Act 1

Who’s there?

Thou art a scholar. Speak to it, Horatio.

Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
Of unimprovèd mettle hot and full,
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Sharked up a list of lawless resolutes
For food and diet to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in ‘t.

In that and all things will we show our duty.

The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.

Do not forever with thy vailèd lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust.
Thou know’st ‘tis common, that all that lives must die.

...I have within which passes show,
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

‘Tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this:
But two months dead—nay, not so much, not two.
So excellent a king, that was to this
Hyperion to a satyr.

...frailty, thy name is woman!

He was a man. Take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven
Withes, like a puffed and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
And recks not his own rede.
This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

…it is a custom
More honored in the breach than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations.
They clepe us drunkards and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition.

So oft it chances in particular men
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As in their birth wherein they are not guilty[...]

... That these men,
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect...
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault.

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres....

O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain!
My tables—meet it is I set it down
That one may smile and smile and be a villain.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

The time is out of joint. O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right!

Act 2

Your bait of falsehood take this carp of truth;
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach
With windlasses and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out.

My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,
No hat upon his heæc, his stockings fouled,
Ungartered, and down-gyvèd to his ankle [...] 
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors—he comes before me.

... since brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad.
“Mad” call I it, for, to define true madness,
What is ‘t but to be nothing else but mad?

At such a time, I’ll loose my daughter to him.
Do you and I behind an arras then.
Mark the encounter.

Though this be madness, yet there is method in ‘t.

You were sent
for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks
which your modesties have not craft enough to
color. I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

What a piece of work is a man, how noble in
reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving
how express and admirable; in action how like
an angel, in apprehension how like a god: the
beauty of the world, the paragon of animals—and
yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?

I am but mad north-north-west. When the
wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that his player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wanned,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit—and all for nothing!
[...]What’s Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have?

The play’s the thing
Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King.
Act 3

To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there’s the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause.

Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be
A breeder of sinners? [...] Or if thou wilt needs marry,
Marry a fool, for wise men know well enough what
Monsters you make of them.

Those that are married already, all but one, shall live.

O, what a noble mind is here o’erthrown!
Th’ expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mold of form,
Th’ observed of all observers, quite, quite down!

Madness in great ones must not unwatched go.

...the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and
Now, was and is to hold, as ‘twere, the mirror up to nature....

Give me that man
That is not passion’s slave, and I will wear him
In my heart’s core, ay, in my heart of heart, as I do thee.

In second husband let me be accurst.
None wed the second but who killed the first.

Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing
you make of me! You would play upon me, you
would seem to know my stops, you would pluck
out the heart of my mystery, you would sound me
from the lowest note to the top of my compass;
and there is much music, excellent voice, in this
little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. ‘Sblood,
Do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe?
Call me what instrument you will, though you can
fret me, you cannot play upon me.

‘Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on.
I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you.
I your commission will forth dispatch,
And he to England shall along with you.

O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon 't,
A brother's murder. Pray can I not....

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed,
At game a-swearung, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in 't—
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damned and black
As hell, whereto it goes.

O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!
A bloody deed—almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king and marry with his brother.

Look here upon this picture and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See what a grace was seated on this brow,
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself [...] 
This was your husband. Look you now what follows.
Here is your husband, like a mildewed ear
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?

O, speak to me no more!
These words like daggers enter in my ears.

...I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft.

... 'tis the sport to have the enginer
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. O, 'tis most sweet
When in one line two crafts directly meet.

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.
Act 4

Diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are relieved
Or not at all.

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

...the present death of Hamlet. Do it, England,
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me.

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

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....

He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.

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.

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

Revenge should have no bounds.

Act 5

To what base uses we may return, Horatio!
Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of
Alexander till he find it stopping a bunghole?

Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will——

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

We defy augury. There is a
special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be
now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be
now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The
readiness is all. Since no man of aught he leaves
knows, what is 't to leave betimes? Let be.

Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric.

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story.

But I do prophesy th' election lights
On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice.
[...] The rest is silence.

Let four captains
Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royal; and for his passage,
The soldier's music and the rite of war
Speak loudly for him.
Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this
Becomes the field but here shows much amiss.
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.