Act 3, Scene 4, Page 9

HAMLET
I must to England, you know that?

GERTRUDE
205 Alack, I had forgot. 'Tis so concluded on.

HAMLET
There's letters sealed, and my two schoolfellows, Whom I will trust as I will adders fanged, They bear the mandate. They must sweep my way And marshal me to knavery. Let it work, For 'tis the sport to have the engineer Hoist with his own petard. And 't shall go hard, But I will delve one yard below their mines, And blow them at the moon. Oh, 'tis most sweet

215 When in one line two crafts directly meet. (indicates POLONIUS ) This man shall set me packing. I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room. Mother, good night. Indeed this counselor Is now most still, most secret, and most grave Who was in life a foolish prating knave.— Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.— Good night, mother.

Exeunt, HAMLET tugging in POLONIUS

They exit, HAMLET dragging POLONIUS offstage.

Act 4, Scene 1

Enter King CLAUDIUS and Queen GERTRUDE, with ROSENCRANTZ and GUIDENSTERN

CLAUDIUS
(to GERTRUDE) There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves. You must translate. 'Tis fit we understand them. Where is your son?

GERTRUDE
(to ROSENCRANTZ and GUIDENSTERN)
5 Bestow this place on us a little while. Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUIDENSTERN

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen tonight!

CLAUDIUS
What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

GERTRUDE
Mad as the sea and wind when both contend Which is the mightier. In his lawless fit,

10 Behind the arras hearing something stir, Whips out his rapier, cries, “A rat, a rat!” And in this brainish apprehension kills The unseen good old man.

CLAUDIUS
**Original Text**

O heavy deed!
It had been so with us, had we been there.

15 His liberty is full of threats to all—
To you yourself, to us, to everyone.
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answered?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrained and out of haunt,

20 This mad young man. But so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit,

**Modern Text**

Oh, this is terrible! It would’ve happened to me if
I’d been there. His wildness is a threat to all of
us—to you, to me, to everyone. How will we deal
with this violent deed? I’m the one who will be
blamed for not restraining and confining this mad
young man. But I loved him so much I didn’t want
to think about what I had to do.
So, like someone suffering from a nasty disease
who refuses to divulge his condition and lets it
infect him to

**Act 4, Scene 1, Page 2**

But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

**GERTRUDE**

25 To draw apart the body he hath killed,
O’er whom his very madness, like some ore
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure. He weeps for what is done.

**CLAUDIUS**

O Gertrude, come away!

30 The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch
But we will ship him hence, and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse.—Ho, Guildenstern!

Enter **ROSENCRANTZ** and **GUIDENSTERN**

Friends both, go join you with some further aid.

35 Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother’s closet hath he dragged him.
Go seek him out, speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

**Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUIDENSTERN**

Come, Gertrude, we’ll call up our wisest friends,

40 And let them know both what we mean to do
And what’s untimely done. So dreaded slander—
Whose whisper o’er the world’s diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,
Transports the poisoned shot—may miss our name

45 And hit the woundless air. Oh, come away!
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

**Exeunt**

**They exit.**

**Act 4, Scene 2**

*Enter HAMLET*

**HAMLET**

Safely stowed.

**GENTLEMEN**

(from within) Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

**HAMLET**

But soft, what noise? Who calls on Hamlet?

**HAMLET**

The body is safely hidden.

**GENTLEMEN**

(from offstage) Hamlet, Lord Hamlet!

**HAMLET**

What’s that noise? Who’s calling for Hamlet? Oh,
Original Text

Oh, here they come.

Enter ROSECRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and others

ROSECRANTZ

What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

HAMLET

Compounded it with dust, whereto ’tis kin.

ROSECRANTZ

Tell us where ’tis, that we may take it thence
And bear it to the chapel.

HAMLET

Do not believe it.

ROSECRANTZ

Believe what?

HAMLET

That I can keep your counsel and not mine own.
Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! What
replication should be made by the son of a king?

ROSECRANTZ

Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Modern Text

here they come.

ROSECRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN enter

with others.

ROSECRANTZ

What have you done with the corpse, my lord?

HAMLET

I’ve gotten it dirty—ashes to ashes, and dust to
dust.

ROSECRANTZ

But tell us where it is, so we can take it to the
chapel.

HAMLET

Don’t believe it.

ROSECRANTZ

Believe what?

HAMLET

That I’d take your advice rather than keep my
own secret. Besides, you’re a sponge! What is
the son of a king supposed to say to a sponge?

ROSECRANTZ

You think I’m a sponge, my lord?

Act 4, Scene 2, Page 2

HAMLET

Ay, sir, that soaks up the king’s countenance, his
rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king
best service in the end. He keeps them, like an ape,
in the corner of his jaw, first mouthed to be last
swallowed. When he needs what you have gleaned,
it is but squeezing you and, sponge, you shall be dry
again.

ROSECRANTZ

I understand you not, my lord.

HAMLET

I am glad of it. A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish
ear.

ROSECRANTZ

My lord, you must tell us where the body is and go
with us to the king.

HAMLET

The body is with the king, but the king is not with the
body.

The king is a thing—

GUILDENSTERN

A thing, my lord?

HAMLET

Of nothing. Bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.
Original Text

Act 4, Scene 3

Enter King CLAUDIUS and two or three attendants

CLAUDIUS
I have sent to seek him and to find the body. How dangerous is it that this man goes loose! Yet must not we put the strong law on him. He’s loved of the distracted multitude, Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes. And where ‘tis so, th’ offender’s scourge is weighed, But never the offense. To bear all smooth and even, This sudden sending him away must seem Deliberate pause. Diseases desperate grown

By desperate appliance are relieved, Or not at all.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ

How now, what hath befall’n?

ROSENCRANTZ
Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord, We cannot get from him.

CLAUDIUS
But where is he?

ROSENCRANTZ
Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

CLAUDIUS
Bring him before us.

ROSENCRANTZ
Ho, Guildenstern! Bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN

CLAUDIUS
Now, Hamlet, where’s Polonius?

Modern Text

CLAUDIUS enters with two or three of his attendants.

CLAUDIUS
I’ve sent men to find him and retrieve the body. How dangerous to have this madman on the loose! But we can’t throw him in jail. The people love him, because they judge based on appearance rather than reason. They’ll pay attention to the severity of the punishment, not the severity of the crime. No, we must seem calm and fair-minded, and our sending him away must seem like a carefully considered move. But a terminal disease requires extreme treatment, or nothing at all.

ROSENCRANTZ enters.

So what’s happened?

ROSENCRANTZ
We can’t get him to tell us where he’s put the body.

CLAUDIUS
But where is he?

ROSENCRANTZ
Outside, my lord, under guard, waiting for your orders.

CLAUDIUS
Bring him to me.

ROSENCRANTZ
Hey, Guildenstern! Bring in my lord. GUILDENSTERN enters with HAMLET.

CLAUDIUS
Now, Hamlet, where’s Polonius?

Act 4, Scene 3, Page 2

HAMLET
At supper.

CLAUDIUS
At supper where?

HAMLET
Not where he eats, but where he is eaten. A certain convocation of politic worms are e’en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet. We fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service—two dishes, but to one table. That’s the end.

CLAUDIUS
Alas, alas!

HAMLET
At dinner.

CLAUDIUS
At dinner where?

HAMLET
Not where he’s eating, but where he’s being eaten. A certain conference of worms is chowing down on him. Worms are the emperor of all diets. We fatten up all creatures to feed ourselves, and we fatten ourselves for the worms to eat when we’re dead. A fat king and a skinny beggar are just two dishes at the same meal. That’s all I have to say.

CLAUDIUS
Oh no, oh no!

HAMLET
Original Text

A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king,
and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

CLAUDIUS
30 What dost you mean by this?

HAMLET
Nothing but to show you how a king may go a
progress through the guts of a beggar.

CLAUDIUS
Where is Polonius?

HAMLET
In heaven. Send hither to see. If your messenger find
him not there, seek him i' th' other place yourself. But
if indeed you find him not within this month, you shall
nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

CLAUDIUS
(to attendants) Go seek him there.

HAMLET
He will stay till ye come.

Exeunt some attendants

CLAUDIUS
(to attendants) Go look for him there.

Some attendants exit.

HAMLET
No need to hurry, he's not going anywhere.

Act 4, Scene 3, Page 3

CLAUDIUS
40 Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety—
Which we do tender as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done—must send thee
hence
With fiery quickness. Therefore prepare thyself.

45 The bark is ready and the wind at help.
Th' associates tend, and everything is bent
For England.

HAMLET
For England?

CLAUDIUS
Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET
Good.

CLAUDIUS
50 So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

HAMLET
I see a cherub that sees them. But come, for
England.
Farewell, dear mother.

CLAUDIUS
Thy loving father, Hamlet.

HAMLET
My mother. Father and mother is man and wife, man
and wife is one flesh, and so, my mother.—Come, for
England!

CLAUDIUS
Hamlet, I care for you just as much as I grieve for
Polonius. For your own protection, I must send
you to England at once. So get ready to leave. The
ship is set to sail, the wind is favorable, your
servants are waiting for you—everything is ready
for you to go to England.

HAMLET
To England?

CLAUDIUS
Yes, Hamlet.

HAMLET
Good.

CLAUDIUS
Yes, you’d think so, if you knew why I was
sending you.

HAMLET
I know an angel who can read your mind. But
okay, off to England! Good-bye, dear mother.

CLAUDIUS
I’m your father, Hamlet—your father who loves
you.

HAMLET
You’re my mother. When you married my mother,
the two of you became one flesh, so if you’re my
father you’re also my mother. Come on, off to
Original Text

**CLAUDIUS**
Follow him at foot. Tempt him with speed aboard.
Delay it not. I’ll have him hence tonight.
Away! For everything is sealed and done
That else leans on the affair. Pray you, make haste.

*Exeunt all but CLAUDIUS*

60 And, England, if my love thou holdest at aught—
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword and thy free awe

---

**Act 4, Scene 3, Page 4**

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,

70 Howe’er my haps, my joys were ne’er begun.

---

**Act 4, Scene 4**

Enter **FORTINBRAS** with his army and a **CAPTAIN**

**FORTINBRAS**
Go, Captain, from me greet the Danish king
Tell him that, by his license, Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promised march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.

5 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 except the **CAPTAIN***

Enter **HAMLET, ROSECRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,**
and others

**HAMLET**
10 Good sir, whose powers are these?

**CAPTAIN**
They are of Norway, sir.

**HAMLET**
How purposed, sir, I pray you?

**CAPTAIN**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Text</th>
<th>Modern Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Against some part of Poland.</td>
<td>They’re on their way to invade some part of Poland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HAMLET</strong></td>
<td><strong>HAMLET</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who commands them, sir?</td>
<td>Who’s commanding them, sir?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAPTAIN</strong></td>
<td><strong>CAPTAIN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.</td>
<td>The nephew of the old king of Norway, Fortinbras.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HAMLET</strong></td>
<td><strong>HAMLET</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,</td>
<td>Is he attacking the heartland of Poland or some frontier?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Or for some frontier?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Act 4, Scene 4, Page 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAPTAIN</th>
<th>CAPTAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truly to speak, and with no addition,</td>
<td>To tell the truth, we’re fighting to win a little patch of ground that’s not worth anything. I myself wouldn’t pay five ducats for it, if someone offered it to me to farm. And it won’t provide any more profits than that to either the Norwegian or the Pole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We go to gain a little patch of ground</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That hath in it no profit but the name.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HAMLET</strong></td>
<td><strong>HAMLET</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why, then the Polack never will defend it.</td>
<td>So then the Poles won’t be willing to defend it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAPTAIN</strong></td>
<td><strong>CAPTAIN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, it is already garrisoned.</td>
<td>Oh, yes they will. They’ve already stationed troops there.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**CAPTAIN**  
God be wi’ you, sir.  

*Exit CAPTAIN*  

**ROSENCRANTZ**  
Will ‘t please you go, my lord?  

**HAMLET**  
30 I’ll be with you straight. Go a little before.  

*Exeunt all except HAMLET*  

**ROSENCRANTZ**  
Will you please come now, my lord?  

**HAMLET**  
I’ll be there in a minute. Start without me.  

*Everyone except HAMLET exits.*  

My God! Everything I see shows me how wrong I am and tells me to hurry up and get on with my revenge. What is a human being if he just eats and sleeps? Nothing more than a beast. God didn’t create us with such a huge power of thought and a divine capacity for reason in order for us not to use them. Now, whether it’s animal-like mindlessness, or the cowardly hesitation
No Fear Shakespeare – Hamlet (by SparkNotes)

Original Text

Act 4, Scene 4, Page 3

40 Of thinking too precisely on th’ event—
   A thought which, quartered, 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
45 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 puffed
   Makes mouths at the invisible event,
50 Exposing what is mortal and unsure
   To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
   Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great
   Is not to stir without great argument,
   But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
55 When honor’s at the stake. How stand I then,
   That have a father killed, a mother stained,
   Excitements of my reason and my blood,
   And let all sleep—while, to my shame, I see
   The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
60 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,
   Which is not tomb enough and continent
   To hide the slain? Oh, from this time forth,
65 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

Exit

Modern Text

that comes from thinking too much (thinking thoughts that are one part wisdom, three parts cowardice), I don’t know why I’m still alive to say “I have to do this deed” rather than having done it already. I have the motivation, the willpower, the ability, and the means to do it. It’s as plain as the ground beneath my feet that I must do it. Look at this massive army led by a delicate and tender prince who’s so puffed up with divine ambition that he puts his fragile life at risk, exposing it to danger and death, for a reason as thin as an eggshell. To be truly great doesn’t mean you’d only fight for a good reason. It means you’d fight over nothing if your honor was at stake. So where does that leave me, whose father has been murdered and mother defiled, ignoring these mental and emotional provocations and letting well enough alone? Meanwhile, to my shame, I watch twenty thousand men go marching to their deaths for an illusion and a little bit of fame, fighting for a tiny piece of land not even big enough to bury them all. From now on, if my thoughts aren’t violent I’ll consider them worthless.

Act 4, Scene 5

Enter HORATIO, GERTRUDE, and a GENTLEMAN

GERTRUDE
I will not speak with her.

GENTLEMAN
She is importunate,
Indeed distract. Her mood will needs be pitied.

GERTRUDE
What would she have?

GENTLEMAN
She speaks much of her father, says she hears
5 There’s tricks i’ th’ world, and hems, and beats her heart,
Spurns enviously at straws, speaks things in doubt
That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
10 The hearers to collection. They aim at it,
And both 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,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

GERTRUDE
I won’t speak to her.

GENTLEMAN
She’s insistent. In fact, she’s crazed. You can’t help feeling sorry for her.

GERTRUDE
What does she want?

GENTLEMAN
She talks about her father a lot, and says she hears there are conspiracies around the world, and coughs, and beats her breast, and gets angry over tiny matters, and talks nonsense. Her words don’t mean anything, but her babbling causes her listeners to draw conclusions. They hear what they want to hear. Her winks and nods and gestures do suggest that she means to convey a message, and not a happy one.
HORATIO
*Twere good she were spoken with, for she may
15 strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.
GERTRUDE
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.
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

Enter OPHELIA, distracted

OPHELIA
Where is the beautiful majesty of Denmark?
GERTRUDE
How now, Ophelia?
OPHELIA
How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.
GERTRUDE
Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?
OPHELIA
Say you? Nay, pray you, mark.
25 (sings)
He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone,
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.
Oh, ho!
GERTRUDE
Nay, but, Ophelia—
OPHELIA
Pray you, mark.
25 (sings)
White his shroud as the mountain snow—

Enter CLAUDIUS

GERTRUDE
My lord, look at this poor girl.
OPHELIA
(sings)
Larded all with sweet flowers,
Which bewept to the ground did not go
With true-love showers.
CLAUDIUS
How do you, pretty lady?

OPHELIA
Well, God’ield you! They say the owl was a baker’s daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table.

CLAUDIUS
Conceit upon her father.

OPHELIA
Pray you, let’s have no words of this, but when they ask you what it means, say you this:
(sings)
Tomorrow is Saint Valentine’s day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.
Then up he rose, and donned his clothes,
And dupped the chamber door.
Let in the maid that out a maid
Never departed more.

CLAUDIUS
Pretty Ophelia—

OPHELIA
Indeed, without an oath I’ll make an end on ‘t:
(sings)
By Gis and by Saint Charity,
Alack, and fie, for shame!
Young men will do ’t, if they come to ’t.
By Cock, they are to blame.
Quoth she, “Before you tumbled me,
You promised me to wed.”
He answers,
“So would I ha’ done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.”

CLAUDIUS
How are you doing, my pretty lady?

OPHELIA
I’m quite well, and may God give you what you deserve. They say the baker’s daughter was turned into an owl for refusing Jesus’ bread. My lord, we know what we are now, but not what we may become. May God be at your table.

CLAUDIUS
She’s talking about her dead father.

OPHELIA
Oh, let’s not talk about that, but when they ask you what it means, just say:
(sings)
Tomorrow is St. Valentine’s Day
And early in the morning
I’m a girl below your window
Waiting to be your Valentine.
Then he got up and put on his clothes
And opened the door to his room.
He let in the girl, and when she left
She wasn’t a virgin anymore.

CLAUDIUS
Pretty Ophelia—

OPHELIA
Hang on, I’ll end it soon, I promise:
(sings)
By the name of Jesus and Saint Charity,
My goodness, what a shame it is,
Young men will do it if they get a chance:
By God, they’re very bad.
She said, “Before you got me into bed,
You promised to marry me.”
He answers:
“I would have married you, I swear,
If you hadn’t gone to bed with me.”

Act 4, Scene 5, Page 4

CLAUDIUS
How long hath she been thus?

OPHELIA
I hope all will be well. We must be patient, but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i’ th’ cold ground. My brother shall know of it, and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies. Good night, sweet ladies. Good night, good night.

Exit OPHELIA

CLAUDIUS
How long has she been like this?

OPHELIA
I hope everything will turn out fine. We must be patient, but I can’t help crying when I think of him being laid in the cold ground. My brother will hear about this. And so I thank you for your good advice. Come, driver! Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.

OPHELIA exits.

CLAUDIUS
Follow her close. Give her good watch, I pray you.

CLAUDIUS
Follow her. Keep an eye on her, please.
Exit HORATIO

Oh, this is the poison of deep grief. It springs
All from her father's death, and now behold!
O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies
But in battalions. First, her father slain.
Next, your son gone, and he most violent author
Of his own just remove. The people muddied,
Thick, and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers
For good Polonius' death, and we have done but greenly
In hugger-mugger to inter him. Poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts.
Last—and as much containing as all these—
Her brother is in secret come from France,
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death,
Wherein necessity, of matter beggared,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering piece, in many places
Gives me superfluous death.

GERTRUDE
Alack, what noise is this?

CLAUDIUS
Where are my Swissers? Let them guard the door.

Enter a MESSENGER

What is the matter?

MESSENGER
Save yourself, my lord.
The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impiteous haste
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him "lord"
And—as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word—
They cry, "Choose we! Laertes shall be king!"
Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds:
"Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!"

GERTRUDE
How cheerfully on the false trail they cry.
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!

A noise within

GERTRUDE
Oh, no—what's that noise?

CLAUDIUS
Listen! Where are my bodyguards? Let them guard the door.

A MESSENGER enters.

What is it?

MESSENGER
You must save yourself, my lord. The young Laertes, like the ocean when it floods the shore and devours the lowlands, is leading a rebellion against your government. The crowd calls him "lord" and shouts, "We want Laertes to be king!" It's as if they were starting the world from scratch right now, throwing out the traditions and ancient customs that are the support of every word we utter. They throw their caps in the air and yell, "Laertes will be king! Laertes king!"

GERTRUDE
They sound so cheerful as they hunt down the wrong prey! Oh, you're on the wrong track, you disloyal Danish dogs!

A noise offstage.
CLAUDIUS
85 The doors are broke.

Enter LAERTES with others

LAERTES enters with others.

Act 4, Scene 5, Page 6

LAERTES
Where is this king?—Sirs, stand you all without.

ALL
No, let's come in!

LAERTES
I pray you, give me leave.

ALL
We will, we will.

Exeunt LAERTES' FOLLOWERS

LAERTES
I thank you. Keep the door.—O thou vile king, Give me my father!

GERTRUDE
Calmly, good Laertes.

LAERTES
That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard, Cries “Cuckold!” to my father, brands the “harlot” Even here between the chaste unsmirched brow

Of my true mother.

CLAUDIUS
What is the cause, Laertes, That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?— Let him go, Gertrude. Do not fear our person. There's such divinity doth hedge a king That treason can but peep to what it would,

Acts little of his will.—Tell me, Laertes, Why thou art thus incensed.—Let him go, Gertrude.— Speak, man.

LAERTES
Where is my father?

CLAUDIUS
Dead.

GERTRUDE
But not by him.

CLAUDIUS
Let him demand his fill.

Act 4, Scene 5, Page 7

LAERTES
How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with.

To hell, allegiance! Vows, to the blackest devil! Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit! I dare damnation. To this point I stand

LAERTES
How did he end up dead? Don't mess with me. To hell with my vows of allegiance to you! Vows can go to hell! Conscience, too! I don't care if I'm damned. I don't care what happens to me in this
Original Text

That both the worlds I give to negligence.
Let come what comes, only I'll be revenged
110
Most thoroughly for my father.

CLAUDIUS
Who shall stay you?

LAERTES
My will, not all the world.
And for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

CLAUDIUS
Good Laertes,

115 If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is 't writ in your revenge,
That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?

LAERTES
None but his enemies.

CLAUDIUS
Will you know them then?

LAERTES
To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms
And, like the kind life-rendering pelican,
Repast them with my blood.

CLAUDIUS
Why, now you speak
Like a good child and a true gentleman.

125 That I am guiltless of your father's death
And am most sensible in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment pierce
As day does to your eye.

Modern Text

world or the next. Whatever happens, happens,
but I'll get revenge for my father's murder.

CLAUDIUS
Who's stopping you?

LAERTES
Only my free will—nothing else. What little
means I have, I'll use against you.

CLAUDIUS
My dear Laertes, in your eagerness to know the
truth about your father's death, are you
determined to hurt your father's friends and
enemies alike?

LAERTES
No, only his enemies.

CLAUDIUS
Do you want to know who they are, then?

LAERTES
I'll open my arms wide to his true friends, and like
a mother pelican with her brood, I'll even give my
life for them.

CLAUDIUS
Why, now you're talking like a good son and a
true gentleman. I'll prove to you as clearly as
daylight that I'm innocent of your father's death,
and am struck with grief over it.

Act 4, Scene 5, Page 8

Noise within: "Let her come in!"

LAERTES
How now? What noise is that?

Enter OPHelia

LAERTES
What's that noise?

OPHELIA enters.

130 O heat, dry up my brains! Tears seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May,
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!

135 O heavens, is 't possible a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

OPHELIA
(sings)
They bore him barefaced on the bier,
Hey, non nonny, nonny, hey, nonny,
And in his grave rained many a tear.
Fare you well, my dove.

A voice offstage, "Let her in!"

LAERTES
Oh, heat, dry up my brains! Salty tears, burn my
eyes! By heaven, I'll get revenge for your
madness! Oh, you sprinptime rose, dear maiden,
kind sister, sweet Ophelia! Is it possible that a
young woman's mind could fade away as easily
as an old man's life? Human nature is refined
and thoughtful—person graciously gives a
valuable part of herself away to her beloved, as
Ophelia has sent off her sanity to her dead
father.

OPHELIA
(sings)
They carried him uncovered in the coffin,
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny.
And tears poured down into his grave.
Good-bye, honey.
Original Text

LAERTES
Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus.

OPHELIA
You must sing A-down a-down—And you, Call him a-down—a—Oh, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward that stole his master’s daughter.

LAERTES
This nothing’s more than matter.

OPHELIA
There’s rosemary, that’s for remembrance. Pray you, love, remember. And there is pansies, that’s for thoughts.

LAERTES
A document in madness. Thoughts and remembrance fitted.

OPHELIA
There’s fennel for you, and columbines.—There’s rue for you, and here’s some for me. We may call it “herb of grace” o’ Sundays.—Oh, you must wear your rue with a difference.—There’s a daisy. I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died. They say he made a good end (sings)
For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy—

LAERTES
Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favor and to prettiness.

OPHELIA
(sings)
And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy deathbed.
He never will come again.
His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll.
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan,
God ha’ mercy on his soul—
And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi’ ye.

LAERTES
Do you see this, O God?

Modern Text

LAERTES
If you were sane and could urge me to take revenge, you couldn’t be more persuasive than you are now.

OPHELIA
You’re supposed to sing, “A down a-down,” and you, “Call him a-down-a.” Oh, how it turns around like a wheel! Like the worker who stole his boss’s daughter.

LAERTES
This nonsense means more than rational speech.

OPHELIA
Look at my flowers. There’s rosemary, that’s for remembering. Please remember, love. And there are pansies, they’re for thoughts.

Act 4, Scene 5, Page 9

LAERTES
A case study in madness, to connect memory and thought.

OPHELIA
(to GERTRUDE ) Here are fennel and columbines for you—they symbolize adultery. (to CLAUDIUS) And here’s rue for you—it symbolizes repentance. We can call it the merciful Sunday flower. You should wear it for a different reason. And here’s a daisy, for unhappy love. I’d give you some violets, flowers of faithfulness, but they all dried up when my father died. They say he looked good when he died. (sings) For good sweet Robin is all my joy.

LAERTES
Sadness and torment, suffering, hell itself—she makes them almost pretty.

OPHELIA
(sings)
And won’t he come again?
And won’t he come again?
No, no, he’s dead.
Go to your deathbed.
He’ll never come again.
His beard was white as snow,
His hair was all white too.
He’s gone, he’s gone,
And we moan as we’re cast away.
God have mercy on his soul.
And on the souls of all good Christians, I hope. Goodbye, God be with you.

Exit OPHELIA

OPHELIA exits.

LAERTES
Do you see this, oh, God?
CLAUDIUS
Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will.
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touched, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we can ours,
To you in satisfaction. But if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labor with your soul
To give it due content.

CLAUDIUS
Laertes, I have a right to share your grief. Go
choose your wisest friends, and have them listen
to both of us and decide which of us is right. If
directly or indirectly they find me implicated
in your father's murder, I'll give up my kingdom, my
crown, my life, and everything I call my own to
you as restitution. But if they find me innocent,
then be patient and I'll work to satisfy to the
fullest extent your deepest need for revenge.

LAERTES
Let this be so.
His means of death, his obscure funeral—
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite nor formal ostentation—
Cry to be heard as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call 't in question.
CLAUDIUS
So you shall.
And where the offense is, let the great ax fall.
I pray you, go with me.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 4, Scene 6

Enter HORATIO and a SERVANT
HORATIO
What are they that would speak with me?
SERVANT
Sealaring men, sir. They say they have letters for you.
HORATIO
Let them come in.

Exit SERVANT
I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

Enter SAILORS
SAILOR
God bless you, sir.
HORATIO
Let him bless thee too.
SAILOR
He shall, sir, an 't please Him. There's a letter for you, sir—it comes from the ambassador that was bound
for England—if your name be Horatio, as I am let to
know it is. (gives HORATIO a letter)
HORATIO
(reads)

SAILOR
Hello, sir. God bless you.
HORATIO
May He bless you, too.
SAILOR
He will, sir, if He wants to. There's a letter for you, sir. It's from the ambassador, Lord Hamlet, who
was going to England—if your name's Horatio, as
they told me it is. (he handsHORATIO a letter)
HORATIO
(reading the letter)
Original Text

"Horatio,
When thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king. They have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valor, and in the grapple I boarded them. On the instant, they got clear of our ship, so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy, but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them.

Act 4, Scene 6, Page 2

Let the king have the letters I have sent, and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb, yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England. Of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

He that thou knowest thine, Hamlet.”
Come, I will give you way for these your letters, And do ’t the speedier, that you may direct me To him from whom you brought them.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 4, Scene 7

Enter CLAUDIUS and LAERTES

CLAUDIUS
Now must your conscience my acquaintance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend,
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he which hath your noble father slain
Pursued my life.

LAERTES
It well appears. But tell me
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So criminal and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirred up.

CLAUDIUS
Oh, for two special reasons,
10 Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinewed,
But yet to me they are strong. The queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks, and for myself—
My virtue or my plague, be it either which—
She’s so conjunctive to my life and soul,
15 That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive

CLAUDIUS
Now you’ve got to acknowledge my innocence
and believe I’m your friend, since you’ve heard
and understood that the man who killed your
father was trying to kill me.

LAERTES
It looks that way. But tell me why you didn’t take
immediate action against his criminal acts, when
your own safety and everything else would seem
to call for it.

CLAUDIUS
Oh, for two main reasons which may seem weak
to you, but strong to me. The queen, his mother,
is devoted to him. And (for better or worse,
whichever it is) she is such a part of my life and
soul that I can’t live apart from her. Any more than
a planet can leave its orbit. The other reason why
I couldn’t prosecute and arrest Hamlet is that the
public loves him. In their affection they overlook
Original Text

Why to a public count I might not go,
Is the great love the general gender bear him,
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces—so that my arrows,
Too slightly timbered for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aimed them.

Act 4, Scene 7, Page 2

LAERTES

25 And so have I a noble father lost,
A sister driven into desperate terms,
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections. But my revenge will come.

CLAUDIUS

30 Break not your sleep for that. You must not think
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull
That we can let our beard be shook with danger
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more.
I loved your father, and we love ourself.
35 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine—

Enter a MESSENGER

How now, what news?

MESSENGER

Letters, my lord, from Hamlet.
This to your majesty, this to the queen. (gives CLAUDIUS letters)

CLAUDIUS

From Hamlet? Who brought them?

MESSENGER

Sailors, my lord, they say. I saw them not.

CLAUDIUS

They were given me by Claudio. He received them
Of him that brought them.

MESSENGER

Laertes, you shall hear them.—Leave us.

CLAUDIUS

I want you to hear what they say. Leave us alone now.

Exit MESSENGER

(reads)

“High and mighty,
You shall know I am set naked on your kingdom.
Tomorrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes,
when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto,
recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return.

Hamlet.”

Modern Text

all his faults. Like magic, they convert them into virtues, so whatever I said against him would end up hurting me, not him.

LAERTES

And so I've lost my noble father, had my sister driven insane—my sister who once was (if I can praise her for what she once was, not what she is now) the most perfect girl who ever lived. But I’ll get my revenge.

CLAUDIUS

Don’t you worry about that. You must not think that I’m so lazy and dull that I can be severely threatened and think it’s just a game. You’ll hear more about my plans soon enough. I loved your father, and I love myself, which should be enough to—

A MESSENGER enters with letters.

What is it? What’s the news?

MESSENGER

Letters, my lord, from Hamlet. This one's for Your Highness, this one for the queen. (gives CLAUDIUS letters)

CLAUDIUS

From Hamlet? Who delivered them?

MESSENGER

Sailors, my lord, or so they say. I didn't see them. Claudio gave them to me, and he got them from the one who delivered them.

CLAUDIUS

Laertes, I want you to hear what they say. Leave us alone now.

The MESSENGER exits.

(reads)

“High and Mighty one,
You know I’ve been set down naked, you might say, in your kingdom. Tomorrow I’ll beg permission to look into your kingly eyes, at which point I’ll tell you the story (after first apologizing) of how I came back to Denmark so strangely and suddenly.

Hamlet”

Act 4, Scene 7, Page 3

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?

What does this mean? Has everyone else come
Original Text

Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

LAERTES
Know you the hand?

CLAUDIUS
’Tis Hamlet’s character. “Naked”?
And in a postscript here, he says “alone.”
Can you advise me?

LAERTES
I’m lost in it, my lord. But let him come.
It warms the very sickness in my heart
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth.

CLAUDIUS
“Thus diddest thou.”

CLAUDIUS
If it be so, Laertes—
As how should it be so? How otherwise?—
Will you be ruled by me?

LAERTES
Ay, my lord—
So you will not o’errule me to a peace.

CLAUDIUS
To thine own peace. If he be now returned,
As checking at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my devise,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall.
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice
And call it accident.

LAERTES
My lord, I will be ruled
The rather if you could devise it so
That I might be the organ.

Modern Text

back too? Or is it all a lie—and no one has yet returned?

LAERTES
Do you recognize the handwriting?

CLAUDIUS
It’s Hamlet’s writing. “Naked,” he says. And in a P.S. he adds, “alone.” Can you help me out with this?

CLAUDIUS
I have no clue, my lord. But let him come. It warms my weary heart to think I’ll get the chance to look him in the eye and say, “You did this.”

CLAUDIUS
If that’s how you feel, Laertes—and why shouldn’t you? Will you let me guide and direct you?

LAERTES
Yes, my lord, as long as you won’t lead me toward peace.

CLAUDIUS
No, just toward your own peace of mind. If he’s come back to Denmark without plans to continue on his trip, then I’ll trick him into an undertaking, which I’m working out now, that’s sure to kill him.
When he dies, no one will be blamed, even his mother will call it an accident.

LAERTES
My lord, I’ll let you make the decision. I only ask to be in on your plans, the agent of his death.

Act 4, Scene 7, Page 4

CLAUDIUS
It falls right.
You have been talked of since your travel much—
And that in Hamlet’s hearing—for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine. Your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him
As did that one, and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.

LAERTES
What part is that, my lord?

CLAUDIUS
A very ribbon in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too, for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness. Two months since,
Here was a gentleman of Normandy.
Original Text

I've seen myself, and served against the French,
And they can well on horseback. But this gallant
Had witchcraft in 't. He grew unto his seat,
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse
85 As he had been encorpsed and demi-natured
With the brave beast. So far he topped my thought,
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Come short of what he did.

LAERTEs
A Norman was 't?

CLAUDIUS
A Norman.

LAERTeS
Upon my life, Lamond!

CLAUDIUS
The very same.

LAERTEs
I know him well. He is the brooch indeed
And gem of all the nation.

Modern Text

well they ride, but this man was a magician on
horseback. It was as if he were part of the horse,
so skillful that even having seen him, I can hardly
conceive of the tricks he did.

LAERTEs
Hmm, he was from Normandy, you say?

CLAUDIUS
Yes, from Normandy.

LAERTEs
I bet it was Lamond.

CLAUDIUS
Yes, that's the one.

LAERTEs
I know him well. He's his homeland’s jewel.

Act 4, Scene 7, Page 5

CLAUDIUS
He made confession of you,
And gave you such a masterly report
For art and exercise in your defense,
95 And for your rapier most especially,
That he cried out 'would be a sight indeed
If one could match you. The 'scrimers of their nation,
He swore, had had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.
Now, out of this—

LAERTEs
What out of this, my lord?

CLAUDIUS
Laertes, was your father dear to you?

105 Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

LAERTEs
Why ask you this?

CLAUDIUS
Not that I think you did not love your father
But that I know love is begun by time,
And that I see, in passages of proof,
110 Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it.
And nothing is at a like goodness still.
For goodness, growing to a pleurisy,
115 Dies in his own too-much. That we would do,
We should do when we would, for this “would” changes
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents.
And then this “should” is like a spendthrift sigh
That hurts by easing.—But to the quick of th’ ulcer:
Hamlet comes back. What would you undertake
To show yourself in deed your father’s son
More than in words?

Act 4, Scene 7, Page 6

LAERTES
To cut his throat i’ th’ church.

CLAUDIUS
No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize.
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet returned shall know you are come home.
We’ll put on those shall praise your excellence
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you, bring you in fine together
And wager on your heads. He, being remiss,
Most generous and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.

CLAUDIUS
Let’s further think of this,
Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape. If this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance,
’Twere better not assayed. Therefore this project

CLAUDIUS
It’s true, no place—not even a church—should offer refuge to that murderer. Revenge should have no limits. But Laertes, will you do this: stay in your room? When Hamlet comes home he’ll learn you’re here. I’ll have people praise your excellence and put a double coat on the fame the Frenchman gave you. In short, we’ll get you together and place bets on you. Hamlet’s so careless, high-minded, and unsuspecting that he won’t examine the swords beforehand, so you can easily choose one with a sharpened point and in one thrust avenge the death of your father.

LAERTES
I’ll do it, and I’ll put a little dab of something on my sword as well. From a quack doctor I bought some oil so poisonous that if you dip a knife in it, no medicine in the world can save the person who’s scratched by it. If I even graze his skin slightly, he’s likely to die.
Original Text

150 Should have a back or second that might hold
    If this should blast in proof.—Soft, let me see.—
    We’ll make a solemn wager on your cunning.—
    I ha’ t! When in your motion you are hot and dry,
    As make your bouts more violent to that end,
155 And that he calls for drink, I’ll have prepared him
    A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
    If he by chance escape your venomed stuck,
    Our purpose may hold there.—But stay, what noise?

Enter GERTRUDE

GERTRUDE
    One woe doth tread upon another’s heel,
160 So fast they follow.—Your sister’s drowned, Laertes.

LAERTES
    Drowned? Oh, where?

GERTRUDE
    There is a willow grows aslant a brook
    That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.
165 Of crowflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
    That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
    But our cold maids do “dead men’s fingers” call them.
    There, on the pendant boughs boughs her coronet weeds
    Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke,
    When down her weedy trophies and herself
    Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
    And mermaid-like a while they bore her up,
    Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds
    As one incapable of her own distress,
    Or like a creature native and indued
    Unto that element. But long it could not be
170 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
    Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
    To muddy death.

Modern Text

escapes your poisoned sword tip, the drink will kill him. But wait, what’s that sound?

GERTRUDE enters.

GERTRUDE
    The bad news just keeps on coming, one disaster after another. Your sister’s drowned, Laertes.

LAERTES
    Drowned? Oh, where?

GERTRUDE
    There’s a willow that leans over the brook, dangling its white leaves over the glassy water. Ophelia made wild wreaths out of those leaves, braiding in crowflowers, thistles, daisies, and the orchises that vulgar shepherds have an obscene name for, but which pure-minded girls call “dead men’s fingers.” Climbing into the tree to hang the wreath of weeds on the hanging branches, she and her flowers fell into the gurgling brook. Her clothes spread out wide in the water, and buoyed her up for a while as she sang bits of old hymns, acting like someone who doesn’t realize the danger she’s in, or like someone completely accustomed to danger. But it was only a matter of time before her clothes, heavy with the water they absorbed, pulled the poor thing out of her song, down into the mud at the bottom of the brook.

Act 4, Scene 7, Page 8

LAERTES
180 Alas, then she is drowned.

GERTRUDE
    Drowned, drowned.

LAERTES
    Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
    And therefore I forbid my tears. But yet
    It is our trick. Nature her custom holds,
185 Let shame say what it will. When these are gone,
    The woman will be out.—Adieu, my lord.
    I have a speech of fire that fain would blaze,
    But that this folly doubts it.

Exit LAERTES

LAERTES exits.

LAERTES
    So she is drowned.

GERTRUDE
    Drowned, drowned.

LAERTES
    You’ve had too much water already, poor Ophelia, so I won’t shed watery tears for you. But crying is what humans do. We do what’s in our nature, even if we’re ashamed of it. After I stop crying I’ll be through acting like a woman. Good-bye, my lord. I have some fiery words I could speak now, but my foolish tears are drowning them out.
Original Text

CLAUDIUS
Let’s follow, Gertrude.
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I this will give it start again.
Therefore let’s follow.

Exeunt

CLAUDIUS
Let’s follow him, Gertrude. I worked so hard to
calm him down, and now I’m worried he’s getting
all excited again. Let’s follow him.

Modern Text

They exit.

Act 5, Scene 1

Enter a GRAVEDIGGER and the OTHER gravedigger

GRAVEDIGGER
Is she to be buried in Christian burial when she
willfully seeks her own salvation?

OTHER
I tell thee she is. Therefore make her grave straight.
The crownor hath sat on her and finds it Christian
burial.

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

OTHER
Why, ’tis found so.

GRAVEDIGGER
It must be se offendendo. It cannot be else. For here
lies the point: if I drown myself willingly, it argues an
act. And an act hath three branches—it is to act, to
do, to perform. Argal, she drowned herself willingly.

OTHER
Nay, but hear you, Goodman Delver—

GRAVEDIGGER
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.

OTHER
But is this law?

GRAVEDIGGER
It sure is. The coroner’s inquest law.

OTHER
Do you want to know the truth? If this woman
hadn’t been rich, she wouldn’t have been given a
Christian burial.

GRAVEDIGGER
Well there, now you’ve said it. It’s a pity that the