

Shakespeare's play is based on a legend retold by the 12th century Danish Chronicler 'Saxo Grammaticus'. The Hamlet story has been made into at least 26 operas, about a dozen films, and has inspired performance works as varied as 'The Lion King', 'Hair' and Tom Stoppard's 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead'. **This is an abridged (shortened) version of the play.**

The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

By William Shakespeare

Dramatis Personae (characters)

Claudius, King of Denmark.

Hamlet, son to the former King, and nephew to the present king.

Polonius, Lord Chamberlain.

Horatio, friend to Hamlet.

Laertes, son to Polonius.

Marcellus, Bernardo, Francisco, officers/guards.

Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Osric, courtiers.

Gertrude, Queen of Denmark, mother to Hamlet.

Ophelia, daughter to Polonius.

Ghost of Hamlet's Father.

Two Clowns, gravediggers.

A Priest.

Group of **Players** (actors).

Fortinbras, A Prince of Norway.

ACT I

Scene I. *Elsinore Castle. A platform before the Castle. Enter two Sentinels, Francisco, and Bernardo.*

Ber. Have you had quiet guard Francisco?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring.

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

Fran. Stand, ho! Who is there?

Ber. Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.

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

Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,

Ber. Last night of all,

When yond star...

Enter Ghost.

Mar. Peace! break thee off! Look where it comes again!

Ber. In the same figure, like the King that's dead.

Mar. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

Hor. Stay! Speak, speak! I charge thee speak!

Exit Ghost.

Mar. 'Tis gone and will not answer.

Ber. How now, Horatio? You tremble and look pale.

Is not this something more than fantasy?

Hor. Before my God, I might not this believe

Without the sensible and true avouch

Of mine own eyes.

The cock crows.

Hor. Let us impart what we have seen to-night

Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,

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

Exeunt.

Scene II. *Elsinore. A room of state in the Castle.*

Musical flourish. Enter Claudius, King of Denmark, Gertrude the Queen, Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes and his sister Ophelia.

Laer. My dread lord,

Your leave and favour to return to France;
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark
To show my duty in your coronation.

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

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

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes. Time be thine,

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son-

Ham. [*aside*] A little more than kin, and less than kind!

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,

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,

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father;

But you must know, your father lost a father;

That father lost, lost his. This must be so.

We pray you throw to earth

This unprevailing woe, and think of us

As of a father; Come away.

Flourish. Exeunt all but Hamlet.

Ham. O that this too too solid flesh would melt,

Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!

Frailty, thy name is woman!-

A little month, or ere those shoes were old

With which she followed my poor father's body

Why she, even she married with my uncle;

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

Than I to Hercules.

Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo.

Hor. Hail to your lordship!

Ham. I am glad to see you well, Horatio!

And what make you from Wittenberg?

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

Ham. I prithee do not mock me, fellow student.

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

Hor. Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.

Ham. The funeral bak'd meats

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

My father- methinks I see my father.

Hor. O, where, my lord?

Ham. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Hor. I saw him once. He was a goodly king.

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

I shall not look upon his like again.

Hor. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Ham. Saw? who?

Hor. My lord, the King your father.

Ham. The King my father?
Hor. Two nights together had these gentlemen
 Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch
 Been thus encount'ed. A figure like your father,
 Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,
Ham. I will watch to-night.
 Perchance 'twill walk again.
Hor. I warr'nt it will.
Exeunt

Scene III. *Elsinore. A room in the house of Polonius.*
Enter Laertes and Ophelia.

Laer. My necessaries are embark'd. Farewell, sister.
 For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
 Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood;
 A violet in the youth of primy nature,
 No more.

Oph. No more but so?

Laer. Think it no more. But you must fear,
 His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
 For he himself is subject to his birth.
 Be wary then; best safety lies in fear.

Oph. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
 As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
 Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
 Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
 And recks not his own rede.

Enter Polonius.

Pol. Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!
 The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
 And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!
 And these few precepts in thy memory
 See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
 Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
 Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
 Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
 Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
 But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
 Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware
 Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,
 Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
 Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;
 Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
 Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
 But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
 And they in France of the best rank and station
 Are of a most select and generous chief in that.
 Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend,

And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine ownself be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!
Laer. Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well
What I have said to you.
Oph. 'Tis in my memory lock'd.
Laer. Farewell. *Exit.*
Pol. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?
Oph. So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.
Pol. What is between you? Give me up the truth.
**Oph. He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.**
**Pol. Affection? Pooh! You speak like a green girl,
Ay, springes to catch woodcocks! I do know,
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth
Have you so slander any moment leisure
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you. Come your ways.**
Oph. I shall obey, my lord.
Exeunt.

Scene IV. Elsinore. The platform before the Castle.

Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.
Ham. What hour now?
Hor. I think it lacks of twelve.
Enter Ghost.
Hor. Look, my lord, it comes!
Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Say, why is this? What should we do?
Ghost beckons Hamlet.
Ham. I say, away!- Go on. I'll follow thee.
Mar. Let's follow. 'Tis not fit thus to obey him.
Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.
Exit all but Ghost and Hamlet.
Ham. Whither wilt thou lead me? Speak!
Ghost. I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
To ears of flesh and blood, list, list, O, list!
Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.
Ham. Murder?
Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me. But know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.
Ham. My uncle?
Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,
O wicked wit won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.

O Hamlet, let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
Adieu, adieu, adieu! Remember me. *Exit Ghost.*
Ham. O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
Enter Horatio and Marcellus.
Mar. How is't, my noble lord?
Hor. What news, my lord?
Ham. There's neer a villain dwelling in all Denmark But he's an arrant knave.
Hor. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.
Ham. Consent to swear never to speak of this that you have seen. Swear by my sword.
Ghost. [*beneath*] Swear by his sword.
Ham. There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
Ghost. [*beneath*] Swear. [*They swear.*]
Ham. The time is out of joint. O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right!
Exeunt.

ACT II

Scene I. *Elsinore. A room in the house of Polonius.*

Enter Polonius and Ophelia.
Oph. O my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!
Pol. With what, i' th' name of God!
Oph. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd,
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.
Pol. Mad for thy love?
Oph. My lord, I do truly do fear it.
Pol. This is the very ecstasy of love,
What, have you given him any hard words of late?
Oph. No, my good lord; but, as you did command,
I did repel his letters and denied
His access to me.
Pol. That hath made him mad.
Come, go we to the King.
Exeunt.

Scene II. *Elsinore. A room in the Castle.*

Flourish. Enter King and Queen, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, with others.
King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.
Something have you heard of Hamlet's transformation.
I entreat you both, being brought up with him,
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
So much as from occasion you may glean.
Guil. We both obey.
Queen. Thanks, and I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son.- Go!
Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, with attendants.

Enter Polonius.

King. He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

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

Pol. Since brevity is the soul of wit,
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad.
And now remains to find the cause of this effect-
I have a daughter who hath given me this letter.

[*Reads*] 'To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,'-
(*'Beautified'* is an ill phrase.)

'In her excellent white bosom, these, &c.
Thine evermore, most dear lady, HAMLET.'

King. But how hath she receiv'd his love?

Pol. When I had seen this hot love on the wing
Then my young mistress thus I did bespeak:
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star.
This must not be.' And she took the fruits of my
advice,

And he, repulsed, a short tale to make,
Fell into the madness wherein now he raves.

King. Do you think 'tis this?

Queen. It may be, very like.

King. How may we try it further?

Pol. You know sometimes he walks four hours together
Here in the lobby.
At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him.
Be you and I behind an arras then.
Mark the encounter. If he love her not,

King. We will try it.

Enter Hamlet, reading on a book.

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

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away
Exeunt King and Queen, with Attendants.

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

Do you know me, my lord?

Ham. Excellent well. You are a fishmonger.

For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god
kissing carrion- Have you a daughter?

Pol. I have, my lord.

[*aside*] Still harping on my daughter. Yet he said I was a fishmonger. He is far gone, far gone! Truly in my
youth I suff' red much extremity for love- very near this. Though this be madness, yet there is a method in't.

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

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

Exit Polonius.

Guil. My honour'd lord!

Ros. My most dear lord!

Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou,
Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

Guil. On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Ham. What have you, my good friends, deserved at the
hands of Fortune that she sends you to prison?

Guil. Prison, my lord?

Ham. Denmark's a prison.

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison. I know the good King and Queen have sent for you.

Ros. To what end, my lord?

Ham. I have of late lost all my mirth, and indeed this most excellent canopy, the air appeareth 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 faculties! 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.

Ros. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you. We coted them on the way, and hither are they coming to offer you service.

Ham. What players are they?

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

Flourish for the Players.

Guil. There are the players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come! But my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceiv'd.

Guil. In what, my dear lord?

Ham. I am but mad north-north-west. When the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Enter four or five Players.

Ham. You are welcome, masters; welcome. We'll have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your quality. Come, a passionate speech.

1st Play. What speech, my good lord?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once, it, I remember, pleas'd not the million, 'twas caviary to the general. So, proceed you.

1st Play. 'O who, had seen the mobled queen-'

Ham. 'The mobled queen'?

1st Play. 'Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames

With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head

Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe...

Ham. God's bodykins, man, much better! Take them in.

Ham. Along, friends. We'll hear a play to-morrow.

Exeunt the Players, with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

Now I am alone.

O, vengeance!

Why, what an ass am I! Fie upon't! foh!

About, my brain! Hum, I have heard

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,

Have by the very cunning of the scene

Been struck so to the soul that presently

They have proclaim'd their malefactions;

I'll have these Players

Play something like the murder of my father

Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks;

The play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King. *Exit.*

ACT III

Scene I. Elsinore. A room in the Castle.

Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and Lords.

King. And can you by no drift of circumstance

Get from him why he puts on this confusion?
Ros. He does confess he feels himself distracted,
But from what cause he will by no means speak.
Queen. Did you assay him to any pastime?
Ros. Madam, it so fell out that certain players
We o'erraught on the way. Of these we told him,
And there did seem in him a kind of joy.
Pol. And he beseech'd me to entreat your Majesties
To hear and see the matter.

King. Good gentlemen, give him a further edge
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia.
Her father and myself (lawful espials)
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge

Exit Queen.

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here.- Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves.- [*To Ophelia*] Read on this book,
I hear him coming. Let's withdraw, my lord.

Exeunt King and Polonius, Enter Hamlet.

Ham. To be, or not to be- that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die- to sleep-
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be 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,
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would these fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death-
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns- puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry

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

Oph. Good my lord,

How does your honour for this many a day?

Ham. I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

Oph. My lord, I have remembrances of yours

That I have longed long to re-deliver.

I pray you, now receive them.

Ham. No, not I! I never gave you aught.

Oph. My honour'd lord, you know right well you did,

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery! 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. Where's your father?

Oph. At home, my lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool nowhere but in's own house. Go, farewell. If thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell. *Exit.*

Oph. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!

Enter King and Polonius.

King. Love? his affections do not that way tend;

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

O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;

Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England

Haply the seas, and countries different,

With variable objects, shall expel

This something-settled matter in his heart.

Pol. To England send him.

King. Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.

Exeunt.

Scene II. *Elsinore. Hall in the Castle.*

Enter Hamlet and three of the Players.

Ham. Make the play, I pray you, as I gave it.

Player. I warrant your honour.

Ham. Bid the players make haste,

Exit Players

Ham. What, ho, Horatio!

Enter Horatio.

Hor. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Enter Trumpets and Kettledrums. Danish march. Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and other Lords attendant, with the Guard carrying torches.

Ham. They are coming to the play. I must be idle.

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Ham. Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish. I eat the air, promise-cramm'd. You cannot feed capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet.

Ham. No, nor mine now. [*To Polonius*] My lord, you play'd once i' th' university, you say?

Pol. That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor. I did enact Julius Caesar; Brutus kill'd me.

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

Ham. No, good mother. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[*Sits down at Ophelia's feet.*]

Oph. No, my lord.

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

Oph. Nay 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham. So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year.

Sound of hautboys playing. The dumb show enters.

Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly; the Queen embracing him and he her. He lays him down upon a bank of flowers. She, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, pours poison in the sleeper's ears, and leaves him. The Queen returns, finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner with some three or four Mutes, comes in again, seem to condole with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner woos the Queen with gifts; she seems harsh and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love. Exeunt.

Ham. Madam, how like you this play?

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. 'The Mousetrap.' This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna. He poisons him i' th' garden for's estate. His name's Gonzago.

Oph. The King rises.

Ham. What, frighted with false fire?

Queen. How fares my lord?

Pol. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light! Away!

Exeunt.

Scene IV. *The Queen's closet.*

Enter Queen and Polonius.

Pol. He will come straight. Look you lay home to him. Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,

Queen. I'll warrant you; fear me not. Withdraw; I hear him coming.

Polonius hides behind the arras. Enter Hamlet.

Ham. Now, mother, what's the matter?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Ham. Mother, you have my father much offended.

Queen. What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?

Help, help, ho!

Pol. [*behind*] What, ho! help, help, help!

Ham. [*draws*] How now? a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead! [*Makes a pass through the arras and kills Polonius.*]

Pol. [*behind*] O, I am slain!

Queen. O me, what hast thou done?

Ham. Nay, I know not. Is it the King?

Queen. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

Ham. A bloody deed- almost as bad, good mother,

As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

Queen. As kill a king?

Ham. [*Lifts up the arras and sees Polonius.*]

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

I took thee for thy better.

Queen. O, speak to me no more!

These words like daggers enter in mine ears.

No more, sweet Hamlet!

Ham. A murderer and a villain!

Enter the Ghost in his nightgown.

Ham. A king of shreds and patches!-

Queen. Alas, he's mad!

Ghost. Do not forget. This visitation

Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.

Ham. How is it with you, lady?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you,

That you do bend your eye on vacancy,

And with th' encorporal air do hold discourse?

Ham. On him, on him! Look you how pale he glares!

His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,

Queen. To whom do you speak this?

Ham. Do you see nothing there?

Queen. Nothing at all but ourselves.

Ham. Look how it steals away!

My father, in his habit as he liv'd!

Exit Ghost.

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain.

Ham. It is not madness that I have utt'ed.

I'll blessing beg of you.- For this same lord,

I do repent; but heaven hath pleas'd it so,

To punish me with this, and this with me,

I must be cruel, only to be kind;

Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.

Good night, mother.

Exit the Queen. Then Exit Hamlet, tugging in Polonius.

Scene V. *Elsinore. A room in the Castle.*

Enter Horatio, Queen, and a Gentleman.

Queen. I will not speak with her.

Gent. She speaks much of her father, and beats her heart.

Queen. Let her come in.

Exit Gentleman. Enter Ophelia distracted.

Oph. Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark?

Queen. How now, Ophelia?

Oph. Say you? Nay, pray You mark.

(Sings) He is dead and gone, lady,

He is dead and gone;

Queen. Nay, but Ophelia-

Oph. Pray you mark.

(Sings) White his shroud as the mountain snow-

Enter King.

King. How do you, pretty lady?

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

(Sings) To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I cannot choose but weep to think they would lay him i' th' cold ground. My brother shall know of it.

Good night, ladies. Good night, sweet ladies.

Exit Ophelia

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

Exit Horatio.

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

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

When sorrows come, they come not single spies.

But in battalions!

Enter Laertes with others.

Laer. Where is this king? O thou vile king, Give me my father!

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

King. Let him go, Gertrude.

Laer. Where is my father?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him!

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

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

Like the kind life-rend'ring pelican.

How now? What noise is that?

Enter Ophelia.

Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!

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

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

Oph. (*sings*) (Hey non nony, nony, hey nony)

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance.

There's a daisy. I would give you some violets,

But they wither'd all when my father died.

Exit Ophelia and Queen after

Laer. Do you see this, O God?

King. Laertes, I must commune with your grief.

It was at Hamlet's hand your father met his end

And where th' offence is let the great axe fall.

Laer. Have I a noble father lost;

A sister driven into desp'rate terms,

But my revenge will come.

King. I lov'd your father, as we love ourself;

Enter a Messenger with letters.

How now? What news?

Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:

King. Laertes, you shall hear them.

Leave us.

Exit Messenger.

[*Reads*] 'High and Mighty, I am returned from England. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes; when I shall (first asking your pardon thereunto) recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return. 'HAMLET.'

What should this mean?

King. Will you be rul'd by me?

Laer. Ay my lord,

King. If he be now return'd, I will work him,

And for his death no wind

But even his mother shall call it accident.

Laer. My lord, I will be rul'd;

The rather, if you could devise it so

That I might be the organ.

King. He gave you such a masterly report

For your rapier most especially,

That he cried out 'twould be a sight indeed

If one could match you.

Laer. To cut his throat i' th' church!

King. No place indeed should murther sanctuarize;

Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,

Will you do this? Keep close within your chamber.

We'll put praise upon your excellence

And set a double varnish on the fame
And wager on your heads. He, being remiss,
Will not peruse the foils; so that with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and, in a pass of practice,
Requite him for your father.

Laer. I will do't!

And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death

King. Let's further think of this,

When he calls for drink, I'll have prepar'd him
A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there.- But stay, what noise,

Enter Queen.

How now, sweet queen?

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

Laer. Drown'd! O, where?

Queen. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crowsfeet, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook and unto that element,
To muddy death.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears

Exeunt

ACT V

Scene I. *Elsinore. A churchyard.*

Enter two Clowns, with spades and pickaxes.

Clown. Is she to be buried in Christian burial when she wilfully seeks her own salvation?

Other. I tell thee she is; therefore make her grave straight.

Clown. How can that be, unless she drown'd herself in her own defence?

Other. Is't the crowner's quest law?

Clown. I'll put a question to thee.

Other. Go to!

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

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

Clown. I like thy wit well, in good faith. Go, fetch me a stoup of liquor.

Exit Second Clown. Enter Hamlet and Horatio afar off.

[Clown digs and sings.]

In youth when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet;

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

Hor. Custom hath made it in him a Property of easiness.

What man dost thou dig it for?

Clown. For no man, sir.

Ham. What woman then?

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

Ham. How absolute the knave is! How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

Clown. Since the very day that young Hamlet was born- he that is mad, and sent into England.

Ham. How came he mad?

Clown. Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How long will a man lie i' th' earth ere he rot?

Clown. Faith, some eight year or nine year. Here's a skull now. This skull hath lien i' th' earth three-and-twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it?

Clown. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the King's jester.

Ham. [*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. [*Puts down the skull.*]

Hor. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bung-hole? But soft! aside! Here comes the King- [*Retires with Horatio.*]
Enter priests with a coffin in funeral procession, King, Queen, Laertes, with Lords attendant.

Laer. Lay her i' th' earth;

And from her fair and unpolled flesh

May violets spring!

Ham. What, the fair Ophelia?

Queen. Sweets to the sweet! Farewell. [*Scatters flowers.*]

I hop'd thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;

Laer. Hold off the earth awhile,

Till I have caught her once more in mine arms. *Leaps in the grave.*

Ham. [*comes forward*] What is he whose grief

Bears such an emphasis? [*Leaps in after Laertes*]

Laer. The devil take thy soul! [*Grapples with him.*]

Ham. I lov'd Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers

Could not make up my sum.

King. O, he is mad, Laertes.

Queen. For love of God, forbear him!

Ham. Hear you, sir!

Let Hercules himself do what he may,

The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. *Exit.*

King. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.

[*To Laertes*] Strengthen your patience

Exeunt.

Scene II. *Elsinore. A hall in the Castle.*

Enter Hamlet and Horatio.

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

Hor. Remember it, my lord!

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

And prais'd be rashness for it; let us know,

Our indiscretion sometime serves us well

When our deep plots do pall; and that should learn us

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,

Rough-hew them how we will-

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

Ham. Not a whit, we defy augury; there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. Since no man knows

aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.

Enter King, Queen, Laertes, Osric, and Lords, with other Attendants with foils and gauntlets. A table and flagons of wine on it.

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

[The King puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's.]

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong;

Laer. I stand aloof, and will no reconcilment

Ham. Give us the foils. Come on.

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

Ham. Very well, my lord.

Laer. This is too heavy; let me see another.

Ham. This likes me well. These foils have all a length?

Prepare to play.

Osr. Ay, my good lord.

King. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.

Ham. Come on, sir.

Laer. Come, my lord.

They play.

Ham. One.

Laer. No.

Ham. Judgment!

Osr. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laer. Well, again!

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

Here's to thy health.

[Drum; trumpets sound]

Give him the cup.

Ham. I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile.

Come. *[They play.]* Another hit. What say you?

Laer. A touch, a touch; I do confess't.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

Ham. Good madam!

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen. I will, my lord; I pray you pardon me. *Drinks.*

King. *[aside]* It is the poison'd cup; it is too late.

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laertes wounds Hamlet; then in scuffling, they change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes.

King. Part them! They are incens'd.

Ham. Nay come! Again!

The Queen falls.

Ham. How does the Queen?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no! The drink, the drink! I am poison'd.

Dies.

Ham. O villany! Treachery! Seek it out.

Laertes falls.

Laer. Hamlet, thou art slain;

No medicine in the world can do thee good.

Unbated and envenom'd. The foul practice

Hath turn'd itself on me. Lo, here I lie,

Never to rise again. Thy mother's poison'd.

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

Ham. The point envenom'd too?

Then, venom, to thy work. *Hurts the King.*

All. Treason! treason!

King. O, yet defend me, friends! I am but hurt.

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane,

Drink off this potion! Is thy union here?

Follow my mother. *King dies.*

Laer. He is justly serv'd.

It is a poison temper'd by himself.

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.

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

Nor thine on me! *Dies.*

Ham. Had I but time (as this fell sergeant, Death,

Is strict in his arrest) O, I could tell you-

But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;

Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright

To the unsatisfied.

Absent thee from felicity awhile,

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,

To tell my story.

March afar off, and shot within.

O, I die, Horatio!

The rest is silence. *Dies.*

Hor. Good night, sweet prince,

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

Enter Fortinbras and others with Drum, Colours, and Attendants.

Fort. Where is this sight?

Hor. What is it you will see?

Fort. Let four captains

Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage;

For he was likely, had he been put on,

To have prov'd most royally; and for his passage

The soldiers' music and the rites of war

Speak loudly for him.

Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this

Becomes the field but here shows much amiss.

Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

Exeunt marching; after the which a peal of ordnance are shot off.