**ACT V**

**SCENE I. A churchyard.**

*Enter two Clowns, with spades, & c*

**First Clown**

Is she to be buried in Christian burial that  
wilfully seeks her own salvation?

**Second Clown**

I tell thee she is: and therefore make her grave  
straight: the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it  
Christian burial.

**First Clown**

How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her  
own defence?

**Second Clown**

Why, 'tis found so.

**First Clown**

It must be 'se offendendo;' it cannot be else. For  
here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly,  
it argues an act: and an act hath three branches: it  
is, to act, to do, to perform: argal, she drowned  
herself wittingly.

**Second Clown**

Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,--

**First Clown**

Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here  
stands the man; good; if the man go to this water,  
and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he  
goes,--mark you that; but if the water come to him  
and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he  
that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

**Second Clown**

But is this law?

**First Clown**

Ay, marry, is't; crowner's quest law.

**Second Clown**

Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been  
a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o'  
Christian burial.

**First Clown**

Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that  
great folk should have countenance in this world to  
drown or hang themselves, more than their even  
Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient  
gentleman but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers:  
they hold up Adam's profession.

**Second Clown**

Was he a gentleman?

**First Clown**

He was the first that ever bore arms.

**Second Clown**

Why, he had none.

**First Clown**

What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the  
Scripture? The Scripture says 'Adam digged:'  
could he dig without arms? I'll put another  
question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the  
purpose, confess thyself--

**Second Clown**

Go to.

**First Clown**

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

**Second Clown**

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

**First Clown**

I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows  
does well; but how does it well? it does well to  
those that do in: now thou dost ill to say the  
gallows is built stronger than the church: argal,  
the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.

**Second Clown**

'Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or  
a carpenter?'

**First Clown**

Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

**Second Clown**

Marry, now I can tell.

**First Clown**

To't.

**Second Clown**

Mass, I cannot tell.

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance*

**First Clown**

Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull  
ass will not mend his pace with beating; and, when  
you are asked this question next, say 'a  
grave-maker: 'the houses that he makes last till  
doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan: fetch me a  
stoup of liquor.

*Exit Second Clown*

*He digs and sings*

In youth, when I did love, did love,  
Methought it was very sweet,  
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,  
O, methought, there was nothing meet.

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

**HAMLET**

'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath  
the daintier sense.

**First Clown**

[Sings]  
But age, with his stealing steps,  
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,  
And hath shipped me intil the land,  
As if I had never been such.

*Throws up a skull*

**HAMLET**

That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once:  
how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were  
Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It  
might be the pate of a politician, which this ass  
now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God,  
might it not?

**HORATIO**

It might, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Or of a courtier; which could say 'Good morrow,  
sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?' This might  
be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord  
such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

**HORATIO**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Why, e'en so: and now my Lady Worm's; chapless, and  
knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade:  
here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to  
see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding,  
but to play at loggats with 'em? mine ache to think on't.

**First Clown**

[Sings]  
A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,  
For and a shrouding sheet:  
O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

*Throws up another skull*

**HAMLET**

There's another: why may not that be the skull of a  
lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quillets,  
his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he  
suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the  
sconce 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,  
his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers,  
his recoveries: is this the fine 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 purchases, and double ones too, than  
the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The  
very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in  
this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

**HORATIO**

Not a jot more, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

**HORATIO**

Ay, my lord, and of calf-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?

**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 it is not  
yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

**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 gain, from me to  
you.

**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?

**First Clown**

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

**HAMLET**

How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the  
card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord,  
Horatio, these three years I have taken a note of  
it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the  
peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he  
gaffs his kibe. How long hast thou been a  
grave-maker?

**First Clown**

Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that day  
that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

**HAMLET**

How long is that since?

**First Clown**

Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it  
was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he that  
is mad, and sent into England.

**HAMLET**

Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

**First Clown**

Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits  
there; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

**HAMLET**

Why?

**First Clown**

'Twill, a not be seen in him there; there the men  
are as mad as he.

**HAMLET**

How came he mad?

**First Clown**

Very strangely, they say.

**HAMLET**

How strangely?

**First Clown**

Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

**HAMLET**

Upon what ground?

**First Clown**

Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, man  
and boy, thirty years.

**HAMLET**

How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

**First Clown**

I' faith, if he be not rotten before he die--as we  
have many pocky corses now-a-days, that will scarce  
hold the laying in--he will last you some eight year  
or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

**HAMLET**

Why he more than another?

**First Clown**

Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that  
he will keep out water a great while; and your water  
is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body.  
Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth  
three and twenty years.

**HAMLET**

Whose was it?

**First Clown**

A whoreson mad fellow's it was: whose do you think it was?

**HAMLET**

Nay, I know not.

**First Clown**

A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! a' poured a  
flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull,  
sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

**HAMLET**

This?

**First Clown**

E'en that.

**HAMLET**

Let me see.

*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; and now, how  
abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rims at  
it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know  
not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your  
gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment,  
that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one  
now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen?  
Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let  
her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must  
come; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell  
me one thing.

**HORATIO**

What's that, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i'  
the earth?

**HORATIO**

E'en so.

**HAMLET**

And smelt so? pah!

*Puts down the skull*

**HORATIO**

E'en so, my lord.

**HAMLET**

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?

**HORATIO**

'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

**HAMLET**

No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with  
modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: as  
thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried,  
Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of  
earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he  
was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?  
Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,  
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:  
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,  
Should patch a wall to expel the winter flaw!  
But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the king.

*Enter Priest, & c. in procession; the Corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following; KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, their trains, & c*

The queen, the courtiers: who is this they follow?  
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken  
The corse they follow did with desperate hand  
Fordo its own life: 'twas of some estate.  
Couch we awhile, and mark.

*Retiring with HORATIO*

**LAERTES**

What ceremony else?

**HAMLET**

That is Laertes,  
A very noble youth: mark.

**LAERTES**

What ceremony else?

**First Priest**

Her obsequies have been as far enlarged  
As we have warrantise: her death was doubtful;  
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,  
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged  
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?

**First Priest**

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' the earth:  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,  
A ministering angel shall my sister be,  
When thou liest howling.

**HAMLET**

What, the fair Ophelia!

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

*Scattering flowers*

I hoped 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  
Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth awhile,  
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

*Leaps into the grave*

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,  
To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus.

**HAMLET**

[Advancing] What is he whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow  
Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand  
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,  
Hamlet the Dane.

*Leaps into the grave*

**LAERTES**

The devil take thy soul!

*Grappling with him*

**HAMLET**

Thou pray'st not well.  
I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;  
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,  
Yet have I something in me dangerous,  
Which let thy wiseness fear: hold off thy hand.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Pluck them asunder.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

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 GERTRUDE**

O my son, what theme?

**HAMLET**

I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers  
Could not, with all their quantity of love,  
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

O, he is mad, Laertes.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

For love of God, forbear him.

**HAMLET**

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

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

This is mere madness:  
And thus awhile the fit will work on him;  
Anon, as patient as the female dove,  
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,  
His silence will sit drooping.

**HAMLET**

Hear you, sir;  
What is the reason that you use me thus?  
I loved you ever: but it is no matter;  
Let Hercules himself do what he may,  
The cat will mew and dog will have his day.

*Exit*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.

*Exit HORATIO*

*To LAERTES*

Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;  
We'll put the matter to the present push.  
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.  
This grave shall have a living monument:  
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;  
Till then, in patience our proceeding be.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE II. A hall in the castle.**

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO*

**HAMLET**

So much for this, sir: now shall you see the other;  
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  
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,  
And praised be rashness for it, let us know,  
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,  
When our deep plots do pall: and that should teach us  
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will,--

**HORATIO**

That is most certain.

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

Is't possible?

**HAMLET**

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

**HORATIO**

I beseech you.

**HAMLET**

Being thus be-netted round with villanies,--  
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,  
They had begun the play--I sat me down,  
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair:  
I once did hold it, as our statists do,  
A baseness to write fair and labour'd much  
How to forget that learning, but, sir, now  
It did me yeoman's service: wilt thou know  
The effect of what I wrote?

**HORATIO**

Ay, good my lord.

**HAMLET**

An earnest conjuration from the king,  
As England was his faithful tributary,  
As love between them like the palm might flourish,  
As peace should stiff her wheaten garland wear  
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,  
And many such-like 'As'es of great charge,  
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,  
Without debatement further, more or less,  
He should the bearers put to sudden death,  
Not shriving-time allow'd.

**HORATIO**

How was this seal'd?

**HAMLET**

Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.  
I had my father's signet in my purse,  
Which was the model of that Danish seal;  
Folded the writ up in form of the other,  
Subscribed it, gave't the impression, placed it safely,  
The changeling never known. Now, the next day  
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent  
Thou know'st already.

**HORATIO**

So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

**HAMLET**

Why, man, they did make love to this employment;  
They are not near my conscience; their defeat  
Does by their own insinuation grow:  
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes  
Between the pass and fell incensed points  
Of mighty opposites.

**HORATIO**

Why, what a king is this!

**HAMLET**

Does it not, think'st thee, stand me now upon--  
He that hath kill'd my king and whored my mother,  
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,  
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,  
And with such cozenage--is't not perfect conscience,  
To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be damn'd,  
To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil?

**HORATIO**

It must be shortly known to him from England  
What is the issue of the business there.

**HAMLET**

It will be short: the interim is mine;  
And a man's life's no more than to say 'One.'  
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,  
That to Laertes I forgot myself;  
For, by the image of my cause, I see  
The portraiture of his: I'll court his favours.  
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me  
Into a towering passion.

**HORATIO**

Peace! who comes here?

*Enter OSRIC*

**OSRIC**

Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

**HAMLET**

I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this water-fly?

**HORATIO**

No, my good lord.

**HAMLET**

Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to  
know him. He hath much land, and fertile: let a  
beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at  
the king's mess: 'tis a chough; but, as I say,  
spacious in the possession of dirt.

**OSRIC**

Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I  
should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

**HAMLET**

I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of  
spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

**OSRIC**

I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

**HAMLET**

No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is  
northerly.

**OSRIC**

It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

**HAMLET**

But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my  
complexion.

**OSRIC**

Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry,--as  
'twere,--I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his  
majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a  
great wager on your head: sir, this is the matter,--

**HAMLET**

I beseech you, remember--

*HAMLET moves him to put on his hat*

**OSRIC**

Nay, good my lord; for mine ease, in good faith.  
Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes; believe  
me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent  
differences, of very soft society and great showing:  
indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or  
calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the  
continent of what part a gentleman would see.

**HAMLET**

Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you;  
though, I know, to divide him inventorially would  
dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw  
neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the  
verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of  
great article; and his infusion of such dearth and  
rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his  
semblable is his mirror; and who else would trace  
him, his umbrage, nothing more.

**OSRIC**

Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

**HAMLET**

The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman  
in our more rawer breath?

**OSRIC**

Sir?

**HORATIO**

Is't not possible to understand in another tongue?  
You will do't, sir, really.

**HAMLET**

What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

**OSRIC**

Of Laertes?

**HORATIO**

His purse is empty already; all's golden words are spent.

**HAMLET**

Of him, sir.

**OSRIC**

I know you are not ignorant--

**HAMLET**

I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did,  
it would not much approve me. Well, sir?

**OSRIC**

You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is--

**HAMLET**

I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with  
him in excellence; but, to know a man well, were to  
know himself.

**OSRIC**

I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation  
laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

**HAMLET**

What's his weapon?

**OSRIC**

Rapier and dagger.

**HAMLET**

That's two of his weapons: but, well.

**OSRIC**

The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary  
horses: against the which he has imponed, as I take  
it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their  
assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so: three of the  
carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very  
responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages,  
and of very liberal conceit.

**HAMLET**

What call you the carriages?

**HORATIO**

I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

**OSRIC**

The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

**HAMLET**

The phrase would be more german to the matter, if we  
could carry cannon by our sides: I would it might  
be hangers till then. But, on: six Barbary horses  
against six French swords, their assigns, and three  
liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet  
against the Danish. Why is this 'imponed,' as you call it?

**OSRIC**

The king, sir, hath laid, 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, 'tis 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 an I can;  
if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

**OSRIC**

Shall I re-deliver you e'en so?

**HAMLET**

To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

**OSRIC**

I commend my duty to your lordship.

**HAMLET**

Yours, yours.

*Exit OSRIC*

He 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**

He did comply with his dug, before he sucked it.  
Thus has he--and many more of the same bevy that I  
know the dressy age dotes on--only got the tune of  
the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of  
yesty collection, which carries them through and  
through the most fond and winnowed 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 purpose; 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 this wager, my lord.

**HAMLET**

I do not think so: since he went into France, I  
have been in continual practise: I shall win at the  
odds. But 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's a 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 has aught of what he  
leaves, what is't to leave betimes?

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and Attendants with foils, & c*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

*KING CLAUDIUS puts LAERTES' hand into HAMLET's*

**HAMLET**

Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong;  
But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.  
This presence knows,  
And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd  
With sore distraction. What I have done,  
That might your nature, honour and exception  
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 wrong'd;  
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.  
Sir, in this audience,  
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil  
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,  
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,  
And hurt my brother.

**LAERTES**

I am satisfied in nature,  
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most  
To my revenge: but in my terms of honour  
I stand aloof; and will no reconcilement,  
Till by some elder masters, of known honour,  
I have a voice and precedent of peace,  
To keep my name ungored. 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 brother's wager frankly play.  
Give us the foils. Come on.

**LAERTES**

Come, one for me.

**HAMLET**

I'll be your foil, Laertes: in mine ignorance  
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,  
Stick fiery off indeed.

**LAERTES**

You mock me, sir.

**HAMLET**

No, by this hand.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

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

**HAMLET**

Very well, my lord  
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

I do not fear it; I have seen you both:  
But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

**LAERTES**

This is too heavy, let me see another.

**HAMLET**

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

*They prepare to play*

**OSRIC**

Ay, my good lord.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Set me the stoops of wine upon that table.  
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,  
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,  
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire:  
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;  
And in the cup an union shall he throw,  
Richer than that which four successive kings  
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;  
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,  
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,  
The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,  
'Now the king dunks to Hamlet.' Come, begin:  
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

**HAMLET**

Come on, sir.

**LAERTES**

Come, my lord.

*They play*

**HAMLET**

One.

**LAERTES**

No.

**HAMLET**

Judgment.

**OSRIC**

A hit, a very palpable hit.

**LAERTES**

Well; again.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;  
Here's to thy health.

*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within*

Give him the cup.

**HAMLET**

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

*They play*

Another hit; what say you?

**LAERTES**

A touch, a touch, I do confess.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Our son shall win.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

He's fat, and scant of breath.  
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows;  
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

**HAMLET**

Good madam!

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Gertrude, do not drink.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

[Aside] It is the poison'd cup: it is too late.

**HAMLET**

I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Come, let me wipe thy face.

**LAERTES**

My lord, I'll hit him now.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

I do not think't.

**LAERTES**

[Aside] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

**HAMLET**

Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;  
I pray you, pass with your best violence;  
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

**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, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Part them; they are incensed.

**HAMLET**

Nay, come, again.

*QUEEN GERTRUDE falls*

**OSRIC**

Look to the queen there, ho!

**HORATIO**

They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

**OSRIC**

How is't, Laertes?

**LAERTES**

Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric;  
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

**HAMLET**

How does the queen?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

She swounds to see them bleed.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

No, no, the drink, the drink,--O my dear Hamlet,--  
The drink, the drink! I am poison'd.

*Dies*

**HAMLET**

O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd:  
Treachery! Seek it out.

**LAERTES**

It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;  
No medicine in the world can do thee good;  
In thee there is not half an hour of life;  
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,  
Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practise  
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.

**HAMLET**

The point!--envenom'd too!  
Then, venom, to thy work.

*Stabs KING CLAUDIUS*

**All**

Treason! treason!

**KING CLAUDIUS**

O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.

**HAMLET**

Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,  
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?  
Follow my mother.

*KING CLAUDIUS dies*

**LAERTES**

He is justly served;  
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*

**HAMLET**

Heaven make thee free 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 to this act,  
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 livest; report me and my cause aright  
To the unsatisfied.

**HORATIO**

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

**HAMLET**

As thou'rt a man,  
Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll have't.  
O good Horatio, what a wounded name,  
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!  
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart  
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*

What warlike noise is this?

**OSRIC**

Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,  
To the ambassadors of England gives  
This warlike volley.

**HAMLET**

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

*Dies*

**HORATIO**

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

*March within*

*Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors, and others*

**PRINCE FORTINBRAS**

Where is this sight?

**HORATIO**

What is it ye would see?  
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

**PRINCE FORTINBRAS**

This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,  
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,  
That thou so many princes at a shot  
So bloodily hast struck?

**First Ambassador**

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

**HORATIO**

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

**PRINCE FORTINBRAS**

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

**HORATIO**

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

**PRINCE FORTINBRAS**

Let four captains  
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;  
For he was likely, had he been put on,  
To have proved 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.

*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off*