

HAMLET Act 1, Scene 2

	Original Text	Modern Text
	<p>CLAUDIUS But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son—</p>	<p>CLAUDIUS And now, Hamlet, my nephew and my son—</p>
65	<p>HAMLET A little more than kin and less than kind.</p>	<p>HAMLET Ah, more than a son now, but I am not fond of you as a son would</p>
	<p>CLAUDIUS How is it that the clouds still hang on you?</p>	<p>CLAUDIUS Why are you still so gloomy, with a cloud hanging over you?</p>
	<p>HAMLET Not so, my lord. I am too much in the sun.</p>	<p>HAMLET It's not true, sir. I show even too well what a son I am (what my real feelings to you are).</p>
70	<p>GERTRUDE Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off, And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark. Do not forever with thy veiled lids Seek for thy noble father in the dust. Thou know'st 'tis common. All that lives must die, Passing through nature to eternity.</p>	<p>GERTRUDE My dear Hamlet, stop wearing these black clothes, and be friendly to the king. You can't spend your whole life with your eyes to the ground remembering your noble father. It happens all the time, what lives must die eventually, passing to eternity.</p>
	<p>HAMLET Ay, madam, it is common.</p>	<p>HAMLET Yes, mother, if you say so...</p>
75	<p>GERTRUDE If it be, Why seems it so particular with thee?</p>	<p>GERTRUDE So why does it seem so particular to you?</p>

<p>HAMLET "Seems," madam? Nay, it is. I know not "seems." 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother, Nor customary suits of solemn black, Nor windy suspiration of forced breath, No, nor the fruitful river in the eye, Nor the dejected behavior of the visage, Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief, That can denote me truly. These indeed "seem," For they are actions that a man might play. But I have that within which passeth show, These but the trappings and the suits of woe.</p>	<p>HAMLET "Seem," mother? No, it <i>is</i> something is upsetting me more and more. I don't know what you mean by "seem." Neither my black clothes, my dear mother, nor my heavy sighs, nor my weeping, nor my downcast eyes, nor any other display of grief can show what I really feel. It's true that all these things "seem" like grief, since a person could use them to fake grief if he wanted to. But I've got more real grief inside me that you could ever see on the surface. These clothes are just a hint of it.</p>
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<p>CLAUDIUS 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet, To give these mourning duties to your father. But you must know your father lost a father, That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound In filial obligation for some term To do obsequious sorrow. But to persevere In obstinate condolment is a course Of impious stubbornness. 'Tis unmanly grief.</p>	<p>CLAUDIUS Hamlet, you are so sweet and such a good son to mourn your father like this. But you have to remember, that your father lost his father, who lost his father before him, and every time, each son has had to mourn his father for a certain period. But overdoing it is just stubborn. It's not manly.</p>
<p>For your intent In going back to school in Wittenberg, It is most retrograde to our desire.</p>	<p>And your plans for going back to Wittenberg are not what I want. I'm asking you now to stay here in my company as the number-one member of my court, my nephew and now my son too.</p>

And we beseech you, bend you to remain Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye, Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.		
	GERTRUDE	GERTRUDE
	Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet. I pray thee, stay with us. Go not to Wittenberg.	Please answer my prayers, Hamlet, and stay with us. Don't go back to Wittenberg.
HAMLET		HAMLET
I shall in all my best obey you, madam.		I'll obey you as well as I can

Exeunt all but Hamlet – **First soliloquy**

HAMLET	HAMLET
<p>Oh, that this too, too sullied flesh would melt, Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew, Or that the Everlasting had not fixed His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God, God! How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable Seem to me all the uses of this world! Fie on 't, ah fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden That grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature Possess it merely. That it should come to this. But two months dead—nay, not so much, not two. So excellent a king, that was to this Hyperion to a satyr. So loving to my mother That he might not betem the winds of heaven Visit her face too roughly.—Heaven and earth, Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him and yet, within a month— Let me not think on 't. Frailty, thy name is woman!—</p>	<p>Ah, I wish my dirty flesh could melt away into a vapor, or that God had not made a law against suicide. Oh God, God! How tired, stale, and pointless life is to me. Damn it! It's like a garden that no one's taking care of, and that's growing wild. Only nasty weeds grow in it now. I can't believe it's come to this. My father's only been dead for two months—no, not even two. Such an excellent king, as superior to my uncle as a god is to a beast, and so loving toward my mother that he kept the wind from blowing too hard on her face.</p> <p>Oh God, do I have to remember that? She would hang on to him, she couldn't have enough of him. Yet even so, within a month of my father's death—I don't even want to think about it. Oh women! You are so weak!</p>

Act 1, Scene 5

Original Text	Modern Text
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	GHOST	GHOST
	Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast, With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts —	Yes, that incestuous, adulterous animal. With his clever words and fancy gifts, he seduced my seemingly virtuous queen, persuading
45	O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.	her to give in to his lust. They were evil words and gifts to seduce her like that! Oh, Hamlet, how far she fell! She went from me, who loved her with the dignity and devotion
50	O Hamlet, what a falling off was there! From me, whose love was of that dignity That it went hand in hand even with the vow I made to her in marriage, and to decline Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor To those of mine.	that suits a legitimate marriage, to a wretch whose natural gifts were poor compared to mine. But just as you can't corrupt a truly virtuous person no matter how you try, the opposite is also true: a lustful person like her can satisfy herself in a heavenly union and then move on to garbage. But hang on, I think I smell the morning air. So let me be brief here. Your uncle snuck up to me while I was sleeping in the orchard, as I always used to do in the afternoon, and poured a vial of henbane poison into my ear—that poison that moves like quicksilver through the veins and curdles the blood, which is just what it did to me. I broke out in a scaly rash that covered my smooth body with a revolting crust. And that's how my brother robbed me of my life, my crown, and my queen all at once. He cut me off in the middle of a sinful life.
55	But virtue, as it never will be moved, Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven, So lust, though to a radiant angel linked, Will sate itself in a celestial bed And prey on garbage.	
60	But soft! Methinks I scent the morning air. Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard, My custom always of the afternoon, Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial, And in the porches of my ears 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 And with a sudden vigor doth posset And curd, like eager droppings into milk, The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine.	
65	And a most instant tetter barked about, Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust All my smooth body.	
70	Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched, Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,	
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	Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled. No reckoning made, but sent to my account With all my imperfections on my head. Oh, horrible, oh, horrible, most horrible! If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not. Let not the royal bed of Denmark be A couch for luxury and damnèd incest. But howsoever thou pursuest this act, Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once. The glowworm shows the matin to be near, And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire.	I had no chance to repent my sins or receive last rites. Oh, it's horrible, horrible, so horrible! If you are human, don't stand for it. Don't let the Danish king's bed be a nest of incest. But however you go about your revenge, don't corrupt your mind or do any harm to your mother. Leave her to God and her own guilt. Now, good-bye. The glowworm's light is beginning to fade, so morning is near. Good-bye, good-bye, good-bye. Remember me.
		<i>Exit</i>

Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me.

Act 3, Scene 4

	<i>POLONIUS hides behind the arras.</i>
<i>Enter HAMLET</i>	<i>HAMLET enters.</i>
HAMLET Now mother, what's the matter?	HAMLET Now mother, what's this all about?
GERTRUDE Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.	GERTRUDE Hamlet, you've insulted your father.
HAMLET Mother, you have my father much offended.	
GERTRUDE Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.	GERTRUDE Come on, you're answering me foolishly.
HAMLET Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue	HAMLET Go on, you're questioning me evilly.
GERTRUDE Why, how now, Hamlet?	GERTRUDE Hamlet, what, why?
HAMLET What's the matter now?	HAMLET What's the problem now?
GERTRUDE Have you forgot me?	GERTRUDE Have you forgotten who I am?

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. Come, come, and sit you down. You shall not budge. You go not till I set you up a glass Where you may see the inmost part of you.	HAMLET For God's sake no, I haven't. You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife, and you are my mother, though I wish you weren't.
GERTRUDE What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me? Help, help, ho!	GERTRUDE What are you going to do? You won't kill me, will you? Help!
POLONIUS <i>(from behind the arras)</i> What, ho? Help, help, help!	POLONIUS <i>(from behind the tapestry)</i> Hey! Help, help, help!

HAMLET	HAMLET
How now, a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead!	What's this, a rat? I'll bet a buck he's a dead rat now.
<i>(stabs his sword through the arras and kills POLONIUS)</i>	
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. <i>(to GERTRUDE)</i> 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 damnèd custom have not brassèd it so That it is proof and bulwark against sense.....	You low-life, nosy, busybody fool, goodbye. I thought you were somebody more important. You've gotten what you deserve. I guess you found out it's dangerous to be a busybody. <i>(to GERTRUDE)</i> Stop wringing your hands. Sit down and let me wring your heart instead, which I will do if it's still soft enough, if your evil lifestyle has not toughened it against feeling anything at all.
GERTRUDE	GERTRUDE
O Hamlet, speak no more! Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul, And there I see such black and grainèd spots As will not leave their tinct.	Oh, Hamlet, stop! You're making me look into my very soul, where the marks of sin are so thick and black they will never be washed away.
HAMLET	HAMLET
Nay, but to live In the rank sweat of an enseamèd bed, Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love Over the nasty sty—	Yes, and you lie in the sweaty stench of your dirty sheets, wet with corruption, making love—
GERTRUDE	GERTRUDE
O, speak to me no more! These words like daggers enter in my ears. No more, sweet Hamlet.	Oh, you must stop! Your words are like daggers. Please, no more, sweet Hamlet.
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 murderer and a villain, a low-life who's not worth a twentieth of a tenth of your first husband—the worst of kings, a thief of the throne, who took the precious crown from a shelf and put it in his pocket
<i>Enter GHOST</i>	
Save me and hover o'er me with your wings, You heavenly guards!—What would your gracious figure?	Oh, angels in heaven, protect me with your wings!—What can I do for you, my gracious lord?
GERTRUDE	GERTRUDE
Alas, he's mad!	Oh no! Hamlet's gone completely crazy.
HAMLET	HAMLET
Do you not come your tardy son to chide, That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by The important acting of your dread command? O, say!	Have you come to scold your tardy son for straying from his mission, letting your important command slip by? Tell me!
GHOST	GHOST
Do not forget. This visitation Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose. But look, amazement on thy mother sits.	Don't forget. I've come to sharpen your somewhat dull appetite for revenge. But look, your mother is in shock. Oh, keep her struggling soul from being overwhelmed by

O, step between her and her fighting soul.
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.
Speak to her, Hamlet.

horrid visions. The imagination works
strongest in those with the weakest bodies.
Talk to her, Hamlet.