

William Shakespeare, *The Tragedie of Hamlet*

(The Project Gutenberg's Etext of Shakespeare's First Folio)

Act II, scene ii, 365-541

Guil. There are the Players

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcom to Elsonower: your hands, come: The appurtenance of Welcome, is Fashion and Ceremony. Let me comply with you in the Garbe, lest my extent to the Players (which I tell you must shew fairely outward) should more appeare like entertainment then yours. You are welcome: but my Vnckle Father, and Aunt Mother are deceiu'd

Guil. In what my deere Lord?

Ham. I am but mad North, North-West: when the Winde is Southerly, I know a Hawke from a Handsaw. Enter Polonius.

Pol. Well be with you Gentlemen

Ham. Hearke you Guildensterne, and you too: at each eare a hearer: that great Baby you see there, is not yet out of his swathing clouts

Rosin. Happily he's the second time come to them: for they say, an old man is twice a childe

Ham. I will Prophetise. Hee comes to tell me of the Players. Mark it, you say right Sir: for a Monday morning 'twas so indeed

Pol. My Lord, I haue Newes to tell you

Ham. My Lord, I haue Newes to tell you. When Roscius an Actor in Rome—

Pol. The Actors are come hither my Lord

Ham. Buzze, buzze

Pol. Vpon mine Honor

Ham. Then can each Actor on his Asse—

Polon. The best Actors in the world, either for Tragedie, Comedie, Historie, Pastorall: Pastorall-Comick-Historicall-Pastorall: Tragicall-Historicall: Tragicall-Comick-Historicall-Pastorall: Scene indiuidible: or Poem vnlimited. Seneca cannot be too heauy, nor Plautus too light, for the law of Writ, and the Liberty. These are the onely men

Ham. O Iephtha Iudge of Israel, what a Treasure had'st thou?

Pol. What a Treasure had he, my Lord?

Ham. Why one faire Daughter, and no more, The which he loued passing well

Pol. Still on my Daughter

Ham. Am I not i'th' right old Iephta?

Polon. If you call me Iephta my Lord, I haue a daughter
that I loue passing well

Ham. Nay that followes not

Polon. What followes then, my Lord?

Ha. Why, As by lot, God wot: and then you know, It
came to passe, as most like it was: The first rowe of the
Pons Chanson will shew you more. For looke where my
Abridgements come.
Enter foure or fiue Players.

Y'are welcome Masters, welcome all. I am glad to see
thee well: Welcome good Friends. Oh my olde Friend?
Thy face is valiant since I saw thee last: Com'st thou to
beard me in Denmarke? What, my yong Lady and Mistris?
Byrlady your Ladiship is neerer Heauen then when
I saw you last, by the altitude of a Choppine. Pray God
your voice like a peece of vncurrant Gold be not crack'd
within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome: wee'l e'ne
to't like French Faulconers, flie at any thing we see: wee'l
haue a Speech straight. Come giue vs a tast of your quality:
come, a passionate speech

1.Play. What speech, my Lord?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was
neuer Acted: or if it was, not aboue once, for the Play I
remember pleas'd not the Million, 'twas Cuiarie to the
Generall: but it was (as I receiu'd it, and others, whose
iudgement in such matters, cried in the top of mine) an
excellent Play; well digested in the Scoenes, set downe
with as much modestie, as cunning. I remember one said,
there was no Sallets in the lines, to make the matter sauory;
nor no matter in the phrase, that might indite the
Author of affectation, but cal'd it an honest method. One
cheefe Speech in it, I cheefely lou'd, 'twas Aeneas Tale
to Dido, and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks
of Priams slaughter. If it liue in your memory, begin at
this Line, let me see, let me see: The rugged Pyrrhus like
th'Hyrceanian Beast. It is not so: it begins with Pyrrhus
The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose Sable Armes
Blacke as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the Ominous Horse,
Hath now this dread and blacke Complexion smear'd
With Heraldry more dismall: Head to foote
Now is he to take Geulles, horridly Trick'd
With blood of Fathers, Mothers, Daughters, Sonnes,
Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous, and damned light
To their vilde Murthers, roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o're-sized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like Carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Olde Grandsire Priam seekes

Pol. Fore God, my Lord, well spoken, with good accent,
and good discretion

1.Player. Anon he findes him,
Striking too short at Greekes. His anticke Sword,
Rebellious to his Arme, lyes where it falles

Repugnant to command: vnequall match,
 Pyrrhus at Priam driues, in Rage strikes wide:
 But with the whiffe and winde of his fell Sword,
 Th' vnnerued Father fals. Then senselesse Illium,
 Seeming to feele his blow, with flaming top
 Stoopest to his Bace, and with a hideous crash
 Takes Prisoner Pyrrhus eare. For loe, his Sword
 Which was declining on the Milkie head
 Of Reuerend Priam, seem'd i'th' Ayre to sticke:
 So as a painted Tyrant Pyrrhus stood,
 And like a Newtrall to his will and matter, did nothing.
 But as we often see against some storme,
 A silence in the Heauens, the Racke stand still,
 The bold windes speechlesse, and the Orbe below
 As hush as death: Anon the dreadfull Thunder
 Doth rend the Region. So after Pyrrhus pause,
 A rowd Vengeance sets him new a-worke,
 And neuer did the Cyclops hammers fall
 On Mars his Armour, forg'd for prooffe Eterne,
 With lesse remorse then Pyrrhus bleeding sword
 Now falles on Priam.
 Out, out, thou Strumpet-Fortune, all you Gods,
 In generall Synod take away her power:
 Breake all the Spokes and Fallies from her wheele,
 And boule the round Naue downe the hill of Heauen,
 As low as to the Fiends

Pol. This is too long

Ham. It shall to'th Barbars, with your beard. Prythee
 say on: He's for a Iigge, or a tale of Baudry, or hee
 sleepes. Say on; come to Hecuba

1.Play. But who, O who, had seen the inobled Queen

Ham. The inobled Queene?

Pol. That's good: Inobled Queene is good

1.Play. Run bare-foot vp and downe,
 Threatning the flame
 With Bisson Rheume: A clout about that head,
 Where late the Diadem stood, and for a Robe
 About her lanke and all ore-teamed Loines,
 A blanket in th' Alarum of feare caught vp.
 Who this had seene, with tongue in Venome steep'd,
 'Gainst Fortunes State, would Treason haue pronounc'd?
 But if the Gods themselues did see her then,
 When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
 In mincing with his Sword her Husbands limbes,
 The instant Burst of Clamour that she made
 (Vnlesse things mortall moue them not at all)
 Would haue made milche the Burning eyes of Heauen,
 And passion in the Gods

Pol. Looke where he ha's not turn'd his colour, and
 ha's teares in's eyes. Pray you no more

Ham. 'Tis well, Ile haue thee speake out the rest,
 soone. Good my Lord, will you see the Players wel bestow'd.
 Do ye heare, let them be well vs'd: for they are
 the Abstracts and breefe Chronicles of the time. After
 your death, you were better haue a bad Epitaph, then
 their ill report while you liued

Pol. My Lord, I will vse them according to their desart

Ham. Gods bodykins man, better. Vse euerie man after his desart, and who should scape whipping: vse them after your own Honor and Dignity. The lesse they deserue, the more merit is in your bountie. Take them in

Pol. Come sirs.

Exit Polon.

Ham. Follow him Friends: wee'l heare a play to morrow. Dost thou heare me old Friend, can you play the murther of Gonzago?

Play. I my Lord

Ham. Wee'l ha't to morrow night. You could for a need study a speech of some dosen or sixteene lines, which I would set downe, and insert in't? Could ye not?

Play. I my Lord

Ham. Very well. Follow that Lord, and looke you mock him not. My good Friends, Ile leaue you til night you are welcome to Elsonower?

Rosin. Good my Lord.

Exeunt.

Act III, scene ii, 1-262

Enter Hamlet, and two or three of the Players.

Ham. Speake the Speech I pray you, as I pronounc'd it to you trippingly on the Tongue: But if you mouth it, as many of your Players do, I had as liue the Town-Cryer had spoke my Lines: Nor do not saw the Ayre too much your hand thus, but vse all gently; for in the verie Torrent, Tempest, and (as I say) the Whirle-winde of Passion, you must acquire and beget a Temperance that may giue it Smoothnesse. O it offends mee to the Soule, to see a robustious Pery-wig-pated Fellow, teare a Passion to tatters, to verie ragges, to split the eares of the Groundlings: who (for the most part) are capeable of nothing, but inexplicable dumbe shewes, & noise: I could haue such a Fellow whipt for o're-doing Termagant: it outHerod's Herod. Pray you auoid it

Player. I warrant your Honor

Ham. Be not too tame neyther: but let your owne Discretion be your Tutor. Sute the Action to the Word, the Word to the Action, with this speciall obseruance: That you ore-stop not the modestie of Nature; for any thing so ouer-done, is fro[m] the purpose of Playing, whose end both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the Mirrour vp to Nature; to shew Vertue her owne Feature, Scorne her owne Image, and the verie Age and

Bodie of the Time, his forme and pressure. Now, this
ouer-done, or come tardie off, though it make the vnskilfull
laugh, cannot but make the Iudicious greeue; The
censure of the which One, must in your allowance o'reway
a whole Theater of Others. Oh, there bee Players
that I haue seene Play, and heard others praise, and that
highly (not to speake it prophanely) that neyther hauing
the accent of Christians, nor the gate of Christian, Pagan,
or Norman, haue so strutted and bellowed, that I haue
thought some of Natures Iouerney-men had made men,
and not made them well, they imitated Humanity so abhominably

Play. I hope we haue reform'd that indifferently with
vs, Sir

Ham. O reforme it altogether. And let those that
play your Clownes, speake no more then is set downe for
them. For there be of them, that will themselues laugh,
to set on some quantitie of barren Spectators to laugh
too, though in the meane time, some necessary Question
of the Play be then to be considered: that's Villanous, &
shewes a most pittifull Ambition in the Foole that vses
it. Go make you readie.

Exit Players.

Enter Polonius, Rosincrance, and Guildensterne.

How now my Lord,
Will the King heare this peece of Worke?

Pol. And the Queene too, and that presently

Ham. Bid the Players make hast.

Exit Polonius.

Will you two helpe to hasten them?
Both. We will my Lord.

Exeunt.

Enter Horatio.

Ham. What hoa, Horatio?

Hora. Heere sweet Lord, at your Seruice

Ham. Horatio, thou art eene as iust a man
As ere my Conuersation coap'd withall

Hora. O my deere Lord

Ham. Nay, do not thinke I flatter:
For what aduancement may I hope from thee,
That no Reuennue hast, but thy good spirits
To feed & cloath thee. Why shold the poor be flatter'd?
No, let the Candied tongue, like absurd pompe,
And crooke the pregnant Hindges of the knee,
Where thrift may follow faining? Dost thou heare,
Since my deere Soule was Mistris of my choyse,
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for her selfe. For thou hast bene
As one in suffering all, that suffers nothing.
A man that Fortunes buffets, and Rewards

Hath 'tane with equall Thankes. And blest are those,
Whose Blood and Iudgement are so well co-mingled,
That they are not a Pipe for Fortunes finger.
To sound what stop she please. Giue me that man,
That is not Passions Slaue, and I will weare him
In my hearts Core. I, in my Heart of heart,
As I do thee. Something too much of this.
There is a Play to night to before the King.
One Scoene of it comes neere the Circumstance
Which I haue told thee, of my Fathers death.
I prythee, when thou see'st that Acte a-foot,
Euen with the verie Comment of my Soule
Obserue mine Vnkle: If his occulted guilt,
Do not it selfe vnkennell in one speech,
It is a damned Ghost that we haue seene:
And my Imaginations are as foule
As Vulcans Stythe. Giue him needfull note,
For I mine eyes will riuet to his Face:
And after we will both our iudgements ioine,
To censure of his seeming

Hora. Well my Lord.
If he steale ought the whil'st this Play is Playing,
And scape detecting, I will pay the Theft.
Enter King, Queene, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosincrance,
Guildensterne, and
other Lords attendant with his Guard carrying Torches. Danish
March. Sound
a Flourish.

Ham. They are comming to the Play: I must be idle.
Get you a place

King. How fares our Cosin Hamlet?
Ham. Excellent Ifaith, of the Camelions dish: I eate
the Ayre promise-cramm'd, you cannot feed Capons so

King. I haue nothing with this answer Hamlet, these
words are not mine

Ham. No, nor mine. Now my Lord, you plaid once
i'th' Vniuersity, you say?

Polon. That I did my Lord, and was accounted a good
Actor

Ham. And what did you enact?

Pol. I did enact Iulius Caesar, I was kill'd i'th' Capitoll:
Brutus kill'd me

Ham. It was a brute part of him, to kill so Capitall a
Calfe there. Be the Players ready?

Rosin. I my Lord, they stay vpon your patience

Qu. Come hither my good Hamlet, sit by me

Ha. No good Mother, here's Mettle more attractiue

Pol. Oh ho, do you marke that?

Ham. Ladie, shall I lye in your Lap?

Ophe. No my Lord

Ham. I meane, my Head vpon your Lap?

Ophe. I my Lord

Ham. Do you thinke I meant Country matters?
Ophe. I thinke nothing, my Lord

Ham. That's a faire thought to ly betweene Maids legs
Ophe. What is my Lord?
Ham. Nothing

Ophe. You are merrie, my Lord?
Ham. Who I?
Ophe. I my Lord

Ham. Oh God, your onely Iigge-maker: what should
a man do, but be merrie. For looke you how cheerefully
my Mother lookes, and my Father dyed within's two
Houres

Ophe. Nay, 'tis twice two moneths, my Lord

Ham. So long? Nay then let the Diuel weare blacke,
for Ile haue a suite of Sables. Oh Heauens! dye two moneths
ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope, a
great mans Memorie, may out-liue his life halfe a yeare:
But byrlady he must builde Churches then: or else shall
he suffer not thinking on, with the Hoby-horsse, whose
Epitaph is, For o, For o, the Hoby-horse is forgot.

Hoboyes play. The dumbe shew enters.

Enter a King and Queene, very louingly; the Queene embracing
him. She
kneeles, and makes shew of Protestation vnto him. He takes her
vp, and
declines his head vpon her neck. Layes him downe vpon a Banke
of Flowers.
She seeing him a-sleepe, leaues him. Anon comes in a Fellow,
takes off his
Crowne, kisses it, and powres poyson in the Kings eares, and
Exits. The
Queene returnes, findes the King dead, and makes passionate
Action. The
Poysoner, with some two or three Mutes comes in againe, seeming
to lament
with her. The dead body is carried away: The Poysoner Wooes the
Queene with
Gifts, she seemes loath and vnwilling awhile, but in the end,
accepts his
loue.

Exeunt.

Ophe. What meanes this, my Lord?
Ham. Marry this is Miching Malicho, that meanes
Mischeefe

Ophe. Belike this shew imports the Argument of the
Play?

Ham. We shall know by these Fellowes: the Players
cannot keepe counsell, they'l tell all

Ophe. Will they tell vs what this shew meant?
Ham. I, or any shew that you'll shew him. Bee not
you asham'd to shew, hee'll not shame to tell you what it

meanes

Ophe. You are naught, you are naught, Ile marke the
Play.
Enter Prologue.

For vs, and for our Tragedie,
Heere stooping to your Clemencie:
We begge your hearing Patientlie

Ham. Is this a Prologue, or the Poesie of a Ring?
Ophe. 'Tis briefe my Lord

Ham. As Womans loue.
Enter King and his Queene.

King. Full thirtie times hath Phoebus Cart gon round,
Neptunes salt Wash, and Tellus Orbed ground:
And thirtie dozen Moones with borrowed sheene,
About the World haue times twelue thirties beene,
Since loue our hearts, and Hymen did our hands
Vnite comutually, in most sacred Bands

Bap. So many iournies may the Sunne and Moone
Make vs againe count o're, ere loue be done.
But woe is me, you are so sicke of late,
So farre from cheere, and from your former state,
That I distrust you: yet though I distrust,
Discomfort you (my Lord) it nothing must:
For womens Feare and Loue, holds quantitie,
In neither ought, or in extremity:
Now what my loue is, prooffe hath made you know,
And as my Loue is siz'd, my Feare is so

King. Faith I must leaue thee Loue, and shortly too:
My operant Powers my Functions leaue to do:
And thou shalt liue in this faire world behinde,
Honour'd, belou'd, and haply, one as kinde.
For Husband shalt thou-

Bap. Oh confound the rest:
Such Loue, must needs be Treason in my brest:
In second Husband, let me be accurst,
None wed the second, but who kill'd the first

Ham. Wormwood, Wormwood

Bapt. The instances that second Marriage moue,
Are base respects of Thrift, but none of Loue.
A second time, I kill my Husband dead,
When second Husband kisses me in Bed

King. I do beleeeue you. Think what now you speak:
But what we do determine, oft we breake:
Purpose is but the slaue to Memorie,
Of violent Birth, but poore validitie:
Which now like Fruite vnripe stickes on the Tree,
But fall vnshaken, when they mellow bee.
Most necessary 'tis, that we forget
To pay our selues, what to our selues is debt:
What to our selues in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of other Greefe or Ioy,
Their owne enactors with themselues destroy:

Where Ioy most Reuels, Greefe doth most lament;
Greefe ioyes, Ioy greeues on slender accident.
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange
That euen our Loues should with our Fortunes change.
For 'tis a question left vs yet to proue,
Whether Loue lead Fortune, or else Fortune Loue.
The great man downe, you marke his fauourites flies,
The poore aduanc'd, makes Friends of Enemies:
And hitherto doth Loue on Fortune tend,
For who not needs, shall neuer lacke a Frend:
And who in want a hollow Friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his Enemie.
But orderly to end, where I begun,
Our Willes and Fates do so contrary run,
That our Deuices still are ouerthrowne,
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our owne.
So thinke thou wilt no second Husband wed.
But die thy thoughts, when thy first Lord is dead

Bap. Nor Earth to giue me food, nor Heauen light,
Sport and repose locke from me day and night:
Each opposite that blankes the face of ioy,
Meet what I would haue well, and it destroy:
Both heere, and hence, pursue me lasting strife,
If once a Widdow, euer I be Wife

Ham. If she should breake it now

King. 'Tis deeply sworne:
Sweet, leaue me heere a while,
My spirits grow dull, and faine I would beguile
The tedious day with sleepe

Qu. Sleepe rocke thy Braine,

Sleepes

And neuer come mischance betweene vs twaine.

Exit

Ham. Madam, how like you this Play?

Qu. The Lady protests to much me thinkes

Ham. Oh but shee'l keepe her word

King. Haue you heard the Argument, is there no Offence
in't?

Ham. No, no, they do but iest, poyson in iest, no Offence
i'th' world

King. What do you call the Play?

Ham. The Mouse-trap: Marry how? Tropically:
This Play is the Image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago
is the Dukes name, his wife Baptista: you shall see
anon: 'tis a knauish peece of worke: But what o'that?
Your Maiestie, and wee that haue free soules, it touches
vs not: let the gall'd iade winch: our withers are vnrun.
Enter Lucianus.

This is one Lucianus nephew to the King

Ophe. You are a good Chorus, my Lord

Ham. I could interpret betweene you and your loue:
if I could see the Puppets dallying

Ophe. You are keene my Lord, you are keene

Ham. It would cost you a groaning, to take off my
edge

Ophe. Still better and worse

Ham. So you mistake Husbands.
Begin Murderer. Pox, leaue thy damnable Faces, and
begin. Come, the croaking Rauens doth bellow for Reuenge

Lucian. Thoughts blacke, hands apt,
Drugges fit, and Time agreeing:
Confederate season, else, no Creature seeing:
Thou mixture ranke, of Midnight Weeds collected,
With Hecats Ban, thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy naturall Magicke, and dire propertie,
On wholesome life, vsurpe immediately.

Powres the poyson in his eares.

Ham. He poysons him i'th' Garden for's estate: His
name's Gonzago: the Story is extant and writ in choyce
Italian. You shall see anon how the Murtherer gets the
loue of Gonzago's wife

Ophe. The King rises

Ham. What, frighted with false fire

Qu. How fares my Lord?
Pol. Giue o're the Play

King. Giue me some Light. Away

All. Lights, Lights, Lights.

Exeunt.