Elsinore

BASED ON HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
ADAPTED BY ROBERT LEPAGE
PRODUCED BY EX MACHINA

Summer 2002

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Production History
Elsinore, created and performed by Robert Lepage in English and French versions, previewed in French at the Monument Nationale, Montreal, in November 1995, co-produced with Ex Machina, the National Arts Centre, Centre Culturel de l'université de Sherbrooke, Corporation du Centre Culturel de Drummondville, Robert Lepage Inc., Philippe Sikdevuka, Marie-Soleil St-Michel, Les Productions d'Albert Inc., Production Specta, Le Menage-Scène Nationale de Mauguege, La Maison des Arts de Créteil, Hebbel Theater Berlin, KunstenFESTIVAL des arts Bruxelles, Helsinki Festival, Göteborg Dans & Theater Festival, National Teatret Oslo, Aarhus Festuge, Kampnagel Theatre Hamburg, Rotterdam Schouwburg, Festival International des Francophones en Limousin/Théâtre de l'Union-Centre dramatique de Limoges and Change Performing Arts Milano. It previewed in English at the Atheneum Theatre in Chicago, 15–17 February 1996 and premiered in English at the DuMaurier World Stage Festival, Toronto, 20 April 1996, written and directed by Robert Lepage, with set by Carl Fillion, costumes by Yvan Gaudin, lighting by Alain Lortie and Nancy Mongrain, music by Robert Caux, fights by Jean François Gagnon and multimedia by Jacques Collin, with Pierre Bernier as Hamlet's double and with Michael Mackenzie as consultant on the English adaptation. The revised version published here premiered in Ottawa, 9 September 1997, and was performed by Peter Darling, with set design by Robert Fillion, costume design by Yvan Gaudin, lighting design by Alain Lortie and Nancy Mongrain, original music and keyboards by Robert Caux, multimedia by Jacques Collin and props by Manon Desmarais.
Playwright’s Note:
All roles are performed by the same actor (plus a body double) on a flexible hydraulic set, using projections, video and multimedia. The text used is published here without detailed stage directions indicating place or time, since the production’s extensive use of transformation through movement, mechanics or costume made the scenes and characters flow into one another without breaks in the action. Indeed, the indications of “scene” used below are included for convenience, but tend to mask the fact that the transformations themselves constituted in many cases the show’s most interesting and significant action.

PART ONE

SCENE ONE

HAMLET: To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether ’tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die— to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. ’Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die— to sleep.
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. There’s the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law’s delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would these fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns—puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.

GHOST: (off) I am thy father’s spirit;
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away.
’Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me; but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father’s life
Now wears his crown.
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of my eyes did pour
The leperous distilment, whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
Thus was I sleeping, by a brother’s hand
Of life of crown of queen at once dispatched.
If thou has nature in thee bear it not
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch of luxury and damned incest.

SCENE TWO

KING: Moreover that we much did long to see you,
The need we have to use you did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet’s transformation. So I call it,
Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was. What it should be,
More than his father’s death, that thus hath put him
So much from the understanding of himself,
I cannot dream of. I entreat you both
That, being of so young days brought up with him,
And since so neighboured to his youth and ‘haviour,
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time; so by your companies
• draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
So much as from occasion you may glean,
Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus
That, opened, lies within our remedy.

QUEEN: Good gentlemen, he hath much talked of you,
And sure I am two men there are not living
• whom he more adheres. If it will please you
• show us so much gentry and good will
As to expend your time with us awhile
For the supply and profit of our hope,
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king’s remembrance.

KING: Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

QUEEN: Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz.
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son. Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Production credits projected on set, as they would be in a film.
SCENE THREE

HAMLET: I have heard
That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaimed their malefactions;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks,
I'll tent him to the quick; if he but blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be a devil; and the devil hath power
T'assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds
More relative than this. The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.

HAMLET: Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, my excellent good
friends, how art thou?

Denmark's a goodly prison in which there are many
confines, wards, and dungeons. What have you deserved
in the hand of fortune that she send you to prison thither?
Were you sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free vis-
itation? Come, come! Nay speak. Anything, but to the pur-
pose. What make you at Elsinore? There is a kind of con-
fession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft
enough to colour. You were sent for. The good King and
Queen have sent for you. Be even and direct with me,
whether you were sent for or no. My friends you were sent
for. I will tell you why, so shall my anticipation prevent
your discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen

moult no feather.

I have of late – but wherefore I know not – lost all my
mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed, it goes
so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the
earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most ex-
cellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging fir-
mament, this mastell roof fretted with golden fire –
why, it appeareth no other thing to me than a soul and
pestilent congregation of vapours. 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? Man delights not me
– no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you
seem to say so. Why did you laugh, when I said “Man
delights not me”?

You are welcome. But my uncle – father and my aunt
– mother are deceived. I am but mad north-north-west.
When the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a hand-
saw.

SCENE FOUR

POLONIUS: My liege, and madam, to expostulate
What majesty should be, what duty is,
Why day is day, night night, and time time,
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
Therefore, 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?
But let that go. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he is mad, 'tis true; 'tis pity; and pity 'tis 'tis true.
A foolish figure! Mad let us grant him then.
And now remains tThat we find out the cause of this
effect –
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
For this effect defective comes by cause.
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
Perpend:
I have a daughter (have while she is mine),
Who in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this. Now gather, and surmise.

To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia

– That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; “beautified” is a vile
phrase.

Doubt thou the stars are fire;
Doubt that the sun doth move;
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt I love.
O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers;
I have not art to reckon my groans; but that I love thee best,
O most best, believe it. Adieu.
Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him,
Hamlet.

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me;
And more above, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,
All given to mine ear. But what might you think,
When I had seen this hot love on the wing
(As I perceived it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me), what might you,
Or my dear Majesty your queen here, think,
If I had played the desk or table book,
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,
Or looked upon this love with idle sight?
What might you think? No, I went round to work
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:
"Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star.
This must not be." And then I precepts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens,
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice,
And he, repulsed, a short tale to make,
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,
Into the madness wherein now he raves,
And all we mourn for.
Hath there been such a time—I would fain know that—
That I have positively said "'Tis so,
When it proved otherwise?
Take this from this, if it be otherwise.
If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

SCENE FIVE

POLONIUS: How does my good lord, Hamlet?

HAMLET: (off) Well, God-a-mercy.

POLONIUS: Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET: (off) Excellent, well, you are a fishmonger.

POLONIUS: Not I, my lord.

HAMLET: (off) Then I would you were so honest a man.
Have you a daughter?

POLONIUS: I have, my lord.

HAMLET: (off) Conception is a blessing, but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to't.

POLONIUS: How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter. Yet he knew me not at first. He said I was a fishmonger. He is far gone, far gone! And truly in my youth I suff’red much extremity for love—very near this. I’ll speak to him again. — What do you read, my lord?

HAMLET: (off) Words, words, words.

POLONIUS: What is the substance, my lord?

HAMLET: Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here

that old men have grey beards; that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams. All which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for you yourself, sir, should be old as I am if, like a crab, you could go backward.

POLONIUS: Though this be madness yet there is method in't. — How pregnant sometimes his replies are! A happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of.

SCENE SIX

HAMLET:

(sings)
How should I your true love know
From another one
By his cockle hat and staff
And his sandal shoon

Is it not monstrous that this 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 warned,
Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing! No, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damned defeat was made.

(sings)
He is dead and gone lady
He is dead and gone
At his head a grass green turf
At his feet a stone.
While his shroud as the mountain snow
Larded with sweet flowers
Which bewept to the grave did go
With his true love showers.

Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this, ha?
'Swounds, I should take it! for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall
To make oppression bitter,
Or ere this I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
O, vengeance!

SCENE SEVEN

Ophelia in her closet, silently applies perfume, prepares.
SCENE EIGHT

OPHELIA: My lord as I was sewing in my closet, Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced, No hat upon his head, his stockings, fouled, Ungart’red, and downgyved to his ankle; Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other, And with a look so piteous in purpoint As if he had been loosed out of hell To speak of horrors – he comes before me ...

HAMLET: Ha, ha! Are you honest? Are you fair? If you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty. Get thee to a nunnery! Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. What should such fellows as I do, crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery.

OPHELIA: He took me by the wrist and held me hard; Then goes he to the length of all his arm, And with his other hand thus o’er his brow, He falls to such perusal of my face As he would draw it.

HAMLET: I have heard of your paintings too, well enough. God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another. You jig, you amble, you lisp; you nickname God’s creatures and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I’ll no more on’t! it hath made me mad ...

OPHELIA: He raised a sight so piteous and profound As it did seem to shatter all his bulk, And end his being. That done, he lets me go, And with his head over his shoulder turned He seemed to find his way without his eyes, For out o’doors he went without their help And to the last bended their light on me. O what a noble mind is here o’erthrown! That no revenue hast but thy good spirits To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flattered? No, Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice And could of men distinguish, her election Hath sealed thee for herself. For thou hast been As one, in suff’ring all, that suffers nothing; A man that Fortune’s buffets and rewards Hast ta’en with equal thanks; and blest are those Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled That they are not a pipe for Fortune’s finger To sound what stop she please. 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. Something too much of this! There is a play tonight before the King, One scene of it comes near the circumstance, Which I have told thee, of my father’s death. I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot, Even with the very comment of thy soul Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt Do not itself unkennel in one speech, It is a damned ghost that we have seen, And my imaginations are as foul As Vulcan’s smithy. Give him heedful note; For I mine eyes will rivet to his face, And after we will both our judgments join In censure of his seeming.

SCENE NINE

HAMLET: Horatio, thou art e’en as just a man As e’er my conversation coped withal. Nay, do not think I flatter; For what advancement may I hope from thee,
modesty of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as ’twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardily off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. Go make you ready.

SCENE ELEVEN

HAMLET: My lord, you played once i' the university, you say?

POLONIUS: That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.

HAMLET: What did you enact?

POLONIUS: I did enact Julius Caesar; I was killed i the Capitol; Brutus killed me.

HAMLET: It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. Be the players ready?

QUEEN: Come hither my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAMLET: No, good mother, here's metal more attractive. Lady, shall I lie in your lap? I mean, my head upon your lap? Do you think I meant country matters?

OPHELIA: I think nothing, my lord.

HAMLET: That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

OPHELIA: You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET: O God, your only jig-maker! What should a man do but be merry? For look you how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within two hours.

KING: Have you heard the argument? Is there no offense in't?

HAMLET: No, no! They do but jest, poison in jest; no offense i' the world.

KING: What do you call the play?

HAMLET: "The Mousetrap."

The play starts

THE ACTOR:
The King ... . . . The Queen.

KING: Faith, I must leave thee, love, and thy shortly too; My operant powers their functions leave to do: And thou shalt live in this fair world behind, Honoured below'd; and happily one as a kind For husband shalt thou ...

QUEEN: O, confound the rest! Such love must needs be treason in my brest: In second husband but who killed the first. A second time I kill my husband dead When second husband kisses me in bed. Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife, If, once a window, I ever be a wife!

KING: 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile; My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile The tedious day with sleep.

QUEEN: Sleep rock thy brain; And never come miscanchese between us twain!

THE ACTOR: Exit the Queen. Enter the King's brother.

LUCIANUS: Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing; Confederate season, else no creature seeing; Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected, With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected, Thy natural magic and dire property On wholesome life usurp immediately.

KING: Give me some light! Away!

OPHELIA: The King rises.

QUEEN: How fares my lord?

POLONIUS: Give o'er the play.

HAMLET: What, frightened with false fire?

SCENE TWELVE

HAMLET: ’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. Soft! now to my mother! O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom. Let me be cruel, not unnatural; I will speak daggers to her, but use none. My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites: How in my words somever she be shent, To give them seals never, my soul consent!

SCENE THIRTEEN

HAMLET: Mother, mother, mother!

POLONIUS: He will come straight. Look you lay home to him.
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
And your grace has screened and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll silence me even here.
Pray you be round with him.

QUEEN: Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET: Mother, you have my father much offended.

QUEEN: Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET: Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

QUEEN: Have you forgot me?

HAMLET: No, by the rood, not so!
You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife,
And -would it were not so-you are my mother.

QUEEN: Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

HAMLET: Come, come, and sit you down, you shall not
budge!
You go not till I set you a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.

QUEEN: What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!

POLONIUS: What, ho! help, help, help!

HAMLET: How now? a rat?
Is it the king? (Kills him)
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune.
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.
Leave wringing of your hands. Peace! sit you down
And let me wring your heart; for so I shall
If it be made of penetrable stuff;
If damned custom have not brazed it so
That it is proof and bulwark against sense.

QUEEN: What have I done that thou dar'st wag thy
tongue
In noise so rude against me?

HAMLET: Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;
Calls virtue hypocrite; takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows
As false as dicers' oaths. O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul, and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words! Heaven's face doth glow;
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.
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;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill:
A combination and a form indeed
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man.
This was your husband. Look you now what follows.
Here is your husband, like a mildewed ear
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love; for at your age
The heyday in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
Would step from this to this? Sense sure you have,
Else could you not have motion; but sure that sense
Is apoplexed; for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstasy was 'er so thrill'd
But it reserved some quantity of choice
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
That thus hath cozened you at hood-man-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope. O shame! where is thy blush?
Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an ensaimed bed,
Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty!

QUEEN: O, speak to me no more!
These words like daggers enter in mine ears.
No more, sweet Hamlet!

HAMLET: A murderer and a villain!
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings;
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole
And put it in his pocket! A king of shreds and patches!

GHOST: (off): Do not forget
This visitation Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But look, amazement on thy mother sits.
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.
Speak to her, Hamlet.

HAMLET: How is it with you, lady?

QUEEN: Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with the incorporeal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hairs, like life in excrement,
Start up and stand on end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience! Whereon do you look?
HAMLET: On him, on him!
Look you how pale he glares! Look how it steals away!
My father, in this habit as he lived!

QUEEN: This is the very coinage of your brain.
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.

HAMLET: Ecstasy? My pulse as yours doth temperately
keep time
And makes as healthful music. It is not madness
That I have utt’red. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass but my madness speaks.
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,
Infests unseen. Good night – but go not to my uncle's
bed.
Assume a virtue, if you have it not. Refrain tonight,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence; the next more easy;
With wonderous potency. Once more, good night;
And when you are desirous to be blest,
I'll blessing beg of you, for this same lord, I do repent;
But heaven hath pleased it so,
To punish me with this, and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him. So again, good night.

HAMLET: For England?

KING: Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET: Good.

KING: So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

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

KING: 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!

End of Act 1.
House curtain comes in; projections of Hamlet's and Laertes's travel.

PART TWO

SCENE ONE

THE QUEEN: (sings)
How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff
And his sandal shoon.

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

White his shroud as the mountain snow -
Larded with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did not go
With true-love showers.

There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.
There with fantastic garlands did she come
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 pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clamb'ring 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, awhile they bore her up;
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element...

(she sings)
And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
No. no. he is dead;
Go to thy death bed,
He will never come again.

His beard was 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!

But long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

(She sings)

SUMMER 2002

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 don't his clothes and dupped the chamber door
Let in the maid that out a maid never departed more.

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 a done by younder sun
and thou hadst not come to my bed.

SCENE TWO

HAMLET: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England.
Of them I have much to tell thee.
Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarfed about me, in the dark
Crope'd I to find out them; had my desire,
Fingered 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
(O 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.
Being thus benetted round with villainies,
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play. I sat me down;
Devised a new commission; wrote it fair.
I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair, and labored much
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service.
I wrote an earnest conjuration from the King,
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 assis of great charge,
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement furthermore or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving time allowed. And this was sealed!
Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.
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 the other,
Subscribed it, gave't the impression, placed it safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day

Was our sea-fight; 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. So I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy; repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death.

Farewell.
He that thou knowest thine,
Hamlet.

SCENE THREE

KING: Now Laertes, must your conscience my acquittance 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 pursu'd my life.

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

KING: O! for two special reasons; 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,
That, as the star moves not but in its sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a public count I might not go,
Is the great love the general tender 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 timber'd for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

If he be now return'd,
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 device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall;
Will you be ruled by me?

LAERTES: The rather, if you could devise it so
That I might be the organ.

KING: What would you undertake
To show yourself your father's son in deed
More than in words?

LAERTES: To cut his throat i the church.

KING: No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes, Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home;

We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
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.

LAERTES: I will do';
And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction from a mountebank,
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
That is but scratch'd withal;

KING: When in your motion you are hot and dry –
As make your bouts more violent to that end –
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepar'd him
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there.

SCENE FOUR

HAMLET: Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio. A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times. And now how abhorred in my imagination it is!

My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips That I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? Your songs? your flashes of merriment That were wont to send the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your grinning? Quite chapfall'n?

I lov'd Ophelia: forty thousand brothers Could not, with all their quantity of love, Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her? Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear thyself? Woo't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile? I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine,
To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I.
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. Let be.

SCENE FIVE

HAMLET: Give me your pardon sir. I have done you wrong; But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.

This presence know, and you must needs have heard, How I am punished with sore distraction. What I have done that might your nature, honour, and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Wasn’t Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet.
If Hamlet from himself is ta’en away,
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 wronged;
His madness is poor Hamlet’s enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts
That I have shot my arrow o’er the house
And hurt my brother.

LAERTES: I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive in this case should stir me most
To my revenge. But in my terms of honour
I will stand aloof, and will no reconcilement
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.

KING: If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance 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.
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heaven, the heavens to the earth,
“Now drinks the king to Hamlet!” Come, begin;
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

LAERTES: This is too heavy; let me see another. (they fight)

HAMLET: (off) One.

LAERTES: (off) No.

HAMLET: (off) Judgement.

OSRIC: (off): A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAERTES: (off): Well; again.

KING: Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;
Give him the cup.

HAMLET: (off) I’ll play this bout first; set it by a while.
Come. (they fight)

HAMLET: (off) Another hit; what say you?

LAERTES: (off) A touch, a touch, I do confess.

QUEEN: Our son shall win. He’s fat and scant of breath.
Here ... The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

KING: (off) Gertrude, do not drink.

QUEEN: I will my lord; I pray you, pardon me.
Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows.
No, no, the drink, the drink, – O my dear Hamlet!
The drink, the drink; I am poison’d.

HAMLET: I am dead, Horatio ... Wretched queen, adieu!
O good Horatio, what a wounded name
Shall live behind me?
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. O, I die Horatio!
The potent poison quite o’ercrows my spirit.
The rest is silence.

THE END