

ROSENCRANTZ: He does confess he feels himself distracted,
But from what cause 'a will by no means speak.

GUILDENSTERN: Nor do we find him forward^o to be sounded,^o
But with a crafty madness^o keeps aloof
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

QUEEN: Did he receive you well?

ROSENCRANTZ: Most like a gentleman.

GUILDENSTERN: But with much forcing of his disposition.^o
ROSENCRANTZ: Niggard of question,^o but of our demands^o
Most free in his reply.

QUEEN: Did you assay^o him
To any pastime?

ROSENCRANTZ: Madam, it so fell out that certain players
We o'traught^o on the way; of these we told him,
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it. They are here about the court,
And as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

POLONIUS: 'Tis most true,
And he beseech'd me to entreat your Majesties
To hear and see the matter.

KING: With all my heart, and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclin'd.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,^o
And drive his purpose into^o these delights.

ROSENCRANTZ: We shall, my lord.

Exeunt Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern.

KING: Sweet Gertrude, leave us two,
For we have closely^o sent for Hamlet hither,

That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront^o Ophelia. Her father and myself,
We'll so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseem,
We may of their encounter frankly^o judge,
And gather by him, as he is behav'd,
If't be th' affliction of his love or no

That thus he suffers for.

QUEEN: I shall obey you.

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

OPHELIA: Madam, I wish it may.

[Exit Queen.]

POLONIUS: Ophelia, walk you here. — Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves. *[To Ophelia.]* Read on this book,
That show of such an exercise^o may color
Your *[loneliness]*.^o We are oft to blame in this —
'Tis too much prov'd^o — that with devotion's visage
And pious action^o we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

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

POLONIUS: I hear him coming. Withdraw, my lord.

[Exeunt King and Polonius.]

Enter HAMLET.

HAMLET: To be, or not to be, that is the question.^o
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer^o
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep —
No more, and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation^o
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep —

7. forward: Readily willing. sounded: Plumbd, probed. 8. crafty madness: I.e. mad craftiness, the shrewdness that mad people sometimes exhibit. 12. disposition: Inclination. 13. question: Conversation. demands: Questions. 14. assay: Attempt to win. 17. o'traught: Passed (literally, overreached). 26. edge: Stimulus. 27. into: On to. 29. closely: Privately. 31. Affront: Meet. 33. frankly: Freely.

44. exercise: I.e. religious exercise (as the next sentence makes clear). 44-45. color Your loneliness: Make your solitude seem natural. 46. too much prov'd: Too often proved true. 47. action: Demenor. 51. to . . . it: In comparison with the paint that makes it look beautiful. 55-59. See the Textual Notes for the version of this soliloquy in Q1. 56. suffer: Submit to, endure patiently. 62. consummation: Completion, end.

To sleep, perchance to dream — ay, there's the rub,⁶⁴
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off⁶⁵ this mortal coil,⁶⁶
 Must give us pause; there's the respect⁶⁷
 That makes calamity of so long life.⁶⁸
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,⁶⁹
 Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make⁷⁰
 With a bare bodkin,⁷¹ who would fardels⁷² bear,
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death,
 The undiscover'd⁷³ country, from whose bourn⁷⁴
 No traveller returns, puzzles⁷⁵ the will,
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
 Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus conscience⁷⁶ does make cowards [of us all],
 And thus the native hue⁷⁷ of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast⁷⁸ of thought,⁷⁹
 And enterprises of great pitch⁸⁰ and moment
 With this regard their currents turn awry,
 And lose the name of action. — Soft you now,
 The fair Ophelia. Nymph, in thy orisons⁸¹
 Be all my sins rememb'ed.

OPHELIA: Good my lord,
 How does your honor for this many a day?
 HAMLET: I humbly thank you, well, [well, well].
 OPHELIA: My lord, I have remembrances of yours
 That I have longed long to redeliver.
 I pray you now receive them.

64. **rub**: Obstacle (a term from the game of bowls). 66. **shuffled off**: Freed ourselves from. **this mortal coil**: The turmoil of this mortal life. 67. **respect**: Consideration. 68. **of . . . life**: So long-lived. 69. **time**: The world. 74. **his quietus make**: Write paid to his account. 75. **bare bodkin**: Mere dagger. **fardels**: Burdens. 78. **undiscover'd**: Not disclosed to knowledge; about which men have no information. **ourn**: Boundary, i.e. region. 79. **puzzles**: Paralyzes. 82. **conscience**: Reflection (but with some of the modern sense, too). 83. **native hue**: Natural (ruddy) complexion. 84. **pale cast**: Pallor. **thought**: I.e. melancholy thought, brooding. 85. **pitch**: Loftiness (a term from falconry, signifying the highest point of a hawk's flight). 88. **orisons**: Prayers.

HAMLET: No, not I,
 I never gave you aught.
 OPHELIA: My honor'd lord, you know right well you did,
 And with them words of so sweet breath compos'd
 As made these things more rich. Their perfume lost,
 Take these again, for to the noble mind
 Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
 There, my lord.
 HAMLET: Ha, ha! are you honest?
 OPHELIA: My lord?
 HAMLET: Are you fair?
 OPHELIA: What means your lordship?
 HAMLET: That if you be honest and fair, [your honesty] should
 admit no discourse to your beauty.
 OPHELIA: Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than
 with honesty?
 HAMLET: Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will sooner trans-
 form honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of
 honesty can translate beauty into his likeness. This was
 sometime¹⁰² a paradox,¹⁰³ but now the time gives it proof. I
 did love you once.
 OPHELIA: Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.
 HAMLET: You should not have believ'd me, for virtue cannot so
 [inoculate] our old stock but we shall relish of it.¹⁰⁴ I lov'd
 you not.
 OPHELIA: I was the more deceiv'd.
 HAMLET: Get thee [to] a nunn'ry, why wouldst thou be a
 breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest,¹⁰⁵ but yet
 I could accuse me of such things that it were better my
 mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful,
 ambitious, with more offenses at my beck than I have
 thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape,
 or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do
 crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves,
 believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunn'ry. Where's your
 father?

102. **honest**: Chaste. 113. **sometime**: Formerly. **paradox**: Tenet contrary to accepted belief. 116–17. **virtue . . . it**: Virtue, engrafted on our old stock (of viciousness), cannot so change the nature of the plant that no trace of the original will remain. 121. **indifferent honest**: Tolerably virtuous.

OPHELIA: At home, my lord.

HAMLET: Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in 's own house. Farewell.

OPHELIA: O, help him, you sweet heavens!

HAMLET: If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunn'ry, farewell. Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool, for wise men know well enough what monsters° you° make of them. To a nunn'ry, go, and quickly too. Farewell.

OPHELIA: Heavenly powers, restore him!

HAMLET: I have heard of your paintings, well enough. God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another. You jig and amble, and you [lisp,] you nickname God's creatures° and make your wantonness [your] ignorance.° Go to, I'll no more on't, it hath made me mad. I say we will have no moe° marriage. Those that are married already (all but one) shall live, the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunn'ry, go.

Exit.

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

The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,

Th' expectation° and rose° of the fair° state,

The glass° of fashion and the mould of form,°

Th' observ'd of all observers,° quite, quite down!

And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,

That suck'd the honey of his [music] vows,

Now see [that] noble and most sovereign reason

Like sweet bells jangled out of time, and harsh;

That unmatch'd form and stature of blown° youth

Blasted° with ecstasy.° O, woe is me

T' have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

[Ophelia withdraws.]

Enter KING and POLONIUS.

138. *monsters*: Alluding to the notion that the husbands of unfaithful wives grew horns. *you*: You women. 143-44. *You . . . creatures*: I.e. you walk and talk affectedly. 144. *make . . . ignorance*: Excuse your affectation as ignorance. 146. *moe*: More. 151. *expectation*: Hope. *rose*: Ornament. *fair*: Probably proleptic: "(the kingdom) made fair by his presence." 152. *glass*: Mirror. *mould of form*: Pattern of (courtly) behavior. 153. *observ'd . . . observers*: Shakespeare uses *observe* to mean not only "behold, mark attentively" but also "pay honor to." 158. *blown*: In full bloom. 159. *Blasted*: Withered. *ecstasy*: Madness.

KING: Love? his affections° do not that way tend,
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,
And I do doubt° the hatch and the disclose°
Will be some danger; which for to prevent,
I have in quick determination
Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England
For the demand of our neglected° tribute.
Haply the seas, and countries different,
With variable objects, shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart,
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

POLONIUS: It shall do well; but yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected° love. *[Ophelia comes forward.]*

How now, Ophelia?

You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said,
We heard it all. My lord, do as you please,
But if you hold it fit, after the play
Let his queen-mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief.° Let her be round° with him,
And I'll be plac'd (so please you) in the ear
Of all their conference. If she find him° not,
To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

KING: It shall be so.

Madness in great ones must not [unwatch'd] go. *Exeunt.*

[Scene 2]°

Enter HAMLET and three of the PLAYERS.

HAMLET: Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounc'd it to you, trippingly on the tongue, but if you mouth° it, as many

161. *affections*: Inclinations, feelings. 165. *doubt*: Fear. *disclose*: Synonymous with *hatch*; see also 5.1.273. 177. *neglected*: Unrequited. 182. *his grief*: What is troubling him. *round*: Blunt, outspoken. 184. *find him*: Learn the truth about him. 3.2. *Location*: The castle. 2. *mouth*: Pronounce with exaggerated distinctness or declamatory effect.

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of our players do, I had as live^o the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently, for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to totters,^o to very rags, to spleet^o the ears of the groundlings,^o who for the most part are capable of^o nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipt for o'erdoing Termagant,^o it out-Herods Herod, pray you avoid it.

[FIRST] PLAYER: I warrant your honor.

HAMLET: Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty^o of nature: for any thing so o'erdone is from^o the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature: to show virtue her feature, scorn^o her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.^o Now this overdone, or come tardy^o off, though it makes the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure^o of which one^o must in your allowance^o o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play — and heard others [praise], and that highly — not to speak it profanely,^o that, neither having th' accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellow'd that I have thought some of Nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.^o

3. live: Lief, willingly. 9. totters: Tatters. 10. spleet: Split. groundlings: Those who paid the lowest admission price and stood on the ground in the "yard" or pit of the theater. 11. capable of: Able to take in. 13. Termagant: A supposed god of the Saracens, whose role in medieval drama, like that of Herod (line 13), was noisy and violent. 18. modesty: Moderation. from: Contrary to. 21. scorn: I.e. that which is worthy of scorn. 22. pressure: Impression (as of a seal), exact image. 23. tardy: Inadequately. 25. censure: Judgment. which one: (Even) one of whom. allowance: Estimation. 28. profanely: Irreverently. 31–32. some . . . abominably: I.e. they were so unlike men that it seemed Nature had not made them herself but had delegated the task to mediocre assistants.

[FIRST] PLAYER: I hope we have reform'd that indifferently^o with us, [sir].

HAMLET: O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them, for there be of them^o that will themselves laugh to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be consider'd. That's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool^o that uses it.^o Go make you ready.

[*Exeunt Players.*]

Enter POLONIUS, GUILDENSTERN, and ROSENCRANTZ.

How now, my lord? Will the King hear this piece of work?^o

POLONIUS: And the Queen too, and that presently.^o

HAMLET: Bid the players make haste. [*Exit Polonius.*]

Will you two help to hasten them?

ROSENCRANTZ: Ay, my lord. [*Exeunt they two.*]

HAMLET: What ho, Horatio!

Enter HORATIO.

HORATIO: Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAMLET: Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man^o

As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.^o

HORATIO: O my dear lord —

HAMLET: Nay, do not think I flatter,

For what advancement may I hope from thee

That no revenue hast but thy good spirits

To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd?

No, let the candied^o tongue lick absurd^o pomp,

And crook the pregnant^o hinges of the knee

Where thrift^o may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice

And could of men distinguish her election,

33. indifferently: Pretty well. 37. of them: Some of them. 41. fool: (1) Stupid person; (2) actor playing a fool's role. uses it: See the Textual Notes for an interesting passage following these words in Q1. 42. piece of work: Masterpiece (said jocularly). 43. presently: At once. 49. thou . . . man: I.e. you come as close to being what a man should be (*just* = exact, precise). 50. my . . . withal: My association with people has brought me into contact with. 55. candied: Sugared, i.e. flattering. absurd: Tasteless (Latin sense). 56. pregnant: Moving readily. 57. thrift: Thriving, profit.

POLONIUS: It is back'd like a weasel.

HAMLET: Or like a whale.

POLONIUS: Very like a whale.

HAMLET: Then I will come to my mother by and by. [*Aside.*]

They fool me to the top of my bent.^o — I will come by and by.^o

[POLONIUS:] I will say so.

[*Exit.*]

HAMLET: "By and by" is easily said. Leave me, friends.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*]

'Tis now the very witching^o time of night,

When churchyards yawn and hell itself [breathes] out

Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood,

And do such [bitter business as the] day

Would quake to look on. Soft, now to my mother.

O heart, lose not thy nature!^o let not ever

The soul of Nero^o enter this firm bosom,

Let me be cruel, not unnatural;

I will speak [daggers] to her, but use none.

My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites —

How in my words somever she be shent,^o

To give them seals^o never my soul consent!

Exit.

[Scene 3]^o

Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

KING: I like him^o not, nor stands it safe with us

To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you.

I your commission will forthwith dispatch,^o

And he to England shall along with you.

The terms^o of our estate^o may not endure

Hazard so near 's as doth hourly grow

Out of his brows.^o

363. They . . . bent: They make me play the fool to the limit of my ability. 363-64. by and by: At once. 367. witching: I.e. when the powers of evil are at large. 372. nature: Natural affection, filial feeling. 373. Nero: Murderer of his mother. 377. shent: Rebuked. 378. give them seals: Confirm them by deeds. 3.3. Location: The castle. 1. him: I.e. his state of mind, his behavior. 3. dispatch: Have drawn up. 5. terms: Conditions, nature. our estate: My position (as king). 7. his brows: The madness visible in his face (?).

GUILDENSTERN: We will ourselves provide.

Most holy and religious fear^o it is

To keep those many many bodies safe

That live and feed upon your Majesty.

ROSENCRANTZ: The single and peculiar^o life is bound

With all the strength and armor of the mind

To keep itself from noyance,^o but much more

That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests

The lives of many. The cess^o of majesty

Dies not alone, but like a gulf^o doth draw

What's near it with it. Or it is a massy wheel

Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,

To whose [huge] spokes ten thousand lesser things

Are mortis'd^o and adjoin'd, which when it falls,

Each small annexment, petty consequence,

Attends^o the boist'rous [ruin^o]. Never alone

Did the King sigh, but [with] a general groan.

KING: Arm^o you, I pray you, to this speedy viage,^o

For we will fetters put about this fear,^o

Which now goes too free-footed.

ROSENCRANTZ:

We will haste us.

Exeunt Gentlemen [Rosencrantz and Guildenstern].

Enter POLONIUS.

POLONIUS: My lord, he's going to his mother's closet.

Behind the arras I'll convey myself

To hear the process.^o I'll warrant she'll tax him home,^o

And as you said, and wisely was it said,

'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,

Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear

The speech, of vantage.^o Fare you well, my liege,

I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,

And tell you what I know.

KING:

Thanks, dear my lord.

Exit [Polonius].

8. fear: Concern. 11. single and peculiar: Individual and private. 13. noyance: Injury. 15. cess: Cessation, death. 16. gulf: Whirlpool. 20. mortis'd: Fixed. 22. Attends: Accompanies. ruin: Fall. 24. Arm: Prepare. viage: Voyage. 25. fear: Object of fear. 29. process: Course of the talk. tax him home: Take him severely to task. 33. of vantage: From an advantageous position (?) or in addition (?).

O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven,^o
 It hath the primal eldest curse^o upon't,
 A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
 Though inclination be as sharp as will.^o
 My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
 And, like a man to double business bound,^o
 I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
 And both neglect.^o What if this cursed hand
 Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
 Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
 To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
 But to confront the visage of offense?^o
 And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
 To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
 Or [pardon'd] being down? then I'll look up.
 My fault is past, but, O, what form of prayer
 Can serve my turn? "Forgive me my foul murder"?
 That cannot be, since I am still possess'd
 Of those effects for which I did the murder:
 My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
 May one be pardon'd and retain th' offense?^o
 In the corrupted currents^o of this world
 Offense's gilded^o hand may [shove] by justice,
 And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize^o itself
 Buys out the law, but 'tis not so above:
 There is no shuffling,^o there the action lies^o
 In his true nature, and we ourselves compell'd,
 Even to the teeth and forehead^o of our faults,
 To give in evidence. What then? What rests?^o
 Try what repentance can. What can it not?
 Yet what can it, when one can not repent?
 O wretched state! O bosom black as death!

36-72. See the Textual Notes for the corresponding lines in Q1. 37. **primal eldest curse**: I.e. God's curse on Cain, who also slew his brother. 39. **Though . . . will**: Though my desire is as strong as my resolve to do so. 41. **bound**: Committed. 43. **neglect**: Omit. 46-47. **Whereto . . . offense**: I.e. what function has mercy except when there has been sin. 56. **th' offense**: I.e. the "effects" or fruits of the offense. 57. **currents**: Courses. 58. **gilded**: I.e. bribing. 59. **wicked prize**: Rewards of vice. 61. **shuffling**: Evasion. **the action lies**: The charge comes for legal consideration. 63. **Even . . . forehead**: I.e. fully recognizing their features, extenuating nothing. 64. **rests**: Remains.

O limed^o soul, that struggling to be free
 Art more engag'd!^o Help, angels! Make assay,
 Bow, stubborn knees, and heart, with strings of steel,
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!
 All may be well. [He kneels.]

Enter HAMLET.

HAMLET: Now might I do it [pat], now 'a is a-praying;
 And now I'll do't — and so 'a goes to heaven,
 And so am I [reveng'd]. That would be scann'd.^o
 A villain kills my father, and for that
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send
 To heaven.
 Why, this is [hire and salary], not revenge.
 'A took my father grossly,^o full of bread,
 With all his crimes^o broad blown,^o as flush^o as May,
 And how his audit^o stands who knows save heaven?
 But in our circumstance and course of thought^o
 'Tis heavy with him. And am I then revenged,
 To take him in the purging of his soul,
 When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
 No!
 Up,^o sword, and know thou a more horrid hent:^o
 When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
 Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed,
 At game a-swearing, or about some act
 That has no relish^o of salvation in't —
 Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
 And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
 As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays,
 This physic^o but prolongs thy sickly days. Exit.
 KING: [Rising.] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
 Words without thoughts never to heaven go. Exit.

68. **limed**: Caught (as in birdlime, a sticky substance used for catching birds). 69. **engag'd**: Entangled. 75. **would be scann'd**: Must be carefully considered. 80. **grossly**: In a gross state; not spiritually prepared. 81. **crimes**: Sins. **broad blown**: In full bloom. **flush**: Lusty, vigorous. 82. **audit**: Account. 83. **in . . . thought**: I.e. to the best of our knowledge and belief. 88. **Up**: Into the sheath. **know . . . hent**: Be grasped at a more dreadful time. 92. **relish**: Trace. 96. **physic**: (Attempted) remedy, i.e. prayer.

[Scene 4]^o

Enter [QUEEN] GERTRUDE and POLONIUS.

POLONIUS: 'A will come straight. Look you lay home to him.^oTell him his pranks have been too broad^o to bear with,

And that your Grace hath screen'd and stood between

Much heat and him. I'll silence me even here;

Pray you be round^o [with him].QUEEN: I'll [warr'nt] you, fear me not.^o Withdraw,

I hear him coming. [Polonius hides behind the arras.]

Enter HAMLET.

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

QUEEN: Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET: Mother, you have my father much offended.

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

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

QUEEN: Why, how now, Hamlet?

HAMLET: What's the matter now?

QUEEN: Have you forgot me?

HAMLET: No, by the rood,^o not so:

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

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

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

HAMLET: Come, come, and sit you down, you shall not

boudge;^o

You go not till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the [inmost] part of you.

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

Help ho!

POLONIUS: [Behind.] What ho, help!

HAMLET: [Drawing.] How now? A rat? Dead, for a ducat,^o

dead! [Kills Polonius through the arras.]

POLONIUS: [Behind.] O, I am slain.

QUEEN: O me, what hast thou done?

HAMLET: Nay, I know not, is it the King?

3. 4. Location: The Queen's closet in the castle. 1. lay . . . him: Reprove him severely.
 2. broad: Unrestrained. 5. round: Plain-spoken. 6. fear me not: Have no fears
 about my handling of the situation. 11. idle: Foolish. 14. rood: Cross. 18.
 boudge: Budge. 24. for a ducat: I'll wager a ducat.

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

HAMLET: A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,
 As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

QUEEN: As kill a king!

HAMLET: Ay, lady, it was my word.

[Parts the arras and discovers Polonius.]

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune;

Thou find'st to be too busy^o is some danger. —

Leave wringing of your hands. Peace, sit you down,

And let me wring your heart, for so I shall

If it be made of penetrable stuff,

If damned custom^o have not brass'd^o it soThat it be proof^o and bulwark against sense.^o

QUEEN: What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue

In noise so rude against me?

HAMLET: Such an act

That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,

Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose

From the fair forehead of an innocent love

And sets a blister^o there, makes marriage vows

As false as dicers' oaths, O, such a deed

As from the body of contraction^o plucksThe very soul, and sweet religion^o makesA thapsody^o of words. Heaven's face does glow^oO'er this solidity and compound mass^oWith heated visage, as against the doom,^o

Is thought-sick at the act.

QUEEN: Ay me, what act,

That roars so loud and thunders in the index?^o

HAMLET: Look here upon this picture, and on this,

The counterfeit presentment^o of two brothers.

See what a grace was seated on this brow:

33. busy: Officious, meddlesome. 37. damned custom: I.e. the habit of ill-doing.
 brass'd: Hardened, literally, plated with brass. 38. proof: Armor. sense: Feeling.
 44. blister: Brand of shame. 46. contraction: The making of contracts, i.e. the assum-
 ing of solemn obligation. 47. religion: I.e. sacred vows. 48. thapsody: Miscellaneous
 collection, jumble. glow: I.e. with anger. 49. this . . . mass: I.e. the earth. Com-
 pound = compounded of the four elements. 50. as . . . doom: As if for Judgment Day.
 52. index: I.e. table of contents. The index was formerly placed at the beginning of a
 book. 54. counterfeit presentment: Painted likenesses.

55
 NEXT PAGE

Hyperion's° curls, the front° of Jove himself,
 An eye like Mars, to threaten and command,
 A station° like the herald Mercury
 New lighted on a [heaven-]kissing hill,
 A combination and a form indeed,
 Where every god did seem to set his seal
 To give the world assurance of a man.
 This was your husband. Look you now what follows:
 Here is your husband, like a mildewed ear,°
 Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
 Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
 And batten° on this moor? ha, have you eyes?
 You cannot call it love, for at your age
 The heyday° in the blood is tame, it's humble,
 And waits upon the judgment, and what judgment
 Would step from this to this? Sense° sure you have,
 Else could you not have motion, but sure that sense
 Is apoplex'd,° for madness would not err,
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd
 But it reserv'd some quantity of choice
 To serve in such a difference.° What devil was't
 That thus hath cozen'd° you at hoodman-blind?°
 Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans° all,
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense
 Could not so mope.° O shame, where is thy blush?
 Rebellious hell,
 If thou canst mutine° in a matron's bones,
 To flaming youth let virtue be as wax
 And melt in her own fire. Proclaim no shame
 When the compulsive ardure gives the charge,
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
 And reason [panders] will.°

56. Hyperion's: The sun-god's. front: Forehead. 58. station: Bearing. 64. ear: i.e. of grain. 67. batten: Gorge. 69. heyday: Excitement. 71. Sense: Sense perception, the five senses. 73. apoplex'd: Paralyzed. 73-76. madness . . . difference: i.e. madness itself could not go so far astray, nor were the senses ever so enslaved by lunacy that they did not retain the power to make so obvious a distinction. 77. cozen'd: Cheated. hoodman-blind: Blindman's bluff. 79. sans: Without. 81. mope: Be dazed. 83. mutine: Rebel. 85-88. Proclaim . . . will: Do not call it sin when the hot blood of youth is responsible for lechery, since here we see people of calmer age on fire for it; and reason acts as procurer for desire, instead of restraining it. Ardure = ardor.

QUEEN: O Hamlet, speak no more!
 Thou turn'st my [eyes into my very] soul,
 And there I see such black and [grained°] spots
 And will [not] leave their tinct.° 90

HAMLET: Nay, but to live
 In the rank sweat of an enseamed° bed,
 Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love
 Over the nasty sty!

QUEEN: O, speak to me no more!
 These words like daggers enter in my ears.
 No more, sweet Hamlet! 95

HAMLET: A murderer and a villain!
 A slave that is not twentieth° part the [tithe]
 Of your precedent° lord, a Vice° of kings,
 A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
 That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
 And put it in his pocket — 100

QUEEN: No more!

Enter GHOST [in his night-gown°].

HAMLET: A king of shreds and patches° —
 Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
 You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?

QUEEN: Alas, he's mad! 105

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

GHOST: Do not forget! This visitation
 Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
 But look, amazement° on thy mother sits,
 O, step between her and her fighting soul.
 Conceit° in weakest bodies strongest works,
 Speak to her, Hamlet. 110

he wants Hamlet to help her.

90. grained: Fast-dyed, indelible. 91. leave their tinct: Lose their color. 92. enseamed: Greasy. 97. twentieth: Twentieth. 98. precedent: Former. Vice: Buffoon (like the Vice of the morality plays). 101. s.d. night-gown: Dressing gown. 102. of . . . patches: Clownish (alluding to the motley worn by jesters) (?) or patched-up, beggarly (?). 107. laps'd . . . passion: "having suffered time to slip and passion to cool" (Johnson). 108. important: Urgent. 112. amazement: Utter bewilderment. 114. Conceit: Imagination.

HAMLET: How is it with you, lady? 115
 QUEEN: Alas, how is't with you,
 That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
 And with th' incorporal air do hold discourse?
 Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep,
 And as the sleeping soldiers in th' alarm,^o 120
 Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,^o
 Start up and stand an end.^o O gentle son,
 Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
 Sprinkle cool patience.^o Whereon do you look?
 HAMLET: On him, on him! look you how pale he glares! 125
 His form and cause^o conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
 Would make them capable.^o — Do not look upon me,
 Lest with this piteous action you convert^o
 My stern effects,^o then what I have to do
 Will want true color^o — tears perchance for blood. 130
 QUEEN: To whom do you speak this?
 HAMLET: Do you see nothing there?
 QUEEN: Nothing at all, yet all that is I see.
 HAMLET: Nor did you nothing hear?
 QUEEN: No, nothing but ourselves.
 HAMLET: Why, look you there, look how it steals away!
 My father, in his habit^o as he lived! 135
 Look where he goes, even now, out at the portal!
Exit Ghost.
 QUEEN: This is the very coinage of your brain,^o
 This bodiless creation ecstasy^o
 Is very cunning in.
 HAMLET: [Ecstasy?] 140
 My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time,
 And makes as healthful music. It is not madness
 That I have utt' red. Bring me to the test,
 And [I] the matter will reword, which madness
 Would gambol^o from. Mother, for love of grace,

120. in th' alarm: When the call to arms is sounded. 121. excrements: Outgrowths; here, hair (also used of nails). 122. an end: On end. 124. patience: Self-control. 126. His . . . cause: His appearance and what he has to say. 127. capable: Sensitive, receptive. 128. convert: Alter. 129. effects: (Purposed) actions. 130. want true color: Lack its proper appearance. 135. habit: Dress. 137–217. See the Textual Notes for the conclusion of the scene in Q1. 138. ecstasy: Madness. 144. gambol: Start, jerk away.

† Lay not that flattering unction^o to your soul, 145
 That not your trespass but my madness speaks;
 It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
 Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
 Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven,
 Repent what's past, avoid what is to come, 150
 And do not spread the compost^o on the weeds
 To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue,
 For in the fatness of these pursy^o times
 Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
 Yea, curb and woo^o for leave to do him good. 155
 QUEEN: O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.
 HAMLET: O, throw away the worser part of it,
 And [live] the purer with the other half.
 Good night, but go not to my uncle's bed —
 Assume a virtue, if you have it not. 160
 That monster custom, who all sense doth eat,^o
 Of habits devil,^o is angel yet in this,
 That to the use of actions fair and good
 He likewise gives a frock or livery
 That aptly is put on.^o Refrain [to-]night, 165
 And that shall lend a kind of easiness
 To the next abstinence, the next more easy;
 For use^o almost can change the stamp of nature,
 And either [. . . ^o] the devil or throw him out
 With wondrous potency. Once more good night, 170
 And when you are desirous to be blest,^o
 I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,
 [Pointing to Polonius.]
 I do repent; but heaven hath pleas'd it so
 To punish me with this, and this with me,
 That I must be their scourge and minister.^o

145. flattering unction: Soothing ointment. 151. compost: Manure. 153. pursy: Puffy, out of condition. 155. curb and woo: Bow and entreat. 161. all . . . eat: Wears away all natural feeling. 162. Of habits devil: I.e. though it acts like a devil in establishing bad habits. Most editors read (in lines 161–62) *eat / Of habits evil*, following Theobald. 164–65. frock . . . on: I.e. a "habit" or customary garment, readily put on without need of any decision. 168. use: Habit. 169. A word seems to be wanting after *either*; for conjectures see the Textual Notes. 171. desirous . . . blest: I.e. repentant. 175. scourge and minister: The agent of heavenly justice against human crime. *Scourge* suggests a permissive cruelty (Tamburlaine was the "scourge of God"), but "woe to him by whom the offense cometh"; the scourge must suffer for the evil it performs.

I will bestow° him, and will answer° well
 The death I gave him. So again good night.
 I must be cruel only to be kind.
 This bad begins and worse remains behind.°
 One word more, good lady.

QUEEN: What shall I do?

HAMLET: Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:

Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed,
 Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse,
 And let him, for a pair of reechy° kisses,
 Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,
 That I essentially am not in madness,
 But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know,
 For who that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
 Would from a paddock,° from a bat, a gib,°
 Such dear concernings° hide? Who would do so?
 No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
 Unpeg the basket° on the house's top,
 Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape,°
 To try conclusions° in the basket creep,
 And break your own neck down.°

QUEEN: Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,
 And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
 What thou hast said to me.

HAMLET: I must to England, you know that?

QUEEN: Alack,
 I had forgot. 'Tis so concluded on.

HAMLET: There's letters seal'd, and my two schoolfellows,
 Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
 They bear the mandate, they must sweep my way
 And marshal me to knavery.° Let it work,
 For 'tis the sport to have the engineer°
 Hoist with° his own petar,° an't shall go hard

176. bestow: Dispose of. answer: Answer for. 179. behind: To come. 184. reechy: Filthy. 190. paddock: Toad. gib: Tom-cat. 191. dear concernings: Matters of intense concern. 193. Unpeg the basket: Open the door of the cage. 194. famous ape: The actual story has been lost. 195. conclusions: Experiments (to see whether he too can fly if he enters the cage and then leaps out). 196. down: By the fall. 205. knavery: Some knavish scheme against me. 206. engineer: Deviser of military "engines" or contrivances. 207. Hoist with: Blown up by. petar: Petard, bomb.

But I will delve one yard below their mines,
 And blow them at the moon. O, 'tis most sweet
 When in one line two crafts° directly meet.
 This man shall set me packing;°
 I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room.
 Mother, good night indeed. This counsellor
 Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
 Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
 Come, sir, to draw toward an end° with you.
 Good night, mother.

Excunt [severally, Hamlet tugging in Polonius].

[ACT 4, Scene 1]°

Enter KING and QUEEN with ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

KING: There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves —
 You must translate, 'tis fit we understand them.
 Where is your son?

QUEEN: Bestow this place on us a little while.

[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]

Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen to-night!

KING: What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

QUEEN: Mad as the sea and wind when both contend
 Which is the mightier. In his lawless fit,
 Behind the arras hearing something stir,
 Whips out his rapier, cries, "A rat, a rat!"
 And in this brainish apprehension° kills
 The unseen good old man.

KING: O heavy deed!
 It had been so with us had we been there.
 His liberty is full of threats to all,
 To you yourself, to us, to every one.
 Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd°
 It will be laid to us, whose providence°
 Should have kept short,° restrain'd, and out of haunt°

210. crafts: Plots. 211. packing: (1) Taking on a load; (2) leaving in a hurry. 216. draw . . . end: Finish my conversation. 4.1. Location: The castle. 11. brainish apprehension: Crazy notion. 16. answer'd: i.e. satisfactorily accounted for to the public. 17. providence: Foresight. 18. short: On a short leash. out of haunt: Away from other people.