

Since yet thy cicatrice° looks raw and red
 After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
 Pays° homage to us — thou mayst not coldly set°
 Our sovereign process°, which imports at full,
 By letters congruing to° that effect,
 The present° death of Hamlet. Do it, England,
 For like the hectic° in my blood he rages,
 And thou must cure me. Till I know 'tis done,
 How e'er my haps°, my joys [were] ne'er [begun]. *Exit.*

[Scene 4]°

Enter FORTINBRAS with his army over the stage.

FORTINBRAS: Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king.
 Tell him that by his license Fortinbras
 Craves the conveyance° of a promis'd march
 Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
 If that his Majesty would aught with us,
 We shall express our duty in his eye,
 And let him know so.

CAPTAIN: I will do't, my lord.

FORTINBRAS: Go softly° on. [*Exeunt all but the Captain.*]

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, [GUILDENSTERN,] etc.

HAMLET: Good sir, whose powers° are these?

CAPTAIN: They are of Norway, sir.

HAMLET: How purpos'd, sir, I pray you?

CAPTAIN: Against some part of Poland.

HAMLET: Who commands them, sir?

CAPTAIN: The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

HAMLET: Goes it against the main° of Poland, sir,
 Or for some frontier?

CAPTAIN: Truly to speak, and with no addition,
 We go to gain a little patch of ground
 That hath in it no profit but the name.

57. cicatrice: Scar. 58-59. thy . . . Pays: Your fear makes you pay voluntarily. 59. coldly set: Undervalue, disregard. 60. process: Command. 61. congruing to: In accord with. 62. present: Immediate. 63. hectic: Continuous fever. 65. haps: Fortunes. 4.4. Location: The Danish coast, near the castle. 3. conveyance of: Escort for. 6. eye: Presence. 8. softly: Slowly. 9. powers: Forces. 15. main: Main territory.

To pay° five ducats, five, I would not farm° it;
 Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
 A ranker° rate, should it be sold in fee.°

HAMLET: Why then the Polack never will defend it.

CAPTAIN: Yes, it is already garrison'd.

HAMLET: Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
 Will not debate° the question of this straw.
 This is th' imposthume° of much wealth and peace,
 That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
 Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.

CAPTAIN: God buy you, sir. [*Exit.*]

ROSENCRANTZ: Will't please you go, my lord?

HAMLET: I'll be with you straight — go a little before.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*]

How all occasions do inform against° me,
 And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
 If his chief good and market° of his time
 Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
 Sure He that made us with such large discourse,
 Looking before and after, gave us not
 That capability and godlike reason
 To fust° in us unus'd. Now whether it be
 Bestial oblivion°, or some craven scruple
 Of thinking too precisely on th' event° —
 A thought which quarter'd hath but one part wisdom
 And ever three parts coward — I do not know
 Why yet I live to say, "This thing's to do,"
 Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
 To do't. Examples gross° as earth exhort me:
 Witness this army of such mass and charge,
 Led by a delicate and tender prince,
 Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd
 Makes mouths at° the invisible° event,
 Exposing what is mortal and unsure
 To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,

20. To pay: I.e. for an annual rent of. farm: Lease. 22. ranker: Higher. in fee: Out-right. 26. Will not debate: I.e. will scarcely be enough to fight out. 27. imposthume: Abscess. 32. inform against: Denounce, accuse. 34. market: Purchase, profit. 36. discourse: Reasoning power. 39. fust: Grow moldy. 40. oblivion: Forgetfulness. 41. event: Outcome. 46. gross: Large, obvious. 47. mass and charge: Size and expense. 50. Makes mouths at: Treats scornfully. invisible: I.e. unforeseeable.

Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great
Is not to° stir without great argument,^o
But greatly° to find quarrel in a straw
When honor's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of° my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That for a fantasy° and trick° of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,^o
Which is not tomb enough and continent°
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

Exit.

[Scene 5]

Enter HORATIO, [QUEEN] GERTRUDE, *and a* GENTLEMAN.

QUEEN: I will not speak with her.^o

GENTLEMAN: She is importunate, indeed distract.

Her mood will needs be pitied.

What would she have?

QUEEN: She speaks much of her father, says she hears

There's tricks i' th' world, and hems, and bears her heart,

Spurns enviously at straws,^o speaks things in doubt°

That carry but half sense. Her speech° is nothing;

Yet the unshaped use° of it doth move

The hearers to collection,^o they yawn at° it,

And borch° the words up fit to their own thoughts,

Which° as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,

Indeed would make one think there might be thought,^o

Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

54. Is not to: i.e. is *not* not to. argument: Cause. 55. greatly: Nobly. 58. Excite-
ments of: Urgings by. 61. fantasy: Caprice. trick: Trifle. 63. Whereon ...
cause: Which isn't large enough to let the opposing armies engage upon it. 64. conti-
nent: Container. 4.5. Location: The castle. 1-20. See the Textual Notes for the
lines that replace these in Q1. 6. Spurns ... straws: Spitefully takes offense at trifles
in doubt: Obscurely. 7. Her speech: What she says. 8. unshaped use: Distracted
to swallow). Most editors adopt the F1 reading *aim at*. 10. borch: Patch. 11.
Which: i.e. the words. 12. thought: Inferred, conjectured.

HORATIO: 'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may
strew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding° minds.

[QUEEN:] Let her come in.

[Exit Gentleman.]

[Aside.] To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,

Each toy° seems prologue to some great amiss,^o

So full of artless jealousy° is guilt,

It spills° itself in fearing to be split.

Enter OPHELIA [distracted, with her hair down, playing on a
lute].

OPHELIA: Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN: How now, Ophelia?

OPHELIA: "How should I your true-love know. *She sings.*

From another one?"

By his cockle hat° and staff,^o

And his sandal shoon."^o

QUEEN: Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPHELIA: Say you? Nay, pray you mark.

"He is dead and gone, lady,

He is dead and gone,

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone."

O ho!

QUEEN: Nay, but, Ophelia —

OPHELIA: Pray you mark.

[Sings.] "White his shroud as the mountain snow" —

Enter KING.

QUEEN: Alas, look here, my lord.

OPHELIA: "Larded° all with sweet flowers,

Which bewept to the ground did not° go

Song.

15. ill-breeding: Conceiving ill thoughts, prone to think the worst. 18. toy: Trifle.
amiss: Calamity. 19. artless jealousy: Uncontrolled suspicion. 20. spills: Destroys.
23-24. These lines resemble a passage in an earlier ballad beginning "As you came from
the holy land / Of Walsingham." Probably all the song fragments sung by Ophelia were
familiar to the Globe audience, but only one other line (184) is from a ballad still extant.
25. cockle hat: Hat bearing a cockle shell, the badge of a pilgrim to the shrine of St.
James of Compostela in Spain. staff: Another mark of a pilgrim. 26. shoon: Shoes
(already an archaic form in Shakespeare's day). 38. Larded: Adorned. 39. not: Con-
trary to the expected sense, and unmetrical; explained as Ophelia's alteration of the line to
accord with the facts of Polonius's burial (see line 83).

HAMLET: That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once.
How the knave jowls^o it to the ground, as if 'twere Cain's
jaw-bone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate
of a politician,^o which this ass now o'erreaches,^o one that
would circumvent God,^o might it not? 75

HORATIO: It might, my lord.

HAMLET: Or of a courtier, which could say, "Good morrow,
sweet lord! How dost thou, sweet lord?" This might be my
Lord Such-a-one, that prais'd my Lord Such-a-one's horse
when 'a [meant] to beg it, might it not? 80

HORATIO: Ay, my lord.

HAMLET: Why, e'en so, and now my Lady Worm's, chopless,^o
and knock'd about the [mazzard^o] with a sexton's spade.
Here's fine revolution,^o and^o we had the trick^o to see't. Did
these bones cost^o no more the breeding, but to play at
loggats^o with them? Mine ache to think on't. 85

FIRST CLOWN: "A pickaxe and a spade, a spade, *Song.*
For and a shrouding sheet:
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet." 90

[Throws up another skull.]

T HAMLET: There's another. Why may not that be the skull of a
lawyer? Where be his quiddities^o now, his quillities,^o his
cases, his tenures,^o and his tricks? Why does he suffer this
mad knave now to knock him about the sconce^o with a
dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery?
Hum! This fellow might be in 's time a great buyer of land,
with his statutes,^o his recognizances, his fines,^o his double
vouchers,^o his recoveries. [Is this the fine^o of his fines, and
the recovery of his recoveries,] to have his fine pate full of
fine dirt? Will [his] vouchers vouch him no more of his pur- 100

73. jowls: Dashes. 75. politician: Schemer, intriguer. o'erreaches: Gets the better of (with play on the literal sense). 76. circumvent God: Bypass God's law. 83. chopless: Lacking the lower jaw. 84. mazzard: Head. 85. revolution: Change. and: If. trick: Knack, ability. 85-86. Did . . . cost: Were . . . worth. 87. loggats: A game in which blocks of wood were thrown at a stake. 93. quiddities: Subtleties, quibbles. quillities: Fine distinctions. 94. tenures: Titles to real estate. 95. sconce: Head. 98. statutes, recognizances: Bonds securing debts by attaching land and property. 98, 99. fines, recoveries: Procedures for converting an entailed estate to freehold. 98-99. double vouchers: Documents guaranteeing title to real estate, signed by two persons. 99. fine: End.

7 chases, and [double ones too], than the length and breadth
of a pair of indentures^o The very conveyances^o of his lands
will scarcely lie in this box,^o and must th' inheritor^o himself
have no more, ha? 105

HORATIO: Not a jot more, my lord.

HAMLET: Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

HORATIO: Ay, my lord, and of calves'-skins too.

HAMLET: They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in
that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?^o 110

FIRST CLOWN: Mine, sir.

[Sings.] "[O], a pit of clay for to be made
[For such a guest is meet]."

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

FIRST CLOWN: You lie out on't, sir, and therefore 'tis not yours;
for my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine. 115

HAMLET: Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine. 'Tis for
the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

FIRST CLOWN: 'Tis a quick lie, sir, 'twill away again from me to
you. 120

HAMLET: What man dost thou dig it for?

FIRST CLOWN: For no man, sir.

HAMLET: What woman then?

FIRST CLOWN: For none neither.

HAMLET: Who is to be buried in't? 125

FIRST CLOWN: One that was a woman, sir, but, rest her soul,
she's dead.

HAMLET: How absolute^o the knave is! we must speak by the
card,^o or equivocation^o will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio,
this three years I have took note of it: the age is grown so
pick'd^o that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of
the courtier, he galls his kibe.^o How long hast thou been
grave-maker? 130

FIRST CLOWN: Of [all] the days i' th' year, I came to't that day
that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras. 135

103. pair of indentures: Legal document cut into two parts which fitted together on a serrated edge. Perhaps Hamlet thus refers to the two rows of teeth in the skull, or to the bone sutures. conveyances: Documents relating to transfer of property. 104. this box: I.e. the skull itself. inheritor: Owner. 110. sirrah: Term of address to inferiors. 128. absolute: Positive. 128-29. by the card: By the compass, i.e. punctiliously. 129. equivocation: Ambiguity. 131. pick'd: Refined. 132. galls his kibe: Rubs the courtier's chilblain.

Forced° it° own life. 'Twas of some estate°
Couch we° a while and mark. [*Retiring with Horatio.*]

LAERTES: What ceremony else?

HAMLET: That is Laertes, a very noble youth. Mark.

LAERTES: What ceremony else?

DOCTOR: Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd

As we have warranty. Her death was doubtful°

And but that great command o'ersways the order°

She should° in ground unsanctified been lodg'd

Till the last trumpet; for° charitable prayers,

[Shards,] flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her.

Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants°

Her maiden strewments° and the bringing home

Of bell and burial°

LAERTES: Must there no more be done?

DOCTOR: No more be done:

We should profane the service of the dead

To sing a requiem° and such rest to her

As to peace-parted souls.

LAERTES: Lay her i' th' earth,

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh

May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,

A minist'ring angel shall my sister be

When thoughest liest howling.

HAMLET: What, the fair Ophelia!

QUEEN: [*Scattering flowers.*] Sweetest° to the sweet, farewell!

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

I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,

And not have strew'd thy grave.

LAERTES: O, treble woe

Fall ten times [treble] on that cursed head

Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious° sense

Depriv'd thee of! Hold off the earth a while,

Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.

[*Leaps in the grave.*]

207. Foredo: Fordo, destroy. it: its. estate rank. 208. Couch we: Let us conceal ourselves. 213. doubtful: i.e. the subject of an "open verdict." 214. order: Customary procedure. 215. should: Would certainly. 216. for: Instead of. 218. crants: Garland. 219. maiden strewments: Flowers scattered on the grave of an unmarried girl. 219-20. bringing... burial: i.e. burial in consecrated ground, with the bell tolling. 223. requiem: Dirge. 229. Sweetest: Flowers. 234. ingenious: Intelligent.

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made
T'° o'er-top old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus°.

HAMLET: [*Coming forward.*] What is he whose grief

Bears such an emphasis, whose phrase° of sorrow

Conjures° the wand'ring stars° and makes them stand

Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane!

LAERTES: The devil take thy soul! [*Hamlet leaps in after Laertes.*]

HAMLET: The devil take thy soul! [*Grappling with him.*]

I prithee take thy fingers from my throat.

For though I am not splenitive° [and] rash,

Yet have I in me something dangerous,

Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand!

KING: Pluck them asunder.

QUEEN: Hamlet, Hamlet!

ALL: Gentlemen!

HORATIO: Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*]

HAMLET: Why, I will fight with him upon this theme

Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

QUEEN: O my son, what theme?

HAMLET: I lov'd Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers

Could not with all their quantity of love

Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

KING: O, he is mad, Laertes.

QUEEN: For love of God, forbear him.

HAMLET: 'Swounds, show me what thou'° do.

Woo't° weep, woo't° fight, woo't° fast, woo't° tear thyself?

Woo't° drink up eisel° eat a crocodile°

I'll do't. Dost [thou] come here to whine?

To outface me with leaping in her grave?

Be buried quick with her, and so will I.

And if thou prate of mountains,° let them throw

265
next

239, 240. Pelion, Olympus: Mountains in northeastern Greece. 241. emphasis, phrase: Rhetorical terms, here used in disparaging reference to Laertes' inflated language. 242. Conjures: Puts a spell upon. wand'ring stars: Planets. 244. the Dane: This title normally signifies the King. 247. splenitive: Impetuous. 260. thou't: Thou wilt. 261. Woo't: Wilt thou. 262. eisel: Vinegar. crocodile: Crocodile. 266. if... mountains: Referring to lines 237-40.

Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,^o
Make Ossa^o like a wart! Nay, and thou'lt mouth,^o
I'll rant as well as thou.

QUEEN: This is mere^o madness, 270
And [thus] a while the fit will work on him;
Anon, as patient^o as the female dove,
When that her golden couplets^o are disclosed,^o
His silence will sit drooping.

HAMLET: Hear you, sir, 275
What is the reason that you use me thus?
I lov'd you ever. But it is no matter.
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.^o *Exit Hamlet.*

KING: I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.

[*Exit*] Horatio.
[*To Laertes.*]^o Strengthen your patience in^o our last night's
speech, 280

We'll put the matter to the present push.^o —
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.
This grave shall have a living^o monument.
An hour of quiet [shortly] shall we see,
Till then in patience our proceeding be. *Exeunt.* 285

[Scene 2]^o

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

HAMLET: So much for this, sir, now shall you see the other^o —
You do remember all the circumstance?

HORATIO: Remember it, my lord!

HAMLET: Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep. [Methought] I lay 5

268. burning zone: Sphere of the sun. 269. Ossa: Another mountain in Greece, near Pelion and Olympus. mouth: Talk bombast (synonymous with *rant* in the next line). 270. mere: Utter. 272. patient: Calm. 273. golden couplets: Pair of baby birds, covered with yellow down. disclosed: Hatched. 277-78. Let . . . day: I.e. nobody can prevent another from making the scenes he feels he has a right to. 280-85. See the Textual Notes for the lines that replace these in Q1. 280. in: I.e. by recalling. 281. present push: Immediate test. 283. living: Enduring (?) or in the form of a lifelike effigy (?). 5.2. Location: The castle. 1. see the other: I.e. hear the other news I have to tell you (hinted at in the letter to Horatio, 4.6.23-24).

Worse than the mutines^o in the [bilboes^o]. Rashly^o —
And prais'd be rashness for it — let us know^o
Our indiscretion sometime serves us well
When our deep plots do pall,^o and that should learn^o us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,^o
Rough-hew them^o how we will — 10

HORATIO: That is most certain.

HAMLET: Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Grop'd I to find out them, had my desire,
Finger'd^o their packet, and in fine withdrew 15
To mine own room again, making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to [unseal]
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio —
Ah, royal knavery! — an exact command,
Larded^o with many several sorts of reasons, 20
Importing^o Denmark's health and England's too,
With, ho, such bugs and goblins in my life,^o
That, on the supervise,^o no leisure bated,^o
No, not to stay^o the grinding of the axe,
My head should be strook off.

HORATIO: Is't possible? 25

HAMLET: Here's the commission, read it at more leisure.
But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

HORATIO: I beseech you.

HAMLET: Being thus benetted round with [villainies],
Or^o I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play. I sat me down,
Devis'd a new commission, wrote it fair.^o
I once did hold it, as our statist^o do,
A baseness^o to write fair, and labor'd much 30

6. mutines: Mutineers (but the term *mutiny* was in Shakespeare's day used of almost any act of rebellion against authority). bilboes: Fetters attached to a heavy iron bar. Rashly: On impulse. 7. know: Recognize, acknowledge. 9. pall: Lose force, come to nothing. learn: Teach. 10. shapes our ends: Gives final shape to our designs. 11. Rough-hew them: Block them out in initial form. 15. Finger'd: Filched, "pinched." 20. Larded: Garnished. 21. Importing: Relating to. 22. bugs . . . life: Terrifying things in prospect if I were permitted to remain alive. Bugs = bugaboos. 23. supervise: Perusal. bated: Deducted (from the stipulated speediness). 24. stay: Wait for. 30. Or: Before. 32. fair: I.e. in a beautiful hand (such as a professional scribe would use). 33. statist: Statesmen, public officials. 34. A baseness: I.e. a skill befitting men of low rank.

hangers till then. But on: six Barb'ry horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this all [impawn'd, as] you call it?

OSRIC: The King, sir, hath laid,° sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits;° he hath laid on twelve for nine;° and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.°

HAMLET: How if I answer no?

OSRIC: I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

HAMLET: Sir, I will walk here in the hall. If it please his Majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me.° Let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the King hold his purpose, I will win for him and I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

OSRIC: Shall I deliver you so?

HAMLET: To this effect, sir — after what flourish° your nature will.

OSRIC: I commend my duty° to your lordship.

HAMLET: Yours. [*Exit Osric.*] ['A] does well to commend it himself, there are no tongues else for 's turn.

HORATIO: This lapwing° runs away with the shell on his head.

HAMLET: 'A did [comply], sir, with his dug° before 'a suck'd it. Thus has he, and many more of the same breed that I know the drossy° age dotes on, only got the tune of the time,° and out of an habit of encounter,° a kind of [yesty°] collection,° which carries them through and through the most

155. laid: Wagered. 156. he . . . hits: Laertes must win by at least eight to four (if none of the "passes" or bouts are draws), since at seven to five he would be only two up. 157. he . . . nine: Not satisfactorily explained despite much discussion. One suggestion is that Laertes has raised the odds against himself by wagering that out of twelve bouts he will win nine. 158. answer: Encounter (as Hamlet's following quibble forces Osric to explain in his next speech). 162. breathing . . . me: My usual hour for exercise. 167. after what flourish: With whatever embellishment of language. 169. commend my duty: Offer my dutiful respects (but Hamlet picks up the phrase in the sense "praise my manner of bowing"). 172. lapwing: A foolish bird which upon hatching was supposed to run with part of the eggshell still over its head. (Osric has put his hat on at last.) 173. comply . . . dug: Bow politely to his mother's nipple. 175. drossy: I.e. worthless. tune . . . time: I.e. fashionable ways of talk. 176. habit of encounter: Mode of social intercourse. yesty: Yeasty, frothy. 176-77. collection: I.e. anthology of fine phrases.

[profound] and [winnow'd°] opinions,° and do but blow them to their trial,° the bubbles are out.°

Enter a LORD.

LORD: My lord, his Majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him that you attend him in the hall. He sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

HAMLET: I am constant to my purposes, they follow the King's pleasure. If his fitness speaks, mine is ready,° now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

LORD: The King and Queen and all are coming down.

HAMLET: In happy time.

LORD: The Queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment° to Laertes before you fall to play.

HAMLET: She well instructs me. [*Exit Lord.*]

HORATIO: You will lose, my lord.

HAMLET: I do not think so; since he went into France I have been in continual practice. I shall win at the odds. Thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart — but it is no matter.

HORATIO: Nay, good my lord —

HAMLET: It is but foolery, but it is such a kind of [gain-]giving,° as would perhaps trouble a woman.

HORATIO: If your mind dislike any thing, obey it. I will forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

HAMLET: Not a whit, we defy augury. There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow.° If it be [now], 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it [will] come — the readiness is all. Since no man, of aught° he leaves, knows what is't to leave betimes,° let be.

A table prepar'd, [and flagons of wine on it. Enter] Trumpets,

178. winnow'd: Sifted, choice. opinions: Judgments. 178-79. blow . . . trial: Test them by blowing on them, i.e. make even the least demanding trial of them. 179. out: Blown away (?) or at an end, done for (?). 185. If . . . ready: I.e. if this is a good moment for him, it is for me also. 189-90. gentle entertainment: Courteous greeting. 198. gain-giving: Misgiving. 202-03. special . . . sparrow: See Matthew 10:29. 205-06. of aught: I.e. whatever. knows . . . betimes: Knows what is the best time to leave it.

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Drums, and Officers with cushions, foils, daggers; KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, [OSRIC,] and all the State.^o

KING: Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

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

HAMLET: Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong,

But pardon't as you are a gentleman.

This presence^o knows,

And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd^o

With a sore distraction. What I have done

That might your nature, honor, and exception^o

Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet!

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,

Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

Who does it then? His madness. If't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged,

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

[*Sir, in this audience,*]

Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil^o

Free^o me so far in your most generous thoughts,

That I have shot my arrow o'er the house

And hurt my brother.

LAERTES: I am satisfied in nature,^o

Whose motive in this case should stir me most

To my revenge, but in my terms of honor^o

I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation

Till by some elder masters of known honor

I have a voice and president of peace

To [keep] my name ungor'd.^o But [till] that time

I do receive your offer'd love like love,

And will not wrong it.

HAMLET: I embrace it freely,
And will this brothers'^o wager frankly^o play.

206. s.d. State: Nobles. 210. presence: Assembled court. 211. punish'd: Afflicted. 213. exception: Objection. 223. my . . . evil: My declaration that I intended no harm. 224. Free: Absolve. 226. in nature: So far as my personal feelings are concerned. 228. in . . . honor: I.e. as a man governed by an established code of honor. 231-32. have . . . ungor'd: Can secure an opinion backed by precedent that I can make peace with you without injury to my reputation. 235. brothers': I.e. amicable, as if between brothers. frankly: Freely, without constraint.

Give us the foils. [*Come on.*]

LAERTES: Come, one for me.

HAMLET: I'll be your foil,^o Laertes; in mine ignorance

Your skill shall like a star i' th' darkest night

Stick fiery off^o indeed.

LAERTES: You mock me, sir.

HAMLET: No, by this hand.

KING: Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,

You know the wager?

HAMLET: Very well, my lord.

Your Grace has laid the odds^o a' th' weaker side.

KING: I do not fear it, I have seen you both;

But since he is [better'd^o], we have therefore odds.^o

LAERTES: This is too heavy; let me see another.

HAMLET: This likes^o me well. These foils have all a length?^o

[*Prepare to play.*]

OSRIC: Ay, my good lord.

KING: Set me the stoups^o of wine upon that table.

If Hamlet give the first or second hit,

Or quit in answer of the third exchange,^o

Let all the battlements their ord'nance fire.

The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath,

And in the cup an [union^o] shall he throw,

Richer than that which four successive kings

In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups,

And let the kettle^o to the trumpet speak,

The trumpet to the cannoneer without,

The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,

"Now the King drinks to Hamlet." Come begin;

[*Trumpets the while.*]

And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

HAMLET: Come on, sir.

LAERTES: Come, my lord.

[*They play and Hamlet scores a hit.*]

237. foil: Thin sheet of metal placed behind a jewel to set it off. 239. Stick . . . off: Blaze out in contrast. 243. laid the odds: I.e. wagered a higher stake (horses to rapier). 245. is better'd: Has perfected his skill. odds: I.e. the arrangement that Laertes must take more bouts than Hamlet to win. 247. likes: Pleases. a length: The same length. 249. stoups: Tankards. 251. quit . . . exchange: Pays back wins by Laertes in the first and second bouts by taking the third. 254. union: An especially fine pearl. 257. kettle: Kettle-drum.

HAMLET: One.
 LAERTES: No.
 HAMLET: Judgment.
 OSRIC: A hit, a very palpable hit.
 LAERTES: Well, again.
 KING: Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine,
 Here's to thy health! Give him the cup. 265
Drum, trumpets [sound] flourish. A piece goes off [within].
 HAMLET: I'll play this bout first, set it by a while.
 Come. [*They play again.*] Another hit; what say you?
 LAERTES: [A touch, a touch,] I do confess't.
 KING: Our son shall win.
 QUEEN: He's fat,^o and scant of breath.
 Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows. 270
 The Queen carouses^o to thy fortune, Hamlet.
 HAMLET: Good madam!
 KING: Gertrude, do not drink.
 QUEEN: I will, my lord, I pray you pardon me.
 KING: [*Aside.*] It is the pois'ned cup, it is too late.
 HAMLET: I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by. 275
 QUEEN: Come, let me wipe thy face.
 LAERTES: My lord, I'll hit him now.
 KING: I do not think't.
 LAERTES: [*Aside.*] And yet it is almost against my conscience.
 HAMLET: Come, for the third, Laertes, you do but dally.
 I pray you pass with your best violence; 280
 I am sure you make a wanton of me.^o
 LAERTES: Say you so? Come on. [*They play.*]
 OSRIC: Nothing, neither way.
 LAERTES: Have at you now!
[Laertes wounds Hamlet; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers.]
 KING: Part them, they are incens'd.
 HAMLET: Nay, come again.
[Hamlet wounds Laertes. The Queen falls.]
 OSRIC: Look to the Queen there ho! 285
 HORATIO: They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?
 OSRIC: How is't, Laertes?

269. fat: Sweaty. 271. carouses: Drinks a toast. 281. make . . . me: I.e. are holding back in order to let me win, as one does with a spoiled child (*wanton*).

LAERTES: Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe,^o Osric:
 I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.
 HAMLET: How does the Queen?
 KING: She sounds^o to see them bleed. 290
 QUEEN: No, no, the drink, the drink — O my dear Hamlet —
 The drink, the drink! I am pois'ned. [*Dies.*]
 HAMLET: O villainy! Ho, let the door be lock'd!
 Treachery! Seek it out.
 LAERTES: It is here, Hamlet. [Hamlet,] thou art slain. 295
 No med'cine in the world can do thee good;
 In thee there is not half an hour's life.
 The treacherous instrument is in [thy] hand,
 Unbated^o and envenom'd. The foul practice^o
 Hath turn'd itself on me. Lo here I lie, 300
 Never to rise again. Thy mother's pois'ned.
 I can no more — the King, the King's to blame.
 HAMLET: The point envenom'd too!
 Then, venom, to thy work. [*Hurts^o the King.*]
 ALL. Treason! treason! 305
 KING: O, yet defend me, friends, I am but hurt.
 HAMLET: Here, thou incestious, [murd'rous], damned Dane,
 Drink [off] this potion! Is [thy union] here?
 Follow my mother! [*King dies.*]
 T LAERTES: He is justly served,
 It is a poison temper'd^o by himself. 310
 Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.
 Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
 Nor thine on me! [*Dies.*]
 HAMLET: Heaven make thee free^o of it! I follow thee.
 I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!
 You that look pale, and tremble at this chance,
 That are but mutes or audience^o to this act,
 Had I but time — as this fell^o sergeant,^o Death,
 Is strict in his arrest — O, I could tell you —
 But let it be. Horatio, I am dead,
 Thou livest. Report me and my cause aright 320

288. springe: Snare. 290. sounds: Swoons. 299. Unbated: Not blunted. foul practice: Vile plot. 304. s.d. Hurts: Wounds. 310. temper'd: Mixed. 314. make thee free: Absolve you. 317. mutes or audience: Silent spectators. 318. fell: Cruel. sergeant: Sheriff's officer.

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To the unsatisfied.

HORATIO: Never believe it;
I am more an antique Roman^o than a Dane.
Here's yet some liquor left.

HAMLET: As th' art a man,
Give me the cup. Let go! By heaven, I'll ha't! 325
O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind me!
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity a while,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain 330
To tell my story. *A march afar off [and a shot within].*
What warlike noise is this?

[*Osric goes to the door and returns.*]

OSRIC: Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To th' ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

HAMLET: O, I die, Horatio,
The potent poison quite o'er-crows^o my spirit.^o 335
I cannot live to hear the news from England,
But I do prophesy th' election lights
On Fortinbras, he has my dying voice.^o
So tell him, with th' occurrents^o more and less
Which have solicited^o — the rest is silence. [*Dies.*] 340

HORATIO: Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest! [*March within.*]
Why does the drum come hither?

Enter FORTINBRAS with the [ENGLISH] EMBASSADORS, [with Drum, Colors, and Attendants].

FORTINBRAS: Where is this sight?

HORATIO: What is it you would see?
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search. 345

FORTINBRAS: This quarry cries on havoc.^o O proud death,
What feast is toward^o in thine eternal cell,

323. antique Roman: I.e. one who will commit suicide on such an occasion. 335. o'er-crows: Triumphs over (a term derived from cockfighting). spirit: Vital energy. 338. voice: Vote. 339. occurrents: Occurrences. 340. solicited: Instigated. 346. This . . . havoc: This heap of corpses proclaims a massacre. 347. toward: In preparation.

That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast strook?

FIRST EMBASSADOR: The sight is dismal,
And our affairs from England come too late. 350
The cars are senseless that should give us hearing,
To tell him his^o commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.
Where should we have our thanks?

HORATIO: Not from his mouth,
Had it th' ability of life to thank you. 355
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since so jump^o upon this bloody question,^o
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies
High on a stage^o be placed to the view, 360
And let me speak to [th'] yet unknowing world
How these things came about. So shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgments,^o casual^o slaughters,
Of deaths put on^o by cunning and [forc'd] cause, 365
And in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on th' inventors' heads: all this can I
Truly deliver.

FORTINBRAS: Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune. 370
I have some rights, of memory^o in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage^o doth invite me.

HORATIO: Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw [on] more.^o
But let this same be presently^o perform'd 375
Even while men's minds are wild,^o lest more mischance
On plots and errors happen.

FORTINBRAS: Let four captains

352. his: I.e. the King's. 357. jump: Precisely, pat. question: Matter. 360. stage: Platform. 364. judgments: Retributions. casual: Happening by chance. 365. put on: Instigated. 371. of memory: Unforgotten. 372. my vantage: I.e. my opportune presence at a moment when the throne is empty. 374. his . . . more: The mouth of one (Hamlet) whose vote will induce others to support your claim. 375. presently: At once. 376. wild: Distracted.

4
 Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,
 For he was likely, had he been put on,^o
 To have prov'd most royal; and for his passage,^o 380
 The soldiers' music and the rite of war
 Speak loudly for him.
 Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this
 Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.^o
 Go bid the soldiers shoot. 385
 1
*Exeunt [marching; after the which a peal of ordinance
 are shot off].*

379. put on: Put to the test (by becoming king). 380. passage: Death. 384. Becomes . . . amiss: Befits the battlefield, but appears very much out of place here.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

Hamlet offers a textual situation too complicated to permit here more than a sketch of the principal problems involved.

There are three early and significant editions of *Hamlet*: First Quarto (Q1), 1603; Second Quarto (Q2), 1604/5; First Folio (F1), 1623. Three more quartos, stemming from Q2, appeared before the Restoration: Q3 (1611); Q4 (undated); Q5 (1637). The first of several Players' Quartos (Betterton's acting version) was printed in 1676.

Q1, which is approximately half the length of Q2, is one of the so-called "bad" quartos, i.e. a memorially reconstructed version, made probably for some provincial touring company, perhaps by the actor who doubled in the roles of Marcellus and Lucianus. Thus, although in one sense a substantive text, Q1 is without any real textual authority, but its stage directions and very occasionally its readings are valuable in supplementing, corroborating, or correcting Q2 and F1. It also contains one scene (see Textual Notes, 4.6) not found in Q2-4 or F1.

Since the pioneer work of J. D. Wilson in 1934, the position of Q2 as basic copy-text for a critical edition has never been seriously questioned. Wilson was able to show with near certainty that Q2 was printed from some form of Shakespeare's autograph, probably the "foul papers." One qualification of this view, however, is now generally admitted: act 1, as Greg had earlier suggested, seems to have been printed not directly from the manuscript but from a copy of Q1 corrected and enlarged by collation with the manuscript. This qualification has important bearings on the relative authority of the Q2 text in act 1 where its

readings agree with Q1 against those of F1. Another influential theory advanced by Wilson — that Q2 was badly printed because the work was set up by a young and inexperienced compositor — must now be abandoned. Fredson Bowers and J. R. Brown have proved that two compositors set Q2 and that the printing errors and supposed omissions, etc. are pretty evenly distributed between them. Such a view means that many words and passages found only in F1 were probably not accidentally omitted by Wilson's hypothetical inexperienced compositor of Q2 but were in fact not present in Shakespeare's manuscript when it served as copy for Q2. This conclusion raises one of several questions about the provenience of the F1 text.

The exact status of the F1 text has become increasingly uncertain in recent years. Two principal theories, each with important implications, are advanced: (a) F1 is based on a playhouse manuscript, a transcript at one or two removes from Shakespeare's "foul papers" as used for Q2, the printer occasionally consulting Q2 on difficult passages; (b) F1 is based on a copy of Q2 which had been brought into some measure of conformity (by verbal substitutions, deletion of some 230 lines, and addition of some 83 lines) with a playhouse manuscript of the kind described under (a). Theory (a) obviously allows the F1 text an independent authority apart from Q2 and strengthens the authority of all readings in which F1 and Q2 agree; theory (b), while still allowing a degree of independence to F1, limits the cumulative authority of all readings common to F1 and Q2. Whichever view is taken, F1 contains a number of readings which seem to reflect early stage usage, as is shown by the fairly frequent agreement, against Q2, between F1 and Q1. Whether such readings (as well as some of the additions in F1) represent possible Shakespearean revision (the major additions presumably do) or actors' or bookholder's changes must in the present state of our knowledge remain uncertain. Harold Jenkins, who in part supports theory (a), has recently gone so far as to suggest that F1 has many of the characteristics of a reported text, a view which, of course, further undermines its already ambiguous authority. The treatment of F1 in the present text has been influenced by Jenkins's position.

Since the textual situation in *Hamlet* is so intricate, the Textual Notes offer as complete a picture of the interrelations between Q2, F1, and Q1 as considerations of space allow. All significant variants, as well as additions and omissions, are listed, together with a record of Q1's concurrence or disagreement with Q2 and F1 in these and some other readings. (Q1) immediately after the square bracket or following other sigla indicates that Q1 here agrees with Q2 or with the other editions