

Play: \*HAMLET\*.

Act: ACT II.

Scen: SCENE I.

Text: [Elsinore. A room in Polonius' house.]

[Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO.]

POLONIUS.

Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo. 2/1/1

REYNALDO.

I will, my lord. 2/1/2

POLONIUS.

You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo, 2/1/3

Before you visit him, to make inquiry 2/1/4

Of his behaviour. 2/1/5

REYNALDO.

My lord, I did intend it.

POLONIUS.

Marry, well said; very well said. Look you, sir, 2/1/6

Inquire me first what \*Danskens\* are in Paris;

2/1/7

And how, and who, what means, and where they keep, 2/1/8

What company, at what expense; and finding, 2/1/9

By this encompassment and drift of question, 2/1/10

That they do know my son, come you more nearer 2/1/11

Than your particular demands will touch it: 2/1/12

Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him; 2/1/13

As thus, "I know his father and his friends, 2/1/14

And in part him;"- do you mark this, Reynaldo? 2/1/15

REYNALDO.

Ay, very well, my lord. 2/1/16

POLONIUS.

"And in part him;- but," you may say, "not well: 2/1/17

But, if't be he I mean, he's very wild; 2/1/18

Addicted so and so;"- and there put on him 2/1/19

What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank 2/1/20

As may dishonour him; take heed of that; 2/1/21

But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips 2/1/22

As are companions noted and most known 2/1/23

To youth and liberty. 2/1/24

REYNALDO.

As gaming, my lord.

POLONIUS.

Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, 2/1/25

Quarrelling, drabbing:- you may go so far. 2/1/26

REYNALDO.  
 My lord, that would dishonour him. 2/1/27  
 POLONIUS.  
 Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge. 2/1/28  
 You must not put another scandal on him, 2/1/29  
 That he is open to incontinency; 2/1/30  
 That's not my meaning: but breathe his faults so quaintly, 2/1/31  
 That they may seem the taints of liberty; 2/1/32  
 The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind; 2/1/33  
 A savageness in unreclaimed blood, 2/1/34  
 Of general assault. 2/1/35  
 REYNALDO.  
     But, my good lord,-  
 POLONIUS.  
 Wherefore should you do this? 2/1/36  
 REYNALDO.  
     Ay, my lord,  
 I would know that. 2/1/37  
 POLONIUS.  
     Marry, sir, here's my drift;  
 And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant: 2/1/38  
 You laying these slight sullies on my son, 2/1/39  
 As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' th'working, 2/1/40  
 Mark you, 2/1/41  
 Your party in converse, him you would sound, 2/1/42  
 Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes 2/1/43  
 The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured 2/1/44  
 He closes with you in this consequence; 2/1/45  
 "Good sir," or so; or "friend," or "gentleman,"- 2/1/46  
 According to the phrase, or the addition, 2/1/47  
 Of man and country. 2/1/48  
 REYNALDO.  
     Very good, my lord.  
 POLONIUS.  
 And then, sir, does he this,- he does- What was I about to 2/1/49  
 say?- By the mass, I was about to say something:- where did 2/1/50  
 I leave? 2/1/51  
 REYNALDO.  
 At "closes in the consequence," at "friend or so," and 2/1/52  
 "gentleman." 2/1/53  
 POLONIUS.  
 At "closes in the consequence,"- ay, marry; 2/1/54  
 He closes with you thus: "I know the gentleman; 2/1/55

I saw him yesterday, or t'other day,	2/1/56
Or then, or then; with such, or such; and, as you say,	2/1/57
There was a' gaming; there o'ertook in's rouse;	2/1/58
There falling out at tennis:" or perchance,	2/1/59
"I saw him enter such a house of sale,"-	2/1/60
Videlicet, a brothel,- or so forth.-	2/1/61
See you now;	2/1/62
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:	2/1/63
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,	2/1/64
With windlasses and with assays of bias,	2/1/65
By indirections find directions out:	2/1/66
So, by my former lecture and advice,	2/1/67
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?	2/1/68
REYNALDO.	
My lord, I have.	2/1/69
POLONIUS.	
God be wi' ye! fare ye well.	
REYNALDO.	
Good my lord!	2/1/70
POLONIUS.	
Observe his inclination in yourself.	2/1/71
REYNALDO.	
I shall, my lord.	2/1/72
POLONIUS.	
And let him ply his music.	2/1/73
REYNALDO.	
Well, my lord.	
POLONIUS.	
Farewell! [Exit REYNALDO.]	2/1/74
[Enter OPHELIA.]	
How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?	2/1/75
OPHELIA.	
O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!	2/1/76
POLONIUS.	
With what, i' th'name of God?	2/1/77
OPHELIA.	
My lord, as I was sewing in my chamber,	2/1/78
Lord Hamlet,- with his doublet all unbraced;	2/1/79
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,	2/1/80
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle;	2/1/80
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;	2/1/81
And with a look so piteous in purport	2/1/82
As if he had been loosed out of hell	2/1/83

To speak of horrors- he comes before me.	2/1/84
POLONIUS.	
Mad for thy love?	2/1/85
OPHELIA.	
My lord, I do not know;	
But, truly, I do fear it.	2/1/86
POLONIUS.	
What said he?	
OPHELIA.	
He took me by the wrist, and held me hard;	2/1/87
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;	2/1/88
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,	2/1/89
He falls to such perusal of my face	2/1/90
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;	2/1/91
At last,- a little shaking of mine arm,	2/1/92
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,-	2/1/93
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound,	2/1/94
That it did seem to shatter all his bulk,	2/1/95
And end his being: that done, he lets me go;	2/1/96
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,	2/1/97
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;	2/1/98
For out o' doors he went without their help,	2/1/99
And, to the last, bended their light on me.	2/1/100
POLONIUS.	
Come, go with me: I will go seek the king.	2/1/101
This is the very ecstasy of love;	2/1/102
Whose violent property fordoes itself,	2/1/103
And leads the will to desperate undertakings,	2/1/104
As oft as any passion under heaven	2/1/105
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.-	2/1/106
What, have you given him any hard words of late?	2/1/107
OPHELIA.	
No, my good lord; but, as you did command,	2/1/108
I did repel his letters, and denied	2/1/109
His access to me.	2/1/110
POLONIUS.	
That hath made him mad.-	
I am sorry that with better heed and judgement	2/1/111
I had not quoted him: I fear'd he did but trifle,	2/1/112
And meant to wrack thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!	2/1/113
It seems it is as proper to our age	2/1/114
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,	2/1/115
As it is common for the younger sort	2/1/116

To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king: 2/1/117  
 This must be known; which, being kept close, might move 2/1/118  
 More grief to hide than hate to utter love. 2/1/119  
 Come. [Exeunt.] 2/1/120

Play: \*HAMLET\*.

Act: ACT \*II\*.

Scen: SCENE \*II\*.

Text: [A room in the castle.]

[Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,  
 and ATTENDANTS.]

KING.

Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern! 2/2/1  
 Moreover that we much did long to see you, 2/2/2  
 The need we have to use you did provoke 2/2/3  
 Our hasty sending. Something have you heard 2/2/4  
 Of Hamlet's transformation; so call it, 2/2/5  
 Since nor th'exterior nor the inward man 2/2/6  
 Resembles that it was. What it should be, 2/2/7  
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him 2/2/8  
 So much from th'understanding of himself, 2/2/9  
 I cannot dream of: I entreat you both, 2/2/10  
 That, being of so young days brought up with him, 2/2/11  
 And sith so neighbour'd to his youth and haviour, 2/2/12  
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court 2/2/13  
 Some little time: so by your companies 2/2/14  
 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather, 2/2/15  
 So much as from occasion you may glean, 2/2/16  
 Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus, 2/2/17  
 That, open'd, lies within our remedy. 2/2/18

QUEEN.

Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you; 2/2/19  
 And sure I am two men there are not living 2/2/20  
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you 2/2/21  
 To show us so much gentry and good will 2/2/22  
 As to expend your time with us awhile, 2/2/23  
 For the supply and profit of our hope, 2/2/24  
 Your visitation shall receive such thanks 2/2/25  
 As fits a king's remembrance. 2/2/26

ROSENCRANTZ.

Both your majesties  
 Might, by the sovereign power you have of us, 2/2/27

Put your dread pleasures more into command Than to entreaty.	2/2/29	2/2/28
GUILDENSTERN.		
But we both obey, And here give up ourselves, in the full bent, To lay our service freely at your feet, To be commanded.	2/2/30 2/2/31 2/2/32	
KING.		
Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.		2/2/33
QUEEN.		
Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz: And I beseech you instantly to visit My too-much-changed son.- Go, some of you, And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.	2/2/34 2/2/35 2/2/36 2/2/37	
GUILDENSTERN.		
Heavens make our presence and our practices Pleasant and helpful to him!	2/2/38 2/2/39	
QUEEN.		
Ay, amen! [Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and some ATTENDANTS.] [Enter POLONIUS.] POLONIUS.		
Th'ambassadors from Norway, my good lord, Are joyfully return'd.	2/2/40 2/2/41	
KING.		
Thou still hast been the father of good news.		2/2/42
POLONIUS.		
Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege, I hold my duty, as I hold my soul, Both to my God and to my gracious king: And I do think- or else this brain of mine Hunts not the trail of policy so sure As it hath used to do- that I have found The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.	2/2/43 2/2/44 2/2/45 2/2/46 2/2/47 2/2/48 2/2/49	
KING.		
O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.		2/2/50
POLONIUS.		
Give first admittance to th'ambassadors; My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.	2/2/51 2/2/52	
KING.		
Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.	[Exit	2/2/53
POLONIUS.]		
He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found		2/2/54

The head and source of all your son's distemper. 2/2/55  
 QUEEN.  
 I doubt it is no other but the main,- 2/2/56  
 His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage. 2/2/57  
 KING.  
 Well, we shall sift him. 2/2/58  
 [Enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.]  
 Welcome, my good friends!  
 Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway? 2/2/59  
 VOLTIMAND.  
 Most fair return of greetings and desires. 2/2/60  
 Upon our first, he sent out to suppress 2/2/61  
 His nephew's levies; which to him appear'd 2/2/62  
 To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack; 2/2/63  
 But, better look'd into, he truly found 2/2/64  
 It was against your highness: whereat grieved,- 2/2/65  
 That so his sickness, age, and impotence, 2/2/66  
 Was falsely borne in hand,- sends out arrests 2/2/67  
 On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys; 2/2/68  
 Receives rebuke from Norway; and, in fine, 2/2/69  
 Makes vow before his uncle never more 2/2/70  
 To give th'assay of arms against your majesty. 2/2/71  
 Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy, 2/2/72  
 Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee; 2/2/73  
 And his commission to employ these soldiers, 2/2/74  
 So levied as before, against the Polack: 2/2/75  
 With an entreaty, herein further shown, [Gives a paper.] 2/2/76  
 That it might please you to give quiet pass 2/2/77  
 Through your dominions for this enterprise, 2/2/78  
 On such regards of safety and allowance 2/2/79  
 As therein are set down. 2/2/80  
 KING.  
 It likes us well;  
 And at our more consider'd time we'll read, 2/2/81  
 Answer, and think upon this business. 2/2/82  
 Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour: 2/2/83  
 Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together: 2/2/84  
 Most welcome home! [Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.]  
 2/2/85  
 POLONIUS.  
 This business is well ended.- 2/2/86  
 My liege, and madam,- to expostulate 2/2/87  
 What majesty should be, what duty is, 2/2/88

Why day is day, night night, and time is time. 2/2/89  
 Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time. 2/2/90  
 Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit, 2/2/90  
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes, 2/2/91  
 I will be brief:- your noble son is mad: 2/2/92  
 Mad call I it; for, to define true madness, 2/2/93  
 What is't but to be nothing else but mad? 2/2/94  
 But let that go. 2/2/95  
 QUEEN.  
     More matter, with less art.  
 POLONIUS.  
 Madam, I swear I use no art at all. 2/2/96  
 That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true,'tis pity, 2/2/97  
 And pity 'tis 'tis true: a foolish figure; 2/2/98  
 But farewell it, for I will use no art. 2/2/99  
 Mad let us grant him, then: and now remains 2/2/100  
 That we find out the cause of this effect,- 2/2/101  
 Or rather say, the cause of this defect, 2/2/102  
 For this effect defective comes by cause: 2/2/103  
 Thus it remains, and the remainder thus. 2/2/104  
 Perpend. 2/2/105  
 I have a daughter,- have whilst she is mine,- 2/2/106  
 Who, in her duty and obedience, mark, 2/2/107  
 Hath given me this: now gather, and surmise. [Reads.] 2/2/108  
 "To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified 2/2/109  
 Ophelia,-" That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase,- "beautified" 2/2/110  
 is a vile phrase: but you shall hear. Thus: [Reads.] "In 2/2/111  
 her excellent white bosom, these, etc.-" 2/2/112  
 QUEEN.  
 Came this from Hamlet to her? 2/2/113  
 POLONIUS.  
 Good madam, stay a while; I will be faithful. [Reads.] 2/2/114  
     "Doubt thou the stars are fire; 2/2/115  
     Doubt that the sun doth move; 2/2/116  
     Doubt truth to be a liar; 2/2/117  
     But never doubt I love. 2/2/118  
 O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not art 2/2/119  
 to reckon my groans: but that I love thee best, O most best, 2/2/120  
 believe it. Adieu. 2/2/121  
     Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst  
         this machine is to him, Hamlet." 2/2/122  
 This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me: 2/2/123  
 And more above, hath his solicitings, 2/2/124



As they fell out by time, by means, and place, 2/2/125  
 All given to mine ear. 2/2/126  
 KING.  
     But how hath she  
 Receiv'd his love? 2/2/127  
 POLONIUS.  
     What do you think of me?  
 KING.  
 As of a man faithful and honourable. 2/2/128  
 POLONIUS.  
 I would fain prove so. But what might you think, 2/2/129  
 When I had seen this hot love on the wing,- 2/2/130  
 As I perceived it, I must tell you that, 2/2/130  
 Before my daughter told me,- what might you, 2/2/131  
 Or my dear majesty your queen here, think, 2/2/132  
 If I had play'd the desk or table-book; 2/2/133  
 Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb; 2/2/134  
 Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;- 2/2/135  
 What might you think? No, I went round to work, 2/2/136  
 And my young mistress thus I did bespeak: 2/2/137  
 "Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star; 2/2/138  
 This must not be:" and then I prescripts gave her, 2/2/139  
 That she should lock herself from his resort, 2/2/140  
 Admit no messengers, receive no tokens. 2/2/141  
 Which done, she took the fruits of my advice; 2/2/142  
 And he, repulsed,- a short tale to make,- 2/2/143  
 Fell into a sadness; then into a fast; 2/2/144  
 Thence to a watch; thence into a weakness; 2/2/145  
 Thence to a lightness; and, by this declension, 2/2/146  
 Into the madness wherein now he raves, 2/2/147  
 And all we mourn for. 2/2/148  
 KING.  
     Do you think 'tis this?  
 QUEEN.  
 It may be, very like. 2/2/149  
 POLONIUS.  
 Hath there been such a time- I'd fain know that- 2/2/150  
 That I have positively said "'Tis so," 2/2/151  
 When it proved otherwise? 2/2/152  
 KING.  
     Not that I know.  
 POLONIUS [pointing to his head and shoulder].  
 Take this from this, if this be otherwise: 2/2/153

If circumstances lead me, I will find 2/2/154  
 Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed 2/2/155  
 Within the centre. 2/2/156  
 KING.  
     How may we try it further?  
 POLONIUS.  
 You know, sometimes he walks four hours together 2/2/157  
 Here in the lobby. 2/2/158  
 QUEEN.  
     So he does, indeed.  
 POLONIUS.  
 At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him: 2/2/159  
 Be you and I behind an arras then; 2/2/160  
 Mark the encounter: if he love her not, 2/2/161  
 And be not from his reason fall'n thereon, 2/2/162  
 Let me be no assistant for a state, 2/2/163  
 But keep a farm and carters. 2/2/164  
 KING.  
     We will try it.  
 QUEEN.  
 But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading. 2/2/165  
 POLONIUS.  
 Away, I do beseech you, both away: 2/2/166  
 I'll board him presently:- O, give me leave. [Exeunt 2/2/167  
 KING, QUEEN, and ATTENDANTS.]  
 [Enter HAMLET, reading on a book.]  
 How does my good Lord Hamlet? 2/2/168  
 HAMLET.  
 Well, God-a-mercy. 2/2/169  
 POLONIUS.  
 Do you know me, my lord? 2/2/170  
 HAMLET.  
 Excellent well; you are a fishmonger. 2/2/171  
 POLONIUS.  
 Not I, my lord. 2/2/172  
 HAMLET.  
 Then I would you were so honest a man. 2/2/173  
 POLONIUS.  
 Honest, my lord! 2/2/174  
 HAMLET.  
 Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man 2/2/175  
 pick'd out of ten thousand. 2/2/176  
 POLONIUS.

That's very true, my lord. 2/2/177  
 HAMLET.  
 For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god 2/2/178  
 kissing carrion,- Have you a daughter? 2/2/179  
 POLONIUS.  
 I have, my lord. 2/2/180  
 HAMLET.  
 Let her not walk i' th'sun: conception is a blessing; but 2/2/181  
 not as your daughter may conceive:- friend, look to't. 2/2/182  
 POLONIUS [aside].  
 How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter:- yet he 2/2/183  
 knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger: he is far 2/2/184  
 gone, far gone: and truly in my youth I suffer'd much 2/2/185  
 extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him 2/2/186  
 again.- What do you read, my lord? 2/2/187  
 HAMLET.  
 Words, words, words. 2/2/188  
 POLONIUS.  
 What is the matter, my lord? 2/2/189  
 HAMLET.  
 Between who? 2/2/190  
 POLONIUS.  
 I mean, the matter that you read, my lord. 2/2/191  
 HAMLET.  
 Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here, that old 2/2/192  
 men have gray beards; that their faces are wrinkled; their 2/2/193  
 eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gums; and that they 2/2/194  
 have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak ham: 2/2/195  
 all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently 2/2/196  
 believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; 2/2/197  
 for yourself, sir, shall grow old as I am, if, like a crab, 2/2/198  
 you could go backward. 2/2/199  
 POLONIUS [aside].  
 Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.- 2/2/200  
 Will you walk out of the air, my lord? 2/2/201  
 HAMLET.  
 Into my grave? 2/2/202  
 POLONIUS.  
 Indeed that is out o' th'air.- 2/2/203  
 [aside] How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness 2/2/204  
 that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could 2/2/205  
 not so prosperously be deliver'd of. I will leave him, and 2/2/206

suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.- My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you. 2/2/207  
2/2/208  
2/2/209

HAMLET.

You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal,- except my life, except my life, except my life. 2/2/210  
2/2/211  
2/2/212

POLONIUS.

Fare you well, my lord. 2/2/213

HAMLET.

These tedious old fools! 2/2/214

[Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

POLONIUS.

You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is. 2/2/215

ROSENCRANTZ [to POLONIUS].

God save you, sir! [Exit POLONIUS.] 2/2/216

GUILDENSTERN.

My honour'd lord! 2/2/217

ROSENCRANTZ.

My most dear lord! 2/2/218

HAMLET.

My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? 2/2/219

Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both? 2/2/220

ROSENCRANTZ.

As the indifferent children of the earth. 2/2/221

GUILDENSTERN.

Happy, in that we are not overhappy; 2/2/222

On Fortune's cap we are not the very button. 2/2/223

HAMLET.

Nor the soles of her shoe? 2/2/224

ROSENCRANTZ.

Neither, my lord. 2/2/225

HAMLET.

Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours? 2/2/226

2/2/227

GUILDENSTERN.

Faith, her privates we. 2/2/228

HAMLET.

In the secret parts of Fortune? O, most true; she is a 2/2/229

strumpet. What's the news? 2/2/230

ROSENCRANTZ.

None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest. 2/2/231

HAMLET.

Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither? 2/2/232  
2/2/233  
2/2/234  
2/2/235

GUILDENSTERN.

Prison, my lord! 2/2/236

HAMLET.

Denmark's a prison. 2/2/237

ROSENCRANTZ.

Then is the world one. 2/2/238

HAMLET.

A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o'th'worst. 2/2/239  
2/2/240

ROSENCRANTZ.

We think not so, my lord. 2/2/241

HAMLET.

Why, then, 'tis none to you: for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison. 2/2/242  
2/2/243

ROSENCRANTZ.

Why, then, your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind. 2/2/244  
2/2/245

HAMLET.

O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams. 2/2/246  
2/2/247

GUILDENSTERN.

Which dreams, indeed, are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream. 2/2/248  
2/2/249

HAMLET.

A dream itself is but a shadow. 2/2/250

ROSENCRANTZ.

Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow. 2/2/251  
2/2/252

HAMLET.

Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretch'd heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to th'court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason. 2/2/253  
2/2/254  
2/2/255

ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

We'll wait upon you. 2/2/256

HAMLET.

No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, 2/2/257  
2/2/258  
2/2/259

what make you at Elsinore? 2/2/260  
 ROSENCRANTZ.  
 To visit you, my lord; no other occasion. 2/2/261  
 HAMLET.  
 Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: 2/2/262  
 and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. 2/2/263  
 Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a 2/2/264  
 free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, 2/2/265  
 speak. 2/2/266  
 GUILDENSTERN.  
 What should we say, my lord? 2/2/267  
 HAMLET.  
 Why, any thing- but to the purpose. You were sent for; and 2/2/268  
 there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your 2/2/269  
 modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know the good 2/2/270  
 king and queen have sent for you. 2/2/271  
 ROSENCRANTZ.  
 To what end, my lord? 2/2/272  
 HAMLET.  
 That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the 2/2/273  
 rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by 2/2/274  
 the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more 2/2/275  
 dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and 2/2/276  
 direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no. 2/2/277  
 ROSENCRANTZ [aside to GUILDENSTERN].  
 What say you? 2/2/278  
 HAMLET [aside].  
 Nay, then, I have an eye of you.- If you love me, hold not 2/2/279  
 off. 2/2/280  
 GUILDENSTERN.  
 My lord, we were sent for. 2/2/281  
 HAMLET.  
 I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your 2/2/282  
 discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no 2/2/283  
 feather. I have of late- but wherefore I know not- lost all 2/2/284  
 my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and, indeed, it 2/2/285  
 goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, 2/2/286  
 the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most 2/2/287  
 excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging 2/2/288  
 firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire,- 2/2/289  
 why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and 2/2/290  
 pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is 2/2/291  
 man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form 2/2/292

and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an 2/2/293  
 angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the 2/2/294  
 world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this 2/2/295  
 quintessence of dust? man delights not me; no, nor woman 2/2/296  
 neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so. 2/2/297

ROSENCRANTZ.

My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts. 2/2/298

HAMLET.

Why did you laugh, then, when I said "man delights not me"? 2/2/299

ROSENCRANTZ.

To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten 2/2/300  
 entertainment the players shall receive from you: we coted 2/2/301  
 them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you 2/2/302  
 service. 2/2/303

HAMLET.

He that plays the king shall be welcome,- his majesty shall 2/2/304  
 have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his 2/2/305  
 foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the 2/2/306  
 humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall 2/2/307  
 make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' th'sere; and the 2/2/308  
 lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall 2/2/309  
 halt for't.- What players are they? 2/2/310

ROSENCRANTZ.

Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the 2/2/311  
 tragedians of the city. 2/2/312

HAMLET.

How chances it they travel? their residence, both in 2/2/313  
 reputation and profit, was better both ways. 2/2/314

ROSENCRANTZ.

I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late 2/2/315  
 innovation. 2/2/316

HAMLET.

Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the 2/2/317  
 city? are they so follow'd? 2/2/318

ROSENCRANTZ.

No, indeed, they are not. 2/2/319

HAMLET.

How comes it? do they grow rusty? 2/2/320

ROSENCRANTZ.

Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: but there is, 2/2/321  
 sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the 2/2/322  
 top of question, and are most tyrannically clapp'd for't: 2/2/323

these are now the fashion; and so berattle the common stages,- so they call them,- that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and dare scarce come thither. 2/2/324  
2/2/325  
2/2/326

HAMLET.

What, are they children? who maintains 'em. how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players,- as it is most like, if their means are no better,- their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession? 2/2/327  
2/2/328  
2/2/329  
2/2/330  
2/2/331  
2/2/332

ROSENCRANTZ.

Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy; there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question. 2/2/333  
2/2/334  
2/2/335  
2/2/336

HAMLET.

Is't possible? 2/2/337

GUILDENSTERN.

O, there has been much throwing about of brains. 2/2/338

HAMLET.

Do the boys carry it away? 2/2/339

ROSENCRANTZ.

Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too. 2/2/340

HAMLET.

It is not very strange; for my uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out. [Flourish 0 of trumpets within.] 2/2/341  
2/2/342  
2/2/343  
2/2/344  
2/2/345

GUILDENSTERN.

There are the players. 2/2/346

HAMLET.

Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb; lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived. 2/2/347  
2/2/348  
2/2/349  
2/2/350  
2/2/351  
2/2/352

GUILDENSTERN.

In what, my dear lord? 2/2/353

HAMLET.



I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw. 2/2/354  
 2/2/355  
 [Enter POLONIUS.]  
 POLONIUS.  
 Well be with you, gentlemen! 2/2/356  
 HAMLET.  
 Hark you, Guildenstern;- and you too;- at each ear a hearer: 2/2/357  
 that great baby you see there is not yet out of his 2/2/358  
 swaddling-clouts. 2/2/359  
 ROSENCRANTZ.  
 Happily he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child. 2/2/360  
 2/2/361  
 HAMLET.  
 I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it.- You say right, sir: o' Monday morning; 'twas then, indeed. 2/2/362  
 2/2/363  
 2/2/364  
 POLONIUS.  
 My lord, I have news to tell you. 2/2/365  
 HAMLET.  
 My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome,- 2/2/366  
 2/2/367  
 POLONIUS.  
 The actors are come hither, my lord. 2/2/368  
 HAMLET.  
 Buz, buz! 2/2/369  
 POLONIUS.  
 Upon mine honour,- 2/2/370  
 HAMLET.  
 Then came each actor on his ass,- 2/2/371  
 POLONIUS.  
 The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, 2/2/372  
 history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, 2/2/373  
 tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, 2/2/374  
 scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men. 2/2/375  
 2/2/376  
 2/2/377  
 HAMLET.  
 O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou! 2/2/378  
 POLONIUS.  
 What a treasure had he, my lord? 2/2/379  
 HAMLET.  
 Why, 2/2/380

"One fair daughter, and no more.  
 The which he loved passing well." 2/2/381  
 POLONIUS [aside].

Still on my daughter. 2/2/382  
 HAMLET.

Am I not i' th'right, old Jephthah? 2/2/383  
 POLONIUS.

If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I 2/2/384  
 love passing well. 2/2/385  
 HAMLET.

Nay, that follows not. 2/2/386  
 POLONIUS.

What follows, then, my lord? 2/2/387  
 HAMLET.

Why, 2/2/388  
 "As by lot, God wot."  
 and then, you know, 2/2/390  
 2/2/391  
 "It came to pass, as most like it was,"- 2/2/392  
 the first row of the pious chanson will show you more; for 2/2/393  
 look, where my abridgement comes. 2/2/394  
 [Enter four or five PLAYERS.]

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all; I am glad to see 2/2/395  
 thee well; welcome, good friends.- O, my old friend! Why, 2/2/396  
 thy face is valanced since I saw thee last; comest thou to 2/2/397  
 beard me in Denmark?- What, my young lady and mistress! By'r 2/2/398  
 lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you 2/2/399  
 last by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, 2/2/400  
 like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not crack'd within the 2/2/401  
 ring.- Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like 2/2/402  
 French falconers, fly at any thing we see: we'll have a 2/2/403  
 speech straight: come, give us a taste of your quality; 2/2/404  
 come, a passionate speech. 2/2/405  
 FIRST PLAYER.

What speech, my good lord? 2/2/406  
 HAMLET.

I heard thee speak me a speech once,- but it was never 2/2/407  
 acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I 2/2/408  
 remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the 2/2/409  
 general: but it was- as I received it, and others, whose 2/2/410  
 judgements in such matters cried in the top of mine- an 2/2/411  
 excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with 2/2/412

as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were 2/2/413  
 no sallies in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no 2/2/414  
 matter in the phrase that might indict the author of 2/2/415  
 affection: but call'd it an honest method, as wholesome as 2/2/416  
 sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech  
 2/2/417  
 in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido; and 2/2/418  
 thereabout of it especially where he speaks of Priam's 2/2/419  
 slaughter: if it live in your memory, begin at this line;- 2/2/420  
 let me see, let me see; 2/2/421  
 "The rugged Pyrrhus, like th'Hyrceanian beast," 2/2/422  
 'tis not so:- it begins with Pyrrhus; 2/2/423  
 "The rugged Pyrrhus,- he whose sable arms, 2/2/424  
 Black as his purpose, did the night resemble 2/2/425  
 When he lay couched in the ominous horse,- 2/2/426  
 Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd 2/2/427  
 With heraldry more dismal; head to foot 2/2/428  
 Now is he total gules; horridly trick'd 2/2/429  
 With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons, 2/2/430  
 Baked and impasted with the parching streets, 2/2/431  
 That lend a tyrannous and damned light 2/2/432  
 To thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore, 2/2/433  
 With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus 2/2/434  
 Old grandsire Priam seeks."- 2/2/435  
 So, proceed you. 2/2/436  
 POLONIUS.  
 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good 2/2/437  
 discretion. 2/2/438  
 FIRST PLAYER.  
 "Anon he finds him  
 Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword, 2/2/439  
 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls, 2/2/440  
 Repugnant to command: unequal match'd, 2/2/441  
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide; 2/2/442  
 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword 2/2/443  
 Th'unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium, 2/2/444  
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top 2/2/445  
 Stoops to his base; and with a hideous crash 2/2/446  
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword, 2/2/447  
 Which was declining on the milky head 2/2/448  
 Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' th'air to stick: 2/2/449  
 So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood; 2/2/450

And, like a neutral to his will and matter, 2/2/451  
 Did nothing. 2/2/452  
 But, as we often see, against some storm, 2/2/453  
 A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still, 2/2/454  
 The bold winds speechless, and the orb below 2/2/455  
 As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder 2/2/456  
 Doth rend the region; so, after Pyrrhus' pause, 2/2/457  
 Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work; 2/2/458  
 And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall 2/2/459  
 On Mars his armour, forged for proof eterne, 2/2/460  
 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword 2/2/461  
 Now falls on Priam.- 2/2/462  
 Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods, 2/2/463  
 In general synod, take away her power; 2/2/464  
 Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel, 2/2/465  
 And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven, 2/2/466  
 As low as to the fiends!" 2/2/467  
 POLONIUS.  
 This is too long. 2/2/468  
 HAMLET.  
 It shall to th'barber's, with your beard.- Prithee, say 2/2/469  
 on:- he's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps:- say 2/2/470  
 on: come to Hecuba. 2/2/471  
 FIRST PLAYER.  
 "But who, O, who had seen the mobled queen-" 2/2/472  
 HAMLET.  
 "The mobled queen"? 2/2/473  
 POLONIUS.  
 That's good; "mobled queen" is good. 2/2/474  
 FIRST PLAYER.  
 "Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames 2/2/475  
 With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head 2/2/476  
 Where late the diadem stood; and for a robe, 2/2/477  
 About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins, 2/2/478  
 A blanket, in th'alarm of fear caught up;- 2/2/479  
 Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd, 2/2/480  
 'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced: 2/2/481  
 But if the gods themselves did see her then, 2/2/482  
 When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport 2/2/483  
 In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs, 2/2/484  
 The instant burst of clamour that she made- 2/2/485  
 Unless things mortal move them not at all- 2/2/486  
 Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven, 2/2/487

And passion in the gods." 2/2/488  
 POLONIUS.  
 Look, whe'r he has not turn'd his colour, and has tears in's 2/2/489  
 eyes.- Pray you, no more. 2/2/490  
 HAMLET.  
 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest soon.- Good my 2/2/491  
 lord, will you see the players well bestow'd? Do you hear, 2/2/492  
 let them be well used; for they are the abstract and brief 2/2/480  
 chronicles of the time: after your death you were better 2/2/481  
 have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live. 2/2/482  
 POLONIUS.  
 My lord, I will use them according to their desert. 2/2/483  
 HAMLET.  
 God's bodykins, man, better: use every man after his desert, 2/2/484  
 and who should scape whipping? Use them after your own 2/2/485  
 honour and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is 2/2/486  
 in your bounty. Take them in. 2/2/487  
 POLONIUS.  
 Come, sirs. 2/2/488  
 HAMLET.  
 Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow. [Exit 2/2/489  
 POLONIUS with all the PLAYERS but the FIRST.]  
 Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the Murder of 2/2/490  
 Gonzago? 2/2/491  
 FIRST PLAYER.  
 Ay, my lord. 2/2/492  
 HAMLET.  
 We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a 2/2/493  
 speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set 2/2/494  
 down and insert in't, could you not? 2/2/495  
 FIRST PLAYER.  
 Ay, my lord. 2/2/496  
 HAMLET.  
 Very well.- Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. 2/2/497  
 [Exit FIRST PLAYER.] My good friends, I'll leave you till 2/2/498  
 night: you are welcome to Elsinore. 2/2/499  
 ROSENCRANTZ.  
 Good my lord! 2/2/500  
 HAMLET.  
 Ay, so, God be wi' ye! [Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and 2/2/501  
 GUILDENSTERN.] Now I am alone. 2/2/502  
 O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I! 2/2/503

Is it not monstrous, that this player here,	2/2/504
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,	2/2/505
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,	2/2/506
That, from her working, all his visage wann'd;	2/2/507
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,	2/2/508
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting	2/2/509
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!	2/2/510
For Hecuba!	2/2/510
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,	2/2/511
That he should weep for her? What would he do,	2/2/512
Had he the motive and the cue for passion	2/2/513
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,	2/2/514
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech;	2/2/515
Make mad the guilty, and appal the free,	2/2/516
Confound the ignorant; and amaze, indeed,	2/2/517
The very faculties of eyes and ears.	2/2/518
Yet I,	2/2/519
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,	2/2/520
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,	2/2/521
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,	2/2/522
Upon whose property and most dear life	2/2/523
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?	2/2/524
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?	2/2/525
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?	2/2/526
Tweaks me by th'nose? gives me the lie i' th'throat,	2/2/527
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this, ha?	2/2/528
'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be	2/2/529
But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall	2/2/530
To make oppression bitter; or, ere this,	2/2/531
I should have fatted all the region kites	2/2/532
With this slave's offal:- bloody, bawdy villain!	2/2/533
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!	2/2/534
O, vengeance!	2/2/535
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,	2/2/536
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,	2/2/537
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,	2/2/538
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,	2/2/539
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,	2/2/540
A scullion!	2/2/541
Fie upon't! foh!- About, my brain! I have heard	2/2/542
That guilty creatures sitting at a play	2/2/543
Have by the very cunning of the scene	2/2/544
Been struck so to the soul, that presently	2/2/545

They have proclaim'd their malefactions;	2/2/546
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak	2/2/547
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players	2/2/548
Play something like the murder of my father	2/2/549
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;	2/2/550
I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,	2/2/551
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen	2/2/552
May be the devil: and the devil hath power	2/2/553
T'assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps	2/2/554
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,	2/2/555
As he is very potent with such spirits,	2/2/556
Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds	2/2/557
More relative than this:- the play's the thing	2/2/558
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. [Exit.]	2/2/559
END.	2/2/560