

ROSENCRANTZ: As the indifferent^o children of the earth.
 GUILDENSTERN: Happy, in that we are not [over-]happy, on
 Fortune's [cap] we are not the very button. 225
 HAMLET: Nor the soles of her shoe?
 ROSENCRANTZ: Neither, my lord.
 HAMLET: Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her
 favors? 230
 GUILDENSTERN: Faith, her privates^o we.
 HAMLET: In the secret parts of Fortune? O, most true, she is a
 strumpet.^o What news?
 ROSENCRANTZ: None, my lord, but the world's grown honest.
 HAMLET: Then is doomsday near. But your news is not true. 235
 [Let me question more in particular. What have you, my
 good friends, deserv'd at the hands of Fortune, that she
 sends you to prison hither?
 GUILDENSTERN: Prison, my lord?
 HAMLET: Denmark's a prison. 240
 ROSENCRANTZ: Then is the world one.
 HAMLET: A goodly one, in which there are many confines,
 wards,^o and dungeons, Denmark being one o' th' worst.
 ROSENCRANTZ: We think not so, my lord.
 HAMLET: Why then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either 245
 good or bad, but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison.
 ROSENCRANTZ: Why then your ambition makes it one. 'Tis too
 narrow for your mind.
 HAMLET: O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count
 myself a king of infinite space — were it not that I have bad 250
 dreams.
 GUILDENSTERN: Which dreams indeed are ambition, for the very
 substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a
 dream.
 HAMLET: A dream itself is but a shadow. 255
 ROSENCRANTZ: Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a
 quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.
 HAMLET: Then are our beggars bodies,^o and our monarchs and

224. *indifferent*: Average. 231. *privates*: (1) Intimate friends; (2) genitalia. 233.
strumpet: A common epithet for Fortune, because she grants favors to all men. 243.
wards: Cells. 258. *bodies*: I.e. not shadows (since they lack ambition).

outstretch'd^o heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to th'
 court? for, by my fay,^o I cannot reason. 260
 BOTH [ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN]: We'll wait upon you.^o
 HAMLET: No such matter. I will not sort^o you with the rest of
 my servants; for to speak to you like an honest man, I am
 most dreadfully^o attended.] But in the beaten way of
 friendship, what make you at Elsinore? 265
 ROSENCRANTZ: To visit you, my lord, no other occasion.
 HAMLET: Beggar that I am, I am [even] poor in thanks — but I
 thank you, and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a
 halfpenny.^o Were you not sent for? is it your own inclining?
 is it a free visitation? Come, come, deal justly^o with me. 270
 Come, come — nay, speak.
 GUILDENSTERN: What should we say, my lord?
 HAMLET: Any thing but^o to th' purpose. You were sent for, and
 there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your
 modesties^o have not craft enough to color. I know the 275
 good King and Queen have sent for you.
 ROSENCRANTZ: To what end, my lord?
 HAMLET: That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by
 the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our
 youth,^o by the obligation of our ever-preserv'd love, and by 280
 what more dear a better proposer can charge^o you withal,
 be even^o and direct with me, whether you were sent for or
 no!
 ROSENCRANTZ: [*Aside to Guildenstern.*] What say you?
 HAMLET: [*Aside.*] Nay then I have an eye of^o you! — If you 285
 love me, hold not off.
 GUILDENSTERN: My lord, we were sent for.
 HAMLET: I will tell you why, so shall my anticipation prevent
 your discovery,^o and your secrecy to the King and Queen

259. *outstretch'd*: I.e. with their ambition extended to the utmost (and hence producing stretched-out or elongated shadows). 260. *fay*: Faith. 261. *wait upon you*: Attend you thither. 262. *sort*: Associate. 264. *dreadfully*: Execrably. 269. *too . . . half-penny*: Too expensive priced at a halfpenny, i.e. not worth much. 270. *justly*: Honestly. 273. *but*: Ordinarily punctuated with a comma preceding, to give the sense "provided that it is"; but Q2 has no comma, and Hamlet may intend, or include, the sense "except." 275. *modesties*: Sense of shame. 279-80. *consonancy . . . youth*: Similarity of our ages. 281. *charge*: Urge, adjure. 282. *even*: Frank, honest (cf. modern "level with me"). 285. *of*: On. 288-89. *prevent your discovery*: Forestall your disclosure (of what the King and Queen have said to you in confidence).