

[SCENE II]

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

Ham. So much for this, sir. Now shall you see the other.
You do remember all the circumstance?

Hor. Remember it, my lord!

Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep. Methought I lay
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly—
And prais'd be rashness for it: let us know
Our indiscretion sometime serves us well
When our deep plots do pall; and that should learn us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will—

Hor.

Ham. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark

Scene II

SCENE II *Revs.* 1. shall you] *Q2*; let me *F.* 5. Methought] *F.*; my thought *Q2*. 6. bilboes] *F.*; bilbo *Q2*. 6-11. Rashly— . . . it: let . . . will—] *Kittredge (subst.)*; rashly, . . . it: let . . . will. *Q2*; rashly, (. . . it) let . . . will. *F.*; Rashly, . . . it,—(Let . . . will.) *Jennens*. 7. prais'd] *Q2*; praise *F.* 8. sometime] *Q2*; sometimes *F.* 9. deep] *Q2*; deare *F.* pall] *Q2 uncorr.*, *F* (pauite); fall *Q2 corr.*; fail *Pope*. learn] *Q2*; teach *F.* 13. me, in the dark] *Q5*; me in the darke *Q2*; me in the darke, *F.*

1. see the other] As promised in iv. vi. 22-3.

6. mutines] = mutiners, mutineers. All three forms occur in Shakespeare's texts.

bilboes] iron shackles attached to a fixed horizontal bar used on board ship to confine prisoners by the ankles.

Rashly—] on impulse (in contrast to deep plots). The word evokes a parenthetic reflection; the narrative resumes at l. 12 with the incidents which rashly describes.

7. let us know] 'that is, take notice and remember' (Johnson).

9. pall] lose force, falter. *OED* v. 1. 2. The variant fall in some copies of *Q2*, though followed (or emended to fall)

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

Hor. Is't possible? 25

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

Hor. I beseech you. 30

Ham. Being thus benetted round with villainies—
Or I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play—I sat me down,
Devis'd a new commission, wrote it fair—

17. unseal] *F.*; vnfold *Q2*. 18-19. Horatio—Ah, royal knavery!—] *Wilson*; *Horatio* A royall knauey, *Q2*; *Horatio*, Oh royall knauey: *F.* 20. reasons] *Q2*; reason *F.* 22. ho!] hoe *Q2*; hoo, *F.* 27. now] *Q2*; me *F.* 28. I beseech] *Q2, F.*; Ay, 'beseech *Capell*. 29. villainies] *Capell*; villaines *Q2, F.* 30. Or] *Q2*; Ere *F.*

his as a 'covering in the night' (*Voyages*, ii. 1, p. 91; cited *OED* sea sb. 18 j.).

scarf'd about] wrapped round (as distinct from properly put on).

14. them] Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

15. Finger'd] purloined. in fine] finally (as at ii. ii. 69, iv. vii. 132).

20. Larded] garnished. Cf. iv. v. 38 and n.

21. Importing] concerning. Cf. i. ii. 23.

22. bugs and goblins] These words, along with the scornful astonishment of *ho!*, ridicule as imaginary the frightful dangers alleged to be inherent in Hamlet's continued exist-

ence. *Str.* i. ii. 207 refers to bugs (i.e. bugbears, bogeys) as suitable for frightening 'boys', *Troil.* v. x. 29 to goblins as the creation of 'frenzy'.

23. supervise] perusal. The sole recorded instance of the noun; see ii. i. 4 n.

no leisure bated] no time lost.

24. stay] wait for.

30. Or] alternative form of *ere* (< O.E. *ær*). Cf. i. ii. 147 n. *F.* modernizes.

30-1. Or I could . . . play] Before I had had time to work out what to do, my brains had started to do it. A prologue (like that to *Rom.*) outlines the action which the players then perform.

32. fair] in a clerly hand.

I once did hold it, as our statistes do,
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
How to forget that learning, but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service. Wilt thou know
Th'effect of what I wrote?

Hor.

Ay, good my lord.

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

40

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And many such-like 'as'es of great charge,

That on the view and knowing of these contents,

Without debatement further more or less,

He should those bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allow'd.

45

Hor.

How was this seal'd?

Ham. Why, even in that was heaven's ordinance.

I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal,
Folded the writ up in the form of th'other,

50

37. Th'effect] *Q*₂; The effects *F*. 40. like] *Q*₂; as *F*. might] *Q*₂;
should *F*. 42. comma] *Q*₂, *F*; commere *Theobald*, conj. *Warburton*.
43. 'as'es] *Rowe* (*As's*); Assis *F*; as sir *Q*₂. 44. knowing] *Q*₂; know *F*.
46. those] *Q*₂; the *F*. 48. ordinance] *Q*₂; ordinate *F*. 51. the form
of th'other] *Q*₂; forme of the other *F*.

33. statistes] politicians, men of
47. Not shriving-time allow'd] Per-
haps too much has been made of the
savagery of refusing them absolution,
when the emphasis is on the denial
not so much of the rite as of time for
it (cf. 'short shrift'). Cf. II. 23-5
above; yet also III.iii.89-95 and LN,
while the lack of opportunity for con-
fession is an aggravation of the killing
of Hamlet's father (I.v.76-9, III.iii.
80-4).

48. ordinance] ordaining, directing
the course of events. Cf. I. 10 above.

50. model] exact likeness.

that] indicating something assumed
to be well known. *OED* That dem.
II. b.

51. writ] writing.

43. 'as'es of great charge] Punning on
(1) the *as* clauses of great import, and
(2) asses with great loads.

45. more or less] (without) the
slightest deviation (from these in-
structions).

Subscrib'd it, gave't th'impression, plac'd it safely,
The changeling never known. Now the next day
Was our sea-fight, and what to this was sequent
Thou knowest already.

55

Hor. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this employment.

They are not near my conscience, their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow.

'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

60

Why, what a king is this!

Ham. Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon—
He that hath kill'd my king and whor'd my mother,
Popp'd in between th'election and my hopes,

65

Subscrib'd] *F*; Subscribe *Q*₂. 54. sequent] *Q*₂; sement *F*.
55. knowest] *Q*₂; know'st *F*. 56. Rosencrantz] *Q*₂; Rosincrance, *F*.
57.] *F*; not in *Q*₂. 58. defeat] *Q*₂; debate *F*. 59. Does] *Q*₂; Both *F*.
63. think] *Q*₂; thinkst *F*; think'st *Dyce*, conj. *Walker*. 63-7. upon— . . .
coz'nage—] *Boswell*; vpon? . . . cuznage, *Q*₂; vpon . . . coozenage; *F*.

But the sense is interrogative: Hamlet
is asking an opinion. The grammar is
less certain, wherefore many eds.
follow *F* and accept Walker's inter-
pretation *thinks't*, seems it? (*Sh.*'s
Versionation, pp. 281-2). But I suspect
that instead of trying to improve the
grammar, we should accept a flexi-
bility whereby *think thee* can borrow
from the interrogative construction
of the main clause: Does it not —
(does it not) seem to thee? — stand me
now upon . . .? (= Isn't it now in-
cumbent on me, don't you think . . .?).
63. stand me . . . upon] put an obliga-
tion on me. To stand upon, to be in-
cumbent on; cf. *R*₂ II.iii.138, *R*₃ IV.
ii.60. See Abbott 204.

64. whor'd] See I.v.42 ff., III. iv.
42-8 and nn.

65. Popp'd in . . . hopes] There was
no suggestion in I.ii of any such
'hopes' or of any discreditable
manoeuvre on the part of Claudius.
But it is now allowed to appear that
he had anticipated the normal process

53. changeling] a child substituted
by fairies for one they steal.

56. to't] to their death. Cf. *Gent*. iv.
iv.3-4, 'one that I say'd from
drowning, when three or four of his
blind brothers and sisters went to it'.
57. make love . . . employment] It does
not appear from the text that they
knew the nature of the commission
they carried. But it is made abun-
dantly clear that they were willing
agents. Hamlet assumes them to be
willing for the worst (III.iv.204-9),
and we are probably meant to be
assume it too and to accept the poetic
justice of their end.

58. defeat] ruin. See II.ii.566n.

59. insinuation] worming their way
in.

60. baser] lowlier.

61. pass] sword-thrust.

62. opposites] antagonists (a frequent
17th-century sense).

63. think] seem, with dative of the
pronoun, as in *methinks*. Usually in-
terpreted as an imperative, bethink.

Thrown out his angle for my proper life

And with such coz'nage—is't not perfect conscience

To quit him with this arm? And is't not to be damn'd

To let this canker of our nature come

In further evil?

Hor. It must be shortly known to him from England

What is the issue of the business there.

Ham. It will be short. The interim is mine.

And a man's life's no more than to say 'one'.

But I am very sorry, good Horatio,

That to Laertes I forgot myself;

For by the image of my cause I see

The portraiture of his. I'll court his favours.

But sure the bravery of his grief did put me

Into a tow'ring passion.

Hor.

Peace, who comes here?

80

Enter OSRIC, a Courtier.

Os. Your Lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

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

67. conscience] conscience, *F*; conscience? *Q2*. 68–80.] *F*; *not in Q2*.

73–5.] *As Hamlet*; 3 lines ending short, / more / *Horatio*, *F*. 73. interim is]

Hamlet; *interim's F*. 78. court] *Rouse*; count *F*. 80 S.D.] *Enter a Courtier*.

Q2; *Enter young Osricke*. *F*; *Enter a Braggart Gentleman*. *Q1*. 82. humbly]

F; humble *Q2*.

of 'election' and so come 'between'

Hamlet's hopes and their fulfilment.

See i.ii.1 LN, iii.iv.99n.

66. angle] fish-hook.

proper] own.

67. coz'nage] deception, with the

common word-play on *cousinage*, kin-

ship. Cf. i.ii.65.

perfect conscience] in complete accord

with one's sense of right. *OED* con-

science 6.

68–80.] The absence of these lines

from *Q2* is difficult to explain except

as an accidental omission.

69. canker] a spreading sore – and

thus a corruption inherent in our

'nature', rather than (as Schmidt) a

grub preying on it.

74. to say 'one'] i.e. in counting. To

the hint that he has only a short time

in which to act Hamlet retorts that

man's whole life is short. Dover

Wilson, however, supposes this re-

fers to a single rapier thrust (cf. i. 279

below), which is enough to 'finish

Claudius off' (*WHH*, p. 272).

77–8. the image . . . his] The irony,

which Hamlet does not remark on

but which we can hardly miss, is that

the *image* which shows Laertes as a

revenger like Hamlet must also show

Hamlet as revenge's object.

79. *bravery*] bravado, flamboyance.

See v.i.244–50, 278–9.

82–3. *water-fly*] LN.

Hor. No, my good lord.

Ham. Thy state is the more gracious, for 'tis a vice to 85

know him. He hath much land and fertile. Let a

beast be lord of beasts and his crib shall stand at the

king's mess. 'Tis a chuff, but, as I say, spacious in the

possession of dirt.

Os. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should 90

impart a thing to you from his Majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit.

Your bonnet to his right use: 'tis for the head.

Os. I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold, the wind is northerly. 95

Os. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

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

complexion.

Os. Exceedingly, my lord, it is very sultry—as 'twere—

I cannot tell how. My lord, his Majesty bade me 100

signify to you that a has laid a great wager on your

88. chuff] *This edn*; though *Q2, F* (Chowgh). say] *Q2*; saw *F*.

90. lordship] *Q2*; friendship *F*. 92. sir] *Q2*; *not in F*. 93. Your] *Q2*;

put your *F*. 94. it is] *Q2*; 'tis *F*. 97. But yet] *Q2*; *not in F*. sultry] *F*;

sully *Q2*. hot for] *F*; hot, or *Q2*. 99. sultry—as 'twere—] *Sleazens*;

sultery, as 'twere *Q2, F*. 100. how.] how: *Q2*; how; but *F*. 101. a has]

85. *gracious*] blessed. Cf. i.i.169.

86–8. *Let a beast . . . king's mess.*] A

man of large possessions is received at

court though himself no better than

the cattle he owns. *Crib*, food-box,

continues the beast metaphor.

88. *chuff*] (of which *Q2* *though* is a

variant spelling) rustic, churl, esp.

one who is nevertheless well-to-do.

LN.

90. *Sweet*] Common in courtly

address. Cf. iii.ii.53.

92. *diligence*] attentiveness.

93. *bonnet*] An ordinary word for a

hat or cap. Cf. *Ven.* 339, 351. Hats

indoors were quite normal. Cf. ii.i.

79n. Arguments that *Osric* must have

worn a Danish hat are without tex-

tual support.

his] its. See i.i.40n.

94. it is *very hot*] An adaptation of

an old joke. Cf. Guazzo, *Civil Conver-*

sation (Tudor Trans., i.165), 'seeing

him bare headed . . . made him put

on his hat – He should have put it

off again, to have shewed that he was

not bare in respect of them, but be-

cause of the heat'; Florio, *Second*

Fruits, 1591, p. 111, 'Why do you

stand bareheaded? . . . I do it

for my ease' (cf. i. 105 below). Bur-

lesqued in *The Malcolm*, Ind. 37–9.

94–5. *hot . . . cold*] For Hamlet's

mockery of the obsequious who will

agree to contrary propositions, cf.

iii.ii.367–73. Theobald would derive

it from Juvenal, *Sat.* iii.102–3.

96. *indifferent*] moderately, fairly, as

at iii.i.122.

98. *complexion*] constitution. Cf. i.

iv.27n.

head. Sir, this is the matter—

Ham. [*signing to him to put on his hat*] I beseech you remember—

Ost. Nay, good my lord, for my ease, in good faith. 105 Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes—believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing. Indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry; for you shall find in him the 110 continent of what part a gentleman would see.

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you,

103. *signing . . . hat*] *Johnson subst.*

105. good my lord] *Q₂*; in good faith *F.* my ease] *Q₂*; mine ease *F.* 106-34. here is . . . Well, sir?] *Q₂*; not in *F.* 109. feelingly] *Q₃*; fellingly *Q₂* *uncorr.*; sellingly *Q₂* *uncorr.* 111. part] *Q₂*; parts *Wilson.*

104. *remember*] for 'remember your courtesies', a formula for 'cover your head'. The phrase has puzzled eds., who naturally suppose that courtesy would require one to remain uncovered; but its use not to demand but to waive this mark of respect is amply demonstrated, if not explained. Cf. *LLL* v.i.84-5, 'I do beseech thee, remember thy courtesy . . . apparel thy head'; *Lusty Juventus*, MSR, I. 616, 'I pray you be remembered, and cover your head'; *Every Man in his Humour*, I.ii.50-2, 'pray you remember your courtesy . . . nay, pray you be covered'. *OED* remember *v.* 1 d. The implication appears to be that the demands of courtesy are now satisfied (and that the hat should therefore be resumed).

105. *for my ease*] The polite rejoinder. See above, I. 94 n.

106-40. *here is newly . . . unfollowed*] This praise of Laertes fulfils iv.vii. 130-2. The reduction of it in *F* to a single sentence is 'an obvious play-house cut' (Dover Wilson).

107. *absolute*] flawless.

108. *differences*] characteristics which are out of the ordinary, distinctions.

soft society] pleasing manners.

109. *feelingly*] with discrimination, justly, as at *Meas.* I.ii.34; *Tw.N.* II.iii.149. Some eds. have preferred *Q₂*'s original *sellingly*, which is compared with *LLL* iv.iii.236 ('a seller's praise') and *Sonn.* xxi.14 and defended at length by Dover Wilson (*MSH*, pp. 293-4); but the word is neither authenticated nor (from Osric) apt.

109-10. *card or calendar*] model or paradigm. Two words for the same thing. A *card* is literally a chart or map, a *calendar* a register or directory.

110. *gentry*] behaviour proper to a gentleman. Cf. II.ii.22.

111. *continent*] container, as at iv. iv.64. See next note.

what part] whatever part, any part which. This sense of *what* makes the emendation *paris* (see *MSH*, p. 301) unnecessary. A pun on *part* gives (1) ability, accomplishment (as in iv. vii.72), which a gentleman desires to see in another; (2) region (sustaining the metaphor of *card, continent*), which he desires to see on his travels.

112. *perdition*] in the literal sense, loss.

though I know to divide him inventorially would dozy th'arithmetick of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity 115 of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article and his infusion of such dearth and rareness as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror and who else would trace him his umbrage, nothing more.

Ost. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him. 120

Ham. The concernancy, sir? Why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

Ost. Sir?

Hor. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? 125

114. *dozy*] *Q₂* *uncorr.* (*dosie*); *dazzie* *Q₂* *corr.*; *dizzie* *Q₃*. yaw] *Q₂* *uncorr.*; raw *Q₂* *corr.* 125. in another] *Q₂*; in a mother *Tschischwitz*, *conj.* *Johnson*; in's mother *conj.* *Stanton.*

113. *to divide him inventorially*] to list his attributes separately.

114. *dozy*] bewildered, stupefy. *Q₂* gives a rare but acceptable form which is difficult to explain except as the *ms.* reading and which the corrector, falling between *dizzy* and *dazzle*, failed to improve.

114-15. *but yaw neither . . . sail*] do no more than divagate in comparison with his rapid motion. A ship is said to yaw when it fails to keep a straight course. The nautical metaphor (cf. *Q₂* corrector evidently did not understand. *Neither*, and nothing else, emphasizes the negative implied in *but*.

Cf. *Mer.V.* iii.v.7 ('that is but a kind of bastard hope neither'), *All's W.* II.ii.33; and see Abbott 128, *OED* neither A 3 b. *In respect of* is regularly used for 'in comparison with', but may alternatively mean 'on account of', which would imply that it was the very attempt to keep up with the swift sailing that threw the pursuer off course. In either case, the excellences of Laertes elude any attempt to catalogue them.

125-6. *Is't not possible . . . really.*]

Apparently a call for a different (simpler) language, provoked by Osric's failure to understand and addressed, I assume, to Hamlet. *You will t'ot*, you will apply yourself to it, have a good go at it; *really*, assuredly. LN.

116. *article*] theme; matter for an inventory.

117. *infusion*] quality (as determined by what has been infused into him).

dearth] = *rareness*.

118. *his semblable . . . mirror*] the (only) person like him is his own image in the glass.

119. *trace him*] follow his tracks.

umbrage] shadow (he himself being the substance).

122. *The concernancy . . .?*] How does this concern us?

122-3. *Why do we wrap . . . breath?*—Why do we clothe him in words of ours which can only fall short of his refinement? An ornate way of asking why we are speaking about the gentleman at all.

125-6. *Is't not possible . . . really.*—Apparently a call for a different (simpler) language, provoked by Osric's failure to understand and addressed, I assume, to Hamlet. *You will t'ot*, you will apply yourself to it, have a good go at it; *really*, assuredly. LN.

You will to't, sir, really.

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Ost. Of Laertes?

Hor. His purse is empty already, all's golden words are spent. 130

Ham. Of him, sir.

Ost. I know you are not ignorant—

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

Ost. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is— 135

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

Ost. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him, by them in his meed, he's unfellowed. 140

Ham. What's his weapon?

Ost. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons. But well.

Ost. The King, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary

126. to't] *Q₂ uncorr.* (too't); doo't *Q₂ corr.* really] *Q₂*; rarely *Theobald*.
 135. is] *Q₂*; is at his weapon. *F.* 136-40.] *Q₂*; not in *F.* 139. his] *Q₅*;
 this *Q₂*. 140. him, by them in his meed,] *Q₂*; him by them: in this
 meed *Capell*; him by them, in his meed *Steevens*². 144. King, sir] *Q₂*; sir
 King *F.* hath wagered] *Q₂*; ha's wag'd *F.*; hath layd a wager *Q₁*.

127. *What imports the nomination of*]
 What is the reason for men-
 tioning.

134. not much approve] approve,
 commend; not much because *Ostic's*
 judgment is of small account.

136-8. *I dare not . . . know himself.*]
 Implying that only the excellent can
 appreciate excellence and that only
 through self-knowledge can a man
 thoroughly know another. The first
 proposition, however, does not entail
 the second, which exceeds it. Hence
but.

139. *imputation*] estimation.

140. *in his meed*] in his service (*meed*,
 reward, pay). So Dover Wilson in
 accord with *Q₂* punctuation and the
 plain sense. To take *in his meed* (=

horses, against the which he has impawned, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hanger, and so. Three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit. 150

Ham. What call you the carriages?

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

Ost. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

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

145. has impawned] *Q₂* (impaund); impon'd *F.* 147. hanger, and] *Q₂*;
 Hangers or *F.* 152-3.] *Q₂*; not in *F.* 154. carriages] *F.*; carriage *Q₂*.
 155-6. matter if] *Q₂*; matter: If *F.* 156. a] *Q₂*; not in *F.*; the *Q₁*.
 157. might be] *F.*; be *Q₂ uncorr.*; be might *Q₂ corr.* 157-8. on. Six . . .
 swords,] *Pope subst.*; on, six . . . swords *Q₂*; on six . . . Swords: *F.*
 160. bet] *Q₂*; but *F.* impawned, as] *Malone*; impon'd as *F.*; all *Q₂*;
 all 'impawned' as *Wilson*; all impon'd, as *Kittredge*.

145. *impawned*] staked. See I. 160 fancy, matching the hilts in design,
 LN. finely wrought (*delicate*) with lavish
 accessories.

147. *assigns*] A fanciful term for
 (*liberal*) ingenuity.

151. *What call you . . . ?*] What do
 you refer to as . . . ?

152. *margin*] where, in books of the
 time, one might find a gloss or ex-
 planatory note.

155-6. *The phrase . . . sides*] Since
carriage is the word for the frame on
 which a cannon is mounted. Cf. *H₅*
 III. ProL. 26.

159-60. *the French bet . . . Danish*]
 What the Frenchified Laertes has
 brought back with him is set against
 the home product. Danish horses
 were esteemed and exported (Doller-
 up, pp. 118-19).
 160. *impawned, as*] On the variant
 readings, LN.

148-50. *very dear . . . conceit*]
 Hangers were often richly orna-
 mented, wherefore: pleasing to the

Osr. The King, sir, hath laid, sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath laid on twelve for nine. And it would come to immediate trial if your lordship 165 would vouchsafe the answer.

Ham. How if I answer no?

Osr. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall. If it please his 170 Majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me. Let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the King hold his purpose, I will win for him and I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

Osr. Shall I deliver you so? 175

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

Osr. I commend my duty to your lordship.

Ham. Yours.

[*Exit Osr.*] 180

A does well to commend it himself, there are no

162. laid, sir] *Q*₂; laid *F*. 163. yourself] *Q*₂; you *F*. 164. laid on] *Q*₂; one *F*.
 165. nine] *Q*₂; mine *F*. it] *Q*₂; that *F*. 171. it is] *Q*₂; 'tis *F*.
 172-3. brought, the . . . purpose.] *Theobald*; brought, the . . . purpose; *Q*₂; *F*; brought. The . . . purpose, conj. *this edn.* 173. and] *Q*₂; if *F*.
 174. I will] *Q*₂; He *F*. 176. deliver] *Q*₂, *Q*₁; redeliver *F*. you] *Q*₂; you e'en *F*.
 180. Yours] *Q*₂; Yours, yours *F*. 180 S.D.] *F*₂ (*Exit. after 179*), *Capell.* 181. A] *Evans, conj. Parrott-Craig*; see *F*; not in *Q*₂.

162-4. *The King, sir, hath laid . . .* win . . . ' This requires us to understand *be* before *willing*. An alternative is to take only 'the gentleman willing, and (= if) . . . purpose' as conditional to what follows.

166. *answer*] acceptance of the challenge (as *Osr* explains). Cf. *Troil.* i.iii.332.

171. *breathing time*] time for exercise. Cf. *All's W.* i.ii.17, 'sick For breathing and exploit'; *Per.* ii.iii.101.

172-4. *Let the foils . . . and I can*] The *Q*₂ punctuation does not declare the syntax, though the semicolon after *purpose* (followed by *F* and some eds.) seems to group the three preceding clauses with *Let*. I take it this is subjunctive rather than imperative, introducing the conditions for 'I will

174. *will*] consent to. This balances the previous *will*. Future tense would of course be *I shall*. See Abbott 319.

175. *the odd hits*] i.e. the extra three he will have suffered (see ll. 163-4).

179. *commend*] (1) present to your favourable regard. Cf. l. 192. But Hamlet takes it as (2) praise. Plain speech could have omitted it, as at i.ii.253.

tongues else for's turn.

Hor. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head. *Ham.* A did comply with his dug before a sucked it. Thus has he—and many more of the same bevy that I 185 know the drossy age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and, out of an habit of encounter, a kind of yeasty collection, which carries them through and through the most fanned and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are 190 out.

Enter a Lord.

182. turn] *Q*₂; tongue *F*. 184. A] *Q*₂; He *F*. comply] *F*; sir *Q*₂ *uncorr.*; so sir *Q*₂ *corr.* a] *Q*₂; see *F*. 185. has] *Q*₂; had *F*. many] *Q*₂; mine *F*. bevy] *F*; breede *Q*₂. 187. out of an] *Q*₂; outward *F*. 188. yeasty] *F*; hisy *Q*₂. 189. fanned] *Hammer, Warburton*; fond *F*; prophane *Q*₂; profound *Tschischwitz, conj. Bailey*. winnowed] *F*; trennowed *Q*₂; trennowed *Q*₃; renowned *Q* 1676. 191 S.D.-204.] *Q*₂; not in *F*.

182. *for's turn*] to serve his purpose, i.e. to do it for him. *OED* turn *sb.* 30b(g).

183. *lapwing . . . head*] A favourite proverb, possibly evoked (as *Dover Wilson* suggests) by *Osr*'s having now put on his hat. But the essential point about the shell is that the lapwing is ornithologically remarkable for leaving the nest within a few hours of birth and hence became the proverbial type of juvenile pretension.

Cf. *Greene's Never Too Late* (*Greene*, viii.35), 'Are you no sooner hatched, with the lapwing, but you will run away with the shell on your head?' *Tilley* L 69.

184. *comply with*] pay courtesies to. As at ii.ii.368. Cf. *Fulwell, Art of Flattery*, Pref.: 'the very sucking babes hath a kind of adulation towards their nurses for the dug'. *Q*₂, in trouble with several words in this speech, appears to have surrendered on this one, for which I take *sir* to be a substitution (and one which the press-corrector did not much improve).

185. *bevy*] As a word used of birds,

perhaps suggested by *lapwing*. 186. *the drossy age*] With the sentiment cf. ii.ii.359-62, iii.iv.155-6, v.i.135-8.

186-7. *the tune of the time*] 'the cant of the day' (*Johnson*).

187. *out of an habit of encounter*] from habitual intercourse. (Cf. *OED* habit *sb.* 10). *F* *outward*, though much followed and superficially attractive in reinforcing *habit* (= dress) and providing a parallel metaphor for *tune*, would imply a contrast with some inner worth, which a *drossy age* must lack. Cf. *MSH*, p. 329.

188. *yeasty collection*] accumulation of froth, i.e. of 'fashionable prattle' (*Johnson*).

188-9. *carries them through . . . opinions*] enables them thoroughly to hold their own among (and hence perhaps, as *Dover Wilson*, impose upon men of) the most tried and well-sifted opinions. LN.

190-1. *do but blow . . . out*] This continues the metaphor of *yeasty*: when you put *Osr* and his like to the test by as much as blowing on them, the bubbles burst, i.e. when

Lord. My lord, his Majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him that you attend him in the hall. He sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes or that you will take longer time. 195

Ham. I am constant to my purposes, they follow the King's pleasure. If his fitness speaks, mine is ready. Now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now. 200

Lord. The King and Queen and all are coming down. 200
Ham. In happy time.

Lord. The Queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me. [Exit Lord.] 205

Hor. You will lose, my lord.
Ham. I do not think so. Since he went into France, I have been in continual practice. I shall win at the odds. Thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart; but it is no matter.

Hor. Nay, good my lord. 210

Ham. It is but foolery, but it is such a kind of gaingiving as would perhaps trouble a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike anything, obey it. I will forestall their repair hither and say you are not fit.

204 S.D.] *Theobald.* 205. lose] *Q*₂; lose this wager *F*. 208. Thou wouldst] *Q*₂; but thou wouldst *F*. ill all's] *Q*₂; all *F*. 211. gaingiving] *F*; gainguing *Q*₂; game-guing *Q*₃. 213. it] *Q*₂; not in *F*.

you try to converse with them their fine phrases are shown to be empty of substance or thought. 198. *If his fitness . . . ready.*] My convenience attends on his. 201. *In happy time.*] At an opportune moment. *A* polite formula of welcome. *Cf. All's W.* v. i. 6, *Oth.* iii. i. 29, etc. 202-3. *use some gentle entertainment*] show some mark of courtesy. This prepares for ll. 222 ff.

205. *lose*] *F*'s addition of *this wager* appears to have been necessitated by the cut of ll. 192-204. (*Cf.* l. 135, *F* at *his weapon.*) Strictly, it is the King who will lose the wager and Hamlet the match. But *cf.* l. 249. 206-7. *I have been in continual practice.*] This, though appropriate here, contradicts ii. ii. 206-7. 207. *the odds*] The 'three hits' of l. 164. 208-9. *how ill . . . heart*] 'By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust Ensuing danger' (*R3* ii. iii. 42-3). 211. *gaingiving*] misgiving, with the same prefix as in *gainsay*. The misreading of *Q*₂ and the conjectural emendation of *Q*₃ suggest that the word was unfamiliar.

Ham. Not a whit. We defy augury. There is 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 aught, what is't to leave betimes? Let be. 220

A table prepared. Trumpets, Drums, and Officers with cushions.
Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, [OSRIC,] and all the State, and Attendants with foils and daggers.

215. There is] *Q*₂; there's a *F*, *Q*₁. 216. now] *F*, *Q*₁; not in *Q*₂. 218. will] *F*; well *Q*₂. 219. of aught he leaves, knows aught.] *This edn;* of aught he leaves, knows *Q*₂ (knows, *Warburton*); ha's ought of what he leaves. *F* (leaves, *Rove*); owes aught of what he leaves, *Hammer*; knows aught of what he leaves, *Johnson*; knows of aught he leaves *Spencer*. 220. Let be.] *Q*₂; not in *F*. 220 S.D.] *Q*₂ subst.; *Enter King, Queen, Laertes and Lords, with other Attendants with Foils, and Gauntlets, a Table and flagons of Wine on it. F. Osric*] *Theobald.*

215. *W*] Note that Hamlet does not speak for himself alone. Characteristically the personal predicament expands to the general.

215-16. *There is special providence . . . sparrow.*] Matthew x. 29. The Elizabethans believed both in general providence manifesting itself in the whole system of creation and, within this, in a singular or special providence manifesting itself in the particular event. The latter, along with its scriptural exemplification in the sparrow, was especially insisted on by Calvin (see *Institutes*, I, esp. xvi. 1, xvii. 6). (*Cf.* above, ll. 10-11, 48. 216. it] death.

218. *The readiness is all.*] *Cf.* Matthew xxiv. 44 ('Be ye also ready'); Luke xii. 40.

218-20. *Since no man . . . betimes*] Since no man has any knowledge of anything he is leaving, what signifies an early death? LN.

220. *Let be.*] Enough, forbear. *Cf. Ant.* iv. iv. 6, *Wind.* v. iii. 61, and v. ii. 343 below. Many eds. wrongly take this to be part of Hamlet's reflections, expressing his resignation to the

course of events. A misplaced ingenuity has even tried to make it answer 'To be or not to be'. But it merely recognizes an interruption which requires their dialogue to break off. *Cf.* variously ii. ii. 416 ('my abridgement'), v. i. 210 ('But soft'), v. ii. 80 ('Peace'), iii. ii. 90. 220 S.D. *the State*] the nobility, the court.

Foils and daggers] In accordance with l. 142. Attempts to show that the fencing must be with single rapier go against the text. Though the exchange of rapiers (ll. 306-10) on which the catastrophe is to turn might be easier with the single weapon, it evidently did not presuppose it. *F*'s substitution of *Gauntlets* for daggers represents a change in fencing style, but the significance of this in updating the action has perhaps been overstressed (*WHH*, p. 280). Rapier and dagger and single rapier seem to have been current simultaneously, and a change in stage-performance may have taken place already by 1603, the use of gauntlets being suggested by the *Q*₁ S.D., 'They catch one another Rapiers' (after l. 306).

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

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong;
 [Puts Laertes's hand into Hamlet's.]

But pardon't as you are a gentleman.
 This presence knows, and you must needs have heard,
 How I am punish'd with a sore distraction.

225
 What I have done
 That might your nature, honour, and exception
 Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
 Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet.
 If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

230
 And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
 Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
 Who does it then? His madness. If't be so,
 Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
 His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

235
 Sir, in this audience,
 Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil
 Free me so far in your most generous thoughts
 That I have shot my arrow o'er the house
 And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature,

240

222-48.] LN.
 224. *presence*] august and royal assembly.
 225. *distraction*] Cf. *distracted*, III.i.5-7.
 227. *nature*] natural feeling, filial regard. Cf. I.v.81, III.ii.384 and nn.
 Hamlet recognizes for Laertes promptings similar to his own.
 [exception] disapproval, sense of grievance (cf. 'take exception to'). Cf. *All's W.* I.ii.38-40, 'his honour . . . knew . . . when Exception bid him speak'.
 230. *If Hamlet . . . ta'en away*] Cf. 'Ophelia divided from herself and her fair judgment' (IV.v.84-5).
 236. *Sir, in this audience.*] Cairncross

222. I have] *Q2*; I've *F*.
 223-6.] *As Rowe*; lines ending knowes, / punnisch / done *Q2*; ending Gentleman. / knowes, / punnisch / done *F*. 225. a] *Q2*; not in *F*. 236.] *F*; not in *Q2*.
 239. my] *Q2*; mine *F, Q1*. 240. brother] *Q2, Q1*; Mother *F*.

(SQ, IX, 587-8) supposes this part-line misplaced and would transfer it to l. 224, reading 'This presence knows, sir, and this audience'.
 239. *shot my arrow*] The figure of the arrow that, once released, may go farther than one meant is common. Cf. Nashe (i.355), 'As an arrow is shot out of a bow . . . with such force, that it flieth far beyond the mark whereto it was aimed'.
 240. *my brother*] Cf. l. 249, 'this brothers' wager'. The ambivalence in Hamlet's relation with Laertes, who is both his foe and his second self, is fundamental to our understanding of the play.

245. *voice and precedent*] 'authoritative pronouncement, justified by precedent' (Dowden).
 246. *ungor'd*] unwounded (rather than 'unstained'), from the verb to *gor*, pierce. Cf. Hamlet's fear of 'a wounded name' (l. 349); and *Truitt*, III.iii.228, 'My fame is shrewdly gored'.
 252. *foit*] background against which a jewel shows more brightly.
 254. *Stick . . . off*] stand out conspicuously. Cf. *Cor.* v.iii.73, 'stick . . . Like a great sea-mark'.
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Whose motive in this case should stir me most
 To my revenge; but in my terms of honour
 I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation
 Till by some elder masters of known honour
 I have a voice and precedent of peace
 To keep my name ungor'd. But till that time
 I do receive your offer'd love like love
 And will not wrong it.

245
 I embrace it freely,
 And will this brothers' wager frankly play.—
 Give us the foils.

Laer. Come, one for me.

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

Laer. You mock me, sir.

Ham. No, by this hand.

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

Ham. Very well, my lord.

Your Grace has laid the odds o'th' weaker side.
 King. I do not fear it. I have seen you both,

245-7.] *As Q2*; divided *Ostricke*, / Cousen *F*. 258. has] *Q2*; hath *F, Q1*.

245. *voice and precedent*] 'authoritative pronouncement, justified by precedent' (Dowden).
 246. *ungor'd*] unwounded (rather than 'unstained'), from the verb to *gor*, pierce. Cf. Hamlet's fear of 'a wounded name' (l. 349); and *Truitt*, III.iii.228, 'My fame is shrewdly gored'.
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 252. *foit*] background against which a jewel shows more brightly.
 254. *Stick . . . off*] stand out conspicuously. Cf

But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.
Laer. This is too heavy. Let me see another.
Ham. This likes me well. These foils have all a length?
Osr. Ay, my good lord.

[Enter Servants with] flagons of wine.
King. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.
 If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
 Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
 Let all the battlements their ordinance fire:
 The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath,
 And in the cup an union shall he throw
 Richer than that which four successive kings
 In Denmark's crown have worn—give me the cups—
 And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
 The trumpet to the cannoneer without,

260
 265
 270
 275

260. better'd] *F*; better *Q*₂. 269 S.D. *They prepare to play.* *F* subst. (*after 262*;
 not in *Q*₂.
260. union] *F*; Vnice *Q*₂ uncorr.; Onix *Q*₂ corr. (*cf.* 220 S.D. *flagons of wine F*).
265. This edn; worne: give . . . cups, *Q*₂; worne. / Give . . . Cups, *F*.
272. trumpet] *Q*₂; Trumpets *F*.

266. better'd] pronounced (by public opinion) to be the better. The meaning, though it has escaped the dictionaries, is plain, and the inept traditional explanation that Laertes has improved (through his stay in Paris) must be firmly contradicted. The comparison is not between Laertes as he is and was but between Laertes and Hamlet.

267. *odds*] Referring to Hamlet's advantage of three hits (l. 164). *Cf.* l. 207.
 266. *quit in answer . . . exchange*] draw level in the third bout (presumably Laertes to have scored in one of the first two). Less satisfactorily (though perhaps more strictly interpreting in *answer of*), equalize in a later bout a score made by Laertes in the third. A mere draw in the third bout, which is what Dover Wilson understands, would not be matter for celebration. The idea that a third hit by Hamlet would finish off the match

belongs to the critic's imagination (see Sprinchorn in LN on ll. 162-4).
 268. *better breath*] enhanced vigour.
 269. *an union*] a pearl (*cf.* l. 284). Apparently so called from the uniqueness of each one. The term is normally reserved for pearls of finest quality—such as might be in a royal crown (l. 271). LN.
 271. *give me the cups*] An order in parenthesis (as the usual punctuation does not make clear) for the cups to be placed by him in readiness. *Cf.* next note.
 272-5. *let the kettle . . . to Hamlet*] *Cf.* i.ii.125-8, i.iv.8-12. This resumes and expands l. 267. Notwithstanding 'give me the cups', the King does not drink yet but announces how he will celebrate if (as in ll. 265-6), and as he accordingly does at ll. 264-5. *Q*₂'s S.D. opp. ll. 275-6 calling for trumpets now may be a book-keeper's misunderstanding.

274. *heaven*] Possibly an error. Later *Q*₁ and some eds. regularize to *heavens*, but 17th-century usage permits either and the singular occurs in the corresponding i.ii.127.
 284. *give me drink*] to celebrate Hamlet's 'hit'. *Cf.* ll. 265-8.
 this *pearl*] It is generally supposed (notwithstanding iv.vii.158-61) that the 'pearl' is the poison, as seems indeed to follow from l. 331, and this may be its *raison d'être*. *Cf.* *Antonio's Rev.* i.i.68-9. In *BB* the King's proposal is to put a powdered diamond into the wine. But the matter is not without difficulty. The reasonable inference from the dialogue both here and at ll. 268-9 is that the King drops the union into the cup from which he then drinks himself. A 19th-century

tradition made Claudius 'pretend to drink' and then offer the same cup to Hamlet (Sprague, *St. and the Actors*, p. 179). W. J. Lawrence, however, maintained that as the King prepares to drink from one cup, he puts the poison in another (*Lond. Mercury*, xxxvii, 526-31). Spencer supposes that he drinks before the 'pearl' has time to dissolve. Dover Wilson concludes that how the poison got into the cup 'we are not told' (*WHH*, p. 283).
 285 S.D. *Drums . . . goes off.*] In obedience to ll. 265-7, 272-5.
 288. *Another hit*] There is no need for the second hit to be celebrated like the first, and the opportunity afforded by 'the first or second' (l. 265) has been taken already.

274. heaven] *Q*₂, *F*; heavens *Q*₃. 275. begin.] *F*; beginne. *Trumpets / the while.* *Q*₂. 278. Come, my lord] *Q*₂; Come on sir *F*. 278 S.D.] *F*, *Q*₁ (*after 280*); not in *Q*₂. 285 S.D.] *Trumpets sound, and shot goes off.* *F* (*after cup*); opp. 282-3 *Drum, trumpets and shot.* / *Flourish, a piece goes off.* *Q*₂. 286. it] *Q*₂, *Q*₁; not in *F*. 287-8. Come. *They play again.* Another] come againe. *They play againe.* Another. *Q*₁; Come. [*play.*] Another *Capbell*; Come, another *Q*₂; Come: Another *F*; *They play.* Come—another *Pope*.

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Laer. I do confess't.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen.

He's fat and scant of breath.

290
The Queen carouses to thy brows.

Ham. Good madam.

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

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

295
She drinks [and offers the cup to Hamlet].

King. [aside] It is the poison'd cup. It is too late.

Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam—by and by.

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now.

King. I do not think't.

Laer. [aside] And yet it is almost against my conscience.

300
Ham. Come for the third, Laertes. You do but dally.

I pray you pass with your best violence.

I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

Laer. Say you so? Come on.

Osr. Nothing neither way.

Laer. Have at you now.

[Laertes wounds Hamlet; then,] in

scuffling, they change rapiers.

King. Part them; they are incensed.

Ham. Nay, come again. [He wounds Laertes.] The Queen falls.

289.] *Q₂*; A touch, a touch, I do confesse. *F*; I, I grant, a tuch, a tuch. *Q₁*.

291. Here, Hamlet, take my] *Q₂* (subst.), *Q₁* (subst.); Heere's a *F*.

295 S.D.] Wilson, after Capell; Shee drinks. *Q₁*; not in *Q₂*. *F*. 296. aside] *Rouve*.

300. aside] *Rouve*. it is] *Q₂*; 'tis *F*. against] *Q₂*; 'gainst *F*. 301. third,

Laertes.] Johnson; third Laertes, *Q₂*; third. Laertes, *F*. do] *Q₂*; not in *F*.

303. afeard] *F*; sure *Q₂*. 304 S.D.] Play *F*; not in *Q₂*. 306 S.D.] Sisson;

Laertes . . . rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes. *Rouve*; In scuffling they change

Rapiers. *F*; They catch one anothers Rapiers, and both are wounded, Laertes falls downe,

the Queene falls downe and dies. *Q₁*; not in *Q₂*. 308. come again.] *Q₂*; *F₂*;

come, againe. *F*; come! again! Kittredge. 308 S.D.] Sisson (cf. 306 S.D.

Rouve, *Q₁*); Queen falls. Capell; not in *Q₂*; *F*.

289. I do confess't.] A touch, a touch

in *F* and *Q₁*, though more felicitous

than most such additions, may be

actors' embroidery.

290. [at] sweaty; alternatively, out

of condition. LN.

291. napkin] handkerchief.

302. pass] thrust.

Osr. Look to the Queen there, ho!

Hor. They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord? 310

Osr. How is't, Laertes?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springs, Osrice.

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

Ham. How does the Queen?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink! O my dear Hamlet! 315

The drink, the drink! I am poison'd. Dies.

Ham. O villainy! Ho! Let the door be lock'd.

Treachery! Seek it out. [Exit Osrice.]

Laer. It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain.

No medicine in the world can do thee good; 320

In thee there is not half an hour's life.

The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,

Unbated and envenom'd. The foul practice

Hath turn'd itself on me. Lo, here I lie,

Never to rise again. Thy mother's poison'd.

I can no more. The King—the King's to blame. 325

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

Wounds the King.

All. Treason! treason!

310. is it] *Q₂*; is't *F*. 312. own] *Q₂*; not in *F*. 314. swoons] sounds

Q₂; *F*, swoons *Q₅*, swoons *F₃*, swoons *Q*. 1676. 315-16.] *As Q₂*; 3 lines

divided drinke. / Oh . . . drinke, / I *F*. 316 S.D.] *Rouve* (cf. 306 S.D. *Q₁*).

317. Ho!] how *Q₂*, hoc *Q₃*; How? *F*. 318 S.D.] *This edn*; at 354 *Jennens*.

319. Hamlet, thou] *F*; thou *Q₂*. 321. hour's] *Q₂*; houre of *F*, *Q₁*.

322. thy] *F*; *Q₁*, *Q₅*; my *Q₂*. 327 S.D.] *Hurts the King / F*; not in *Q₂*.

309. ho!] A call to stop the combat,

as in Chaucer, *Knight's T*, ll. 1706,

2656.

312. a woodcock . . . springs] This

combines two proverbs (Tilley *F* 626,

S 788), so that the man who is caught

in his own snare becomes the foolish

bird who is easily caught.

318 S.D. *Exit Osrice*.] Necessary for

the entry before l. 355, which most

eds. delete. But if an editor is to help

Shakespeare out, he should not re-

move a clearly purposed entry but

contrive an unobtrusive exit. Dover

Wilson has it in the middle of l. 354,

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

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane, 330
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?
Follow my mother.

King dies.

Laer. He is justly serv'd.

It is a poison temper'd by himself.

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.

Mine and my father's death come not upon thee, 335
Nor thine on me.
Dies.

Ham. Heaven make thee free of it. I follow thee.

I am dead, Horatio. Wretched Queen, adieu.

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

340

That are but mutes or audience to this act,

Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, Death,

Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you—

But let it be. Horatio, I am dead,

Thou livest. Report me and my cause aright

To the unsatisfied.

345

Hor. Never believe it.

I am more an antique Roman than a Dane.
Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As th'art a man
Give me the cup. Let go, by Heaven I'll ha't.

O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind me. 351
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. *A march afar off and shot within.*

What warlike noise is this?

Enter OSRIC.

Ost. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland, 356
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

Ham. O, I die, Horatio.

The potent poison quite o'erflows my spirit.
I cannot live to hear the news from England,

But I do prophesy th' election lights 360
On Fortinbras. He has my dying voice.

346. antique anticke *Q2*, Antike *F, Q1*, antique *Q5*. 347-8. As . . . ha't. As *Q2*; *divided* Cup. / Let *F*. 348. ha't] *Q2* (hate); haue't *F*. 349. Good] *Q2*; good *F*; fie *Q1* 350. shall I leave] *Q2*; shall Iue *F*; wouldst thou leaue *Q1*; shall't leaue *conj. Novotny*; shall leaue *conj. Maxwell*. 354 S.D.] *Stevens*; *A march a farre* off. *Q2*; *March a farre* conj. *Maxwell*. 354 S.D.] *Enter Osric*.] *Q2, F*; *not in Capell*; *Osric goes to the door and returns*. *Evans*. 356-7. To . . . volley.] *As Pope*; *one line Q2, F*. 356. the ambassadors] *Pope*; th'ambassadors *Q2, F*.

346. antique Roman] i.e. one who prefers suicide to unworthy life. Cf. *Caes.* v.iii.80; *Ant.* iv.xv.87; *Mac.* v.viii.1.

350. shall I leave] *Q2* is suspect because of the metre and the apparent error of *leau* for *liue* at iv.iv.160. But metrical redundancy would encourage corruption in *F*, and *leau* here has the support of *Q1*. The conjectures *shall't* (= shall it) *leau* and, still more, *shall* (= shall I) *leau* (*MLR*, II, 161-7; *LIV*, 395-6) regularize metre at the expense of syntax.

352. felicity] Cf. the dying words of Juliet in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*

(ii. novel 25), 'death the end of sorrow, and beginning of felicity'. Cf. below, I. 383n.

354. Enter Osric] See I. 318 S.D. n.

358. o'erflows] triumphs over (like a victorious cock).

360. th' election] for the new king of Denmark. Cf. i.ii.1 LN.

361. He has my . . . voice.] As Hamlet had had Claudius's voice, iii.ii.332-3. The importance naturally attaching to a monarch's own view of his successor is reflected here, as in the concern for Elizabeth's deathbed nomination of James.

So tell him, with th'occurrences more and less
Which have solicited—the rest is silence.

Dies.

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest. 365
[*March within.*]

Why does the drum come hither?

*Enter FORTINBRAS, and the English Ambassadors, and Soldiers
with drum and colours.*

Fort. Where is this sight?

Hor. What is it you would see?

If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

Fort. This quarry cries on havoc. O proud Death,

362. th'occurrences] *Q*₂; the occurrences *F.* 363. solicited—[*Jennens*; solicited, *Q*₂; solicited. *F.* silence.] *Q*₂; silence. *O, o, o, F.* 363 S.D.] *F.*; not in *Q*₂.
364. cracks] *Q*₂; cracke *F.* 365 S.D.] *Cambridge*; opp. 366 *Capell.*
366 S.D.] *This edn, after Sisson*; *Enter Fortenbrasse, with the Ambassadors. Q*₂;
Enter Fortinbras and English Ambassador, with Drumme, Colours, and Attendants. F.
Enter Voltenar and the Ambassadors from England. enter Fortenbrasse with his traine.
*Q*₁. 367. you] *Q*₂; ye *F.* 369. This] *Q*₂; His *F.*

362. *occurrences*] = occurrences.
'Common in 16th and 17th c.'
(*OED*).

363. *solicited*—] urged (me to give it
him).

silence] Cf. Psalm cxv.17 ('go down
into silence'), 2 Esdras vii. 32 ('dwell
in silence').

364. *sweet*] Frequent as an epithet
of affection. Cf. iii.ii.53.

365. *fighths of angels . . . rest*] No
specific source can be alleged or
should be sought for so traditional a
conception. But cf. e.g. the antiphon
of the old Latin burial service, 'In
paradisum deducant te angeli . . .
Chorus angelorum te suscipiat . . .
aeternam habebas requiem'; *Everyman*,
ll. 891-3, 'Methinketh that I hear
angels sing . . . where Everyman's soul
received shall be'. See R. M. Frye,
Sh. and Christian Doctrine, pp. 135-6.
Not all who quote this line recognize
that *sing* is optative.

368. *wonder*] calamity, extreme
wretchedness. The alliterative phrase

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck?

1st Ambass. The sight is dismal;

And our affairs from England come too late.

The ears are senseless that should give us hearing

To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,

That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.

Where should we have our thanks?

Hor.

Not from his mouth,

Had it th'ability of life to thank you.

He never gave commandment for their death.

But since, so jump upon this bloody question, 380

You from the Polack wars and you from England

Are here arriv'd, give order that these bodies

High on a stage be placed to the view,

And let me speak to th'yet unknowing world

How these things came about. So shall you hear 385

Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,

Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,

371. shot] *Q*₂; shoote *F.* 382. arriv'd.] *Q*₂; arrived. *F.* 384. th' yet] *F.*;
yet *Q*₂.

scene with which Fortinbras is con-
fronted. To *cry on* is to cry out loud
(sometimes in outrage), as in *Oth.* v.
i.48 ('that cries on murder'), *R3* v.
iii.231 ('cried on victory').

370. *What feast . . . cell*] The meta-
phor is not, as sometimes supposed, of
Valhalla, where souls feast after
death, but of Death feasting on the
slain. Cf. *HF6* iv.v.7, *John* ii.i.354-
toward, in preparation.

372. *dismal*] (much stronger in
meaning than now) dreadful. Cf. ii.
ii.452 and n.

380. *jump upon . . . question*] at the
precise moment of this bloody affair.
For *jump*, see i.i.68; *question*, topic
for discussion, i.e. the 'sight' of
ll. 367, 372.

383. *stage*] platform. Cf. accounts of
Romeo and Juliet: 'The magistrates
ordained that the two dead bodies
should be erected upon a stage to the
casual] (seemingly) due to chance.

view and sight of the whole world'
(Painter); 'the corpses . . . Should be
set forth upon a stage, high raised
from the ground' (Brooke, ll. 2818-
19).

386-8. *Of carnal . . . forc'd cause*] We
need not suppose this a systematic
classification. Examples of each kind
will readily occur to everyone.
Carnal applies to the incestuous
marriage, *unnatural* (cf. i.v.25) to the
fratricide. The consequential deaths
of Polonius, Hamlet, Laertes,
Claudius are all *bloody. Judgments* in
casual slaughters are seen in the deaths
of Polonius (cf. iii.iv.175-6), Laertes
and the Queen; *deaths put on by
cunning* in those of Rosencrantz and
Guildenstern and of Hamlet himself.

387. *accidental judgments*] divine
judgments manifested in seeming
accidents.

Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause,
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on th'inventors' heads. All this can I
Truly deliver.

Fort. Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.

For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune.
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me. 395
Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more.
But let this same be presently perform'd
Even while men's minds are wild, lest more mischance
On plots and errors happen.

Fort. Let four captains 400
Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have prov'd most royal; and for his passage,
The soldier's music and the rite of war
Speak loudly for him. 405

388. *forc'd*] *F*; for no *Q*₂. 390. th'inventors'] *Q*₂; the Inuentsors *F*.
394. rights] *Q*₂, *Q*₁; Rites *F*. 395.] *one line Q*₂; *divided doth* / Inuite *F*.
now] *Q*₂, *Q*₁; are *F*. 396. also] *Q*₂; always *F*. 397.] *one line Q*₂;
divided mouth / Whose *F*. *on*] *Q*₂; no *Q*₂. 399.] *one line Q*₂; *divided*
wilde, / Lest *F*. while] *Q*₂; whiles *F*. 403.] *one line Q*₂; *divided* royally: /
And *F*. royal] *Q*₂, *Q*₁; royally *F*. 404. rite] *Wilson*; right *Q*₂; rites *F*.

388. *put on*] instigated.
forc'd] contrived. Cf. *Oth.* I.iii. 111,
'indirect and forced courses'.
389-90. *purposes mistook* . . . *heads*]
above.

Cf. above, ll. 312-13, 323-4, 332-3.
While here specifically applied (*in*
this upshot) to the final stratagems of
Claudius and Laertes, this is of course
a dominant motif of the play, par-
ticularly manifest elsewhere in the
fates of Rosencrantz and Guilden-
stern (cf. III.iv. 208-9) and generally
in the whole story of murder and re-
venge. Cf. II.ii. 206-7.

394. *of memory*] unforgotten.
395. *vantage*] favourable oppor-
tunity.
397. *whose voice*] See I. 361 above.
364.)

Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

Exeunt marching, [bearing off the bodies,] after
which a peal of ordnance is shot off.

406. bodies] *Q*₂; body *F*, *Q*₁. 408 S.D. *Exeunt marching*] *F*; *Exeunt Q*₂.
bearing off the bodies] *Capell*. *after* . . . *off*] *F* (*subst.*); *not in Q*₂.

408 S.D.] Writing to Ellen Terry and Hamlet carried off on the shields,
about Robertson's *Hamlet* on 8 Sept. with the "ordnance shot off within"
1897, Shaw said, 'I gave Forbes a de- just as the wily William planned
scription of what the end ought to be it . . .'
like. Fortinbras with a winged helmet