lovely violets grow from her body.

Hamlet: Beautiful Ophelia!

Gertrude: Good flowers, it is right that you are strewn over a beautiful maiden's body. Goodbye forever, beautiful Ophelia. I hoped you would be my son's wife, and these fresh flowers should have been strewn over your bridal bed. I never thought I would spread them over your grave.

Laertes: May a thousand curses fall upon that villain who drove you mad! (*To the gravediggers.*) Do not fill it yet! Let me hold her once more! Little sister! Good father, please bury the living with the dead!

Hamlet: I am Hamlet, Prince of Denmark!

(*Hamlet and Laertes struggle, and the others separate them.*)

Hamlet: I will have a duel with you!

Gertrude: My son, why are you acting like this?

Hamlet: I love Ophelia! A thousand brothers put together could not love her as I do!  
What can you do for her? Will you cry? Will you shout? Will you tear yourself?  
Will you eat a crocodile? I will try it! You came here to cry, right? You jump into  
her grave to insult me publicly!

Claudius: Laertes, he is a crazy man! Do not become as he is!

Gertrude: Laertes, he is always like this in his illness. He will be quiet in a moment!

Hamlet: Laertes, there was a time when I loved you. How could you treat me like this?  
Let mountebanks boast. Let cats mew and dogs bark.

Claudius: Go with him!

Horatio: Alright.

*(Hamlet sobs.)*

Hamlet: Horatio, I am sorry! I am sorry. I should not have lost control in front of  
Laertes! I saw my own sorrow in his eyes.

Horatio: Highness.

Hamlet: I want to ask for his forgiveness!

Horatio: I think you will lose at this competition!

Hamlet: I shall not be defeated! Only a woman would panic because of some  
inexplicable premonition. But Horatio, you could not believe just how much sorrow I  
feel in my heart. Nevermind, nevermind...

Horatio: Highness!

Hamlet: Nevermind...

Horatio: If you don't want to do something, don't do it! I will go tell them that you are  
not feeling well!

Hamlet: No, no, no! I will not believe in those premonitions! However, even the death  
of a sparrow is determined by fate. If it is set for today, then it will be tomorrow. If it  
is set for tomorrow, then it will not be today. If it escapes today, it will not escape  
tomorrow. Since no one knows when the most fitting time is to leave this world, one  
should be prepared to go at any time!

Claudius: Come, Hamlet, and let me make peace between the two of you.

Hamlet: Forgive me, Laertes. I have offended you! But you are a noble youth, so you will forgive me. Those who were there all know how I was set upon by madness. My actions dishonored you, hurt your feelings, and roused your anger. My statements came out of madness. Since it is so, Hamlet is also a victim in this. Hamlet's madness is his enemy. In front of everyone, that for which I ask forgiveness did not come of malicious intent.

Laertes: These words placate my emotions. These emotions compelled me to seek revenge, but this does not involve honor, so I shall not seek satisfaction unless a respected elder comes and says it would be a dishonor. For now, I will accept your friendly gesture and swear not to betray your kindness.

Hamlet: I accept your frankness, and I would be pleased to compete against you! Take up your sword!

Claudius: Hamlet! Do you know how we have wagered?

Hamlet: Yes. You cast your lots in the corner...

Claudius: I do not think that my judgment will be proven poor. If Hamlet's swordsmanship prevails, the king will drink a toast to Hamlet! I will also place a pearl in the goblet, and give it to the winner! Alright, now the match begins! Referee, pay careful attention please.

Horatio: A clean fight, please!

Hamlet: At your leave.

Laertes: Please, Highness!

Hamlet: Ahahah...aha, a hit! What does the referee say?

Horatio: A hit! A very clear hit!

*(Hamlet laughs.)*

Laertes: Alright, then. Once more!

Claudius: Hamlet, this cup is yours. A toast to you!

Hamlet: Leave it for me there, and I will drink it after the match! Now let's go! Full speed! Hold nothing back!

Laertes: Come on!

Hamlet: Come then! *(The two fight.)* What's wrong? Have you been hit again?  
*(Laughs.)*

Gertrude: Hamlet, my good son. Come. Come here, and take your mother the queen's handkerchief to wipe the sweat from your brow.

Hamlet: Thank you, good mother!

Gertrude: And I will drink this cup of wine for you.

Claudius: No, don't drink it. That is Hamlet's wine!

Gertrude: No, Majesty, I want to drink it! Hamlet! My good son, may you be victorious!

Laertes: Majesty, I will strike him in a moment!

Claudius: It seems to me that you are going to lose!

Laertes: En garde! *(Strikes Hamlet in the arm.)*

Hamlet: Come then! *(The two fight.)* Come! Come!

Laertes: Ah... *(Receives an injury.)*

Horatio: Do not get angry, Highness! *(Pulls Hamlet and Laertes apart.)* They are both bleeding! My queen, what is wrong?

Claudius: There is nothing wrong. She has just fainted at the sight of blood!

Gertrude: No! Hamlet, it was the wine. There is poison in the wine! *(Dies.)*

Hamlet: Wicked conspiracy! Wicked conspiracy! Close the gates! Close the gates!  
Find the assassin! Find the assassin!

*(Claudius repeats Hamlet.)*

Laertes: Here is the assassin! *(Points to Claudius.)* Hamlet, the tool of your death is in your own hand! There is poison on that sharp blade. This treachery has killed me as well. And the queen, she has been poisoned! It was the king. It was all the king's doing.

Hamlet and Claudius: Poison! Your power comes of poison!

*(Hamlet and Claudius confront each other. They switch characters, and Claudius falls.)*

Laertes: Dear Hamlet, let us forgive one another. I do not hate you for killing my father and me. Do not hate me for killing you. (*Laertes dies.*)

Claudius: May Heaven forgive you, Laertes. Goodbye, Mother! Horatio, I am dying. Before you go to Heaven, please sacrifice some of your time to tarry in this grim country, and tell the people my story.

(*Thunderous noise.*)

Hamlet: What is that sound?

Horatio: It is the young Fortinbras returning victorious from Poland! It is a cannon salute!

Hamlet: I foresee Fortinbras becoming this nation's king. He already has the support of this dying man. You that have witnessed these events, if the Reaper were not chasing me, I would definitely tell you everything myself! But now, there is only silence. (*Dies.*)

Horatio: A noble heart is broken. Good night, dear prince. May you enter the angelic hosts and ease your shoulders with singing.

Fortinbras: The match! The match! (*Laughs.*) Where is the fencing match?

Horatio: What do you want?

Fortinbras: The match?

Horatio: If you want to see the show, then here it is!

Fortinbras: Ah! What a horrible slaughter! (*Laughs.*) Proud Reapers, killing so many noble ones all at once! Amid your eternal sorrow, you will enjoy a sumptuous feast!

Horatio: Take his body up onto the stage! And let me bear record of every bit of this story to the ignorant world!

Fortinbras: It is I who have the authority to inherit this nation's throne. But today, as I enjoy this honor, my heart is full of sorrow. Guards! Take Hamlet and put him up on the stage like a soldier!