

Hor. 'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds. 15
Queen. Let her come in. [Exit Gentleman.]
[Aside] To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss.
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt. 20

Enter OPHELIA.

Oph. Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark?
Queen. How now, Ophelia?
Oph. (sings) *How should I your true love know
From another one?*

14. Hor.] Q₂; Qu. F.; not in Hamner. 14-16.] As Q₂; lines ending with, /
conjectures / come in. F. 16. Queen.] Hamner; before 17 Q₂; before 14 F.
16 S.D.] Hamner; Exit Hor. / Johnson. 17. Aside.] As Capell. 20 S.D.] Q₂
(after 16); Enter Ophelia distracted. F.; Enter Ophelia playing on a lute, and her
hair done singing. Q₁; Enter Horatio, with Ophelia, distracted. Johnson; Re-enter
Gentleman, with Ophelia. Cambridge. 23. sings] Q₂; not in F (which prints all
the songs in *italic*). 23-6, 29-32.] As Capell, Q₁ (subst.); 4 lines as 2, Q₂ F.

mischievously (*unhappily*), though
nothing certainly, supposed.
15. *ill-breeding*] prone to breed evil,
mischief-making.

16. Queen. *Let her come in.*] Only the
Queen can give this order: I infer
that some misunderstanding of the
copy led Q₂ to put the speech-
heading a line too late. Similar mis-
lining of the speech-heading occurs at
l. 152 below, *ii.iv.52*. See *MLR*,
LIV, 391-3.

17. *my sick soul*] Hamlet's reproaches
of *iii.iv* have a lasting effect.
17-20.] In Q₂ each of these lines
has prefixed to it the quotation-mark
which indicates a sententious saying.
Cf. *i.iii.36, 38-9*.

18. *toy*] trifle. Cf. *i.iii.6* and *LN*.
amiss] misfortune.
19. *jealousy*] apprehension of evil, as
at *ii.1.113*.

By his cockle hat and staff
And his sandal shoon.
Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?
Oph. Say you? Nay, pray you mark.
(sings) *He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone,
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.*

O ho!

Queen. Nay, but Ophelia—
Oph. Pray you mark.
[sings] *White his shroud as the mountain snow—*

Enter KING.

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.
Oph. (sings) *Larded with sweet flowers
Which bewept to the grave did not go
With true-love showers.*

29, 38, 48, 164, 187 sings] Song (at right of text) Q₂; not in F. 33. O ho] Q₂;
not in F; O, o Capell. 35-6.] As F; one line Q₂. 36 S.D. Enter King.]
Q₂; before 34 F. 38. Larded] F, Q₁; Larded all Q₂. 39. *grass*] F, Q₂;
ground Q₂. *did not*] Q₂, F, Q₁; *did* Pope.

25-6. *his cockle hat . . . shoon*] The
insignia of a pilgrim. A favourite
convention pictured the lover as
going on pilgrimage to the shrine of
his saint (as in *Mer.F.* *i.i.120, ii.*
viii.39-40. Cf. *Rom.* *i.v.91-104*). A
lyric in Greene's *Newer Too Late*
(Greene, *viii.14*) describes a pilgrim
lover as having 'A hat of straw . . .
With a scallop-shell before; Sandals
on his feet he wore'.

25. *cockle hat*] A cockle-shell (or
more strictly, a scallop-shell) was
worn on the hat to denote, originally,
one who had been at the shrine of St
James at Compostela. The practice
appears to have derived from the use
of the scallop-shell in baptism and
hence as a symbol of repentance and
regeneration.

26. *shoon*] The ballad retains the
archaic plural.

31-2. *At his head . . . a stone.*] Tra-

ditional burial-customs referred to in
ballad and folklore. Cf. Child, *Eng.*
and *Scot. Pop. Ballads*, 1882-98, *ii.145*,
'A green turf upon his breast To hold
that good lord down'; Keats, *Isabella*,
st.38, 'a large flint-stone weighs upon
my feet'. An allusion to the custom
whereby obscurer graves had the
gravestone at the feet seems unlikely.
33. *O ho!*] A deep sigh (Parrott-
Craig).

38. *Larded*] strewn, bedecked. The
culinary verb for inserting strips of
fat extended its range till it came to
mean 'enrich' or 'garnish' in a general
sense and so 'interperse or sprinkle
with ornaments'. Cf. *v.ii.20*, and for
the practice of strewing flowers on the
dead *v.i.236-9*.

39. *not*] This of course violates both
the metre and the expected sense, and
has been thought an error. But (with
all three texts agreeing) we must

King. How do you, pretty lady?

Oph. Well, good dild you. They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table.

King. Conceit upon her father.

Oph. Pray let's have no words of this, but when they ask you what it means, say you this.

(sings)
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 donn'd his clo'es,

And dupp'd the chamber door,

Let in the maid that out a maid

Never departed more.

King. Pretty Ophelia—

41. you] Q₂; ye F. 42. good dild] Q₂; God dill'd F; God yeild Q₁.
46. Pray] Q₂; Pray you F. 48-51.] As Q₂; Q₁; 2 lines F. 52-5.] As Johnson, Q₁ subst.; 2 lines Q₂; F. 52. clo'es] Wilson; close Q₂; clothes F; Q₁.

rather suppose it a deliberate interpolation by the singer, who recalls and so emphasizes that the pattern celebrated in the song is contradicted by the instance in her mind. The song thus reflects the actual shortcomings of her father's burial (ll. 84, 210-12) but still more, since it concerns a 'true love', her fantasies of Hamlet's death. Cf. ll. 23-40 LN.

42. good dild you] A corruption of God yeild (i.e. requite) you, which Q₁ reads. (OED yield v. 7; God 8). Q₂, with the good of colloquial speech (cf. 'good-bye'), probably gives the authentic reading, which F and Q₁ sophisticate.

42-3. the owl was a baker's daughter] The relevance of this legend to the context is obscure, but it possibly alludes to the loss of virginity. LN.

43-4. we know what . . . may be] An ironic echo of 1 John iii. 2, 'Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not

yet appear what we shall be'.

44. God be at your table.] A sentiment contrasting with that of the baker's daughter (who grudged Christ bread)?

45. Conceit] fancy.

upon her father] The King, not alone, apparently takes her to allude to the lack of burial rites and is blind to Ophelia's frustrated love for Hamlet. Cf. l. 23 LN.

48-66.] LN.

51. Valentine] sweetheart according to the ancient custom which recognizes as such the first person of the opposite sex seen on St Valentine's day.

53. dupp'd] opened. Dup = do up (cf. don, doff).

56. Pretty Ophelia -] Comparison with ll. 34. 41 suggests that this, though almost always rendered as an exclamation, is addressed to Ophelia, in a vain attempt to divert the flow.

Oph. Indeed, without an oath, I'll make an end on't.

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 promis'd me to wed.'

He answers,

'So would I a done, by yonder sun,

And thou hadst not come to my bed.'

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope all will be well. We must be patient. But I

cannot choose but weep to think they would lay

him i'th' cold ground. My brother shall know of it. 70

And so I thank you for your good counsel. Come,

my coach. Good night, ladies, good night. Sweet

ladies, good night, good night. Sweet

King. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you.

[Exit Horatio.]

O, this is the poison of deep grief: it springs

All from her father's death. And now behold— 75

57. Indeed.] Q₂; Indeed la? F. 62-3.] As F; Q₁; one line Q₂. 64. He answers] Q₂ (in brackets); not in F; Q₁. 65. a] Q₂; Q₁; ha F. 67. thus] Q₂; this F. 69. would] Q₂; should F. 72-3. (4 times) Good (or good night) F (as one word); God (or god) might Q₂. 73 S.D.] F; not in Q₂.

74 S.D.] Theobald; Horatio and the gentleman follow her / Wilson. 75-7.] As Stevens'; prose Q₂; 2 lines divided springs / All F. 76. And now behold] Q₂; not in F.

58. Gis] A corruption of Jesus, common in adjectives, pronounced and sometimes spelt *gis*.

Saint Charity] Not a saint's name, of course, but through such phrases as *by, for, or of Charity*, often used in oaths as if it were. 'The Catholics comen othe . . . to haue charitye alwayes in their mouth' (Shepherdes Calender, May gloss).

60. do't] A euphemism. Cf. *Tim.* iv. i. 8.

61. Cock] Corruption of God; but no doubt there is a thought of the male organ too.

62. tumbled] tousel'd (with obvious innuendo).

64. He answers] Dialogue in a lyric is indicated in just the same way in *Troil.* iv. iv. 17.

72. my coach] Cf. 1 *Tamburlaine*, v. i. 315, where the mad Zabina calls for her coach in order to join her dead husband.

74 S.D. Horatio] See n. on S.D. at head of scene. It is clear that the King and Queen must now have the stage to themselves.

75. this is] Often contracted to a single syllable. Abbott 461.

76. All . . . father's death.] See above, l. 45 n.

And now behold—] F's omission of these words regularizes the metre.

Why thou art thus incens'd.—Let him go, Gertrude.—
Speak, man.

Laer. Where is my father?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with.

To hell, allegiance! Vows to the blackest devil!

Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!

I dare damnation. To this point I stand,

That both the worlds I give to negligence,

Let come what comes, only I'll be reveng'd

Most thoroughly for my father.

King. Who shall stay you?

Laer. My will, not all the world's.

And for my means, I'll husband them so well,

They shall go far with little.

King. Good Laertes,

If you desire to know the certainty

Of your dear father, is't writ in your revenge

That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,

Winner and loser?

Laer. None but his enemies.

128. Where is] *Q2*; Where's *F*. 137. world's] *Pope*; worlds *Q2*; world *F*.

139-40. Good . . . certainty] *As F*; one line *Q2*. 141. father] *Q2*; Fathers

death *F*. is't] *Q2*; if *F*. 142. swoopstake] swoopstake *Q2, F*; swoopstake

Dyce; Swoop-stake-like *Q1*; sweep-stake *Pope*.

132-5. *Conscience . . . what comes]* (*MSH*, p. 254).

The contrast with Hamlet is regularly

remarked. See esp. iii. i. 78-83.

132. *grace]* The grace of God

through which man attains salvation

and the rejection of which here leads

on to the next line.

profoundest pit] the 'bottomless pit'

of Revelation (ix. 1, etc.).

134. *both the worlds]* i.e. this world

and the next.

King. Will you know them then?

Laer. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms,

And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,

Repast them with my blood.

King. Why, now you speak

Like a good child and a true gentleman.

That I am guiltless of your father's death

And am most sensibly in grief for it,

It shall as level to your judgment 'pear

As day does to your eye.

Laer. How now, what noise is that?

Enter OPHELIA.

O heat, dry up my brains. Tears seven times salt

146. pelican] *Q2*; Politician *F*. 150. sensibly] *Q2*; sensible *F*.

151. 'pear] *Johnson*; peare *Q2*; pierce *F*. 152 S.D. *within.] Q2*; *within, Let*

her come in. F. *Ophelia . . . singing.] This edn.* 152. Let . . . in.] *This edn;*

Voices (within). Let . . . in. Muro; Shouting without. Let . . . in. Capell;

153. Laer. How] F; How Q2. 153 S.D. *Enter Ophelia.] Q2 (at 152, before*

dress with Straus and Flowers. Rowe; Ophelia re-enters with flowers in her hand |

Wilson.

146. *kind]* showing natural feeling

for its 'kind'.

pelican] In traditional fable the

pelican feeds its young from its own

breast, in some versions reviving them

from seeming death (cf. *life-rend'ring*).

According as it is applied to parent or

child the same fable may illustrate

self-sacrifice or (*Lr* iii. iv. 74; *R2* ii.

i. 126) heartlessness. The extravagance

of the image here is no doubt meant

to characterize Laertes's 'emphasis'

and 'rant' (cf. v. i. 248, 279).

151. *level]* unimpeded. Cf. iv. i. 42;

2H4 iv. iv. 7, 'everything lies level to

our wish'.

'*pear]* On the superiority of this (=

Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye.
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid—kind sister—sweet Ophelia—
O heavens, is't possible a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

Oph. (sings) *They bore him bare-fac'd on the bier,
And in his grave rain'd many a tear—*

Fare you well, my dove.

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus.

Oph. You must sing *A-down a-down*, and you *Call him*

156. with] *Q2*; by *F.* 157. Till] *F.*; Tell *Q2*; turn] *Q2*; turns *F.*
160. an old] *F, Q1*; a poore *Q2*. 161-3.] *F.*; not in *Q2*. 164. bier.] *Q2*;
Bier, / *Hey non nony, hey nony*: *F.* 165. in] *Q2*; on *F.* rain'd] *Q2*;
rains F. 166.] *Q2*; italic (as part of song) *F.* 167-8.] As *Q2*; prose *F.*
168. move] *Q2, F.*; move me conj. *Walker*. 169-71.] *Prose F.*; 3 lines divided a
downe, / And . . . it, / It *Q2*. 169-70. You . . . *a-down-a*] *This edn.*; as two
lines of song *Stanton*; all in italics *Johnson*; italics for all after You must sing /
Stevens?; only 'Adown adown' as quotation *Wilson*. 169. *A-down a-down*] *Q2*;
downe a-downe *F.* and] *Q2, F.*; an *Capell*.

cold and moist, would perish if 'dried
up'.

155. virtue] inherent power,
157. turn the beam] tilt the bar join-

ing the two scales of a balance.

161-3.] These 'obscure and affec-

ted' lines (*Johnson*) have often given

trouble but may be paraphrased:

Human nature, when in love, is ex-

quisitely sensitive, and being so, it

sends a precious part of itself as a

token to follow the object of its love.

Thus, the fineness of Ophelia's love is

demonstrated when, after the loved

one has gone, her mind goes too. The

commentators, with *Laertes*, always

apply the general statement to

Ophelia's love for her father, but the

play leaves it open to us to apply it

also to her love for Hamlet.

155
160

a-down-a. O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the
false steward that stole his master's daughter.
Laer. This nothing's more than matter.

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance—pray
you, love, remember. And there is pansies, that's for
thoughts.

Laer. A document in madness: thoughts and remem-
brance-fitted. 175

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines. There's
rue for you. And here's some for me. We may call it
herb of grace a Sundays. You must wear your rue
with a difference. There's a daisy. I would give you
some violets, but they withered all when my father
died. They say a made a good end.

[sings] *For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.*

170. wheel becomes it] *Q2, F.*; wheels become it *F2*; wheels become *F3*.
173-4. pray you] *Q2*; Pray *F.*; I pray *Q1*. 174. pansies] *Q2*; Paconies *F.*;
pansy *Q1*. 180. herb of grace] *Q2*; Herbe-Grace *F.*; herb a grace *Q1*.
You] *Q2, Q1*; Oh you *F.* must] *F, Q1*; may *Q2*. 183. a made] *Q2*;
he made *F.*

170. wheel] refrain. Strictly, a term
for a metrical or rhythmic (rather
than a verbal) element in a poem
which recurs at the end of each
stanza. LN.

170-1. *It is the false steward*] Ophelia's
mind is still running on hapless
maidens and deceits in love. *It is*
sometimes taken (I think unneces-
sarily) to refer to the ballad which
'the wheel becomes'. No appropriate
ballad, or tale, has been traced. The
false steward in the 'Second History'
of Wotton's *Cupid's Cautels* (1578),
which has been unconvincingly pro-
posed as a source for the Ophelia
story (see *Emporia State Research*
Studs., 1966, pp. 18-26), is not a can-
didate here: he ravishes his master's
daughter after making her drunk.

172. *This nothing . . . matter.*] This
nonsense conveys more than sense
would do. Cf. *Lr* IV. vi. 175, 'matter
and impertinency mix'd'.

173-83.] The plants have their
meanings appropriate to their recipi-
ents. *Rosemary* and *pansies* are pre-
sented to *Laertes*; *fennel* and *colum-
bines*, signifying marital infidelity, to
the Queen; *rue* or *herb o' grace*, for
repentance, to the King. The *daisy* is
the flower of (unhappy) love, *violets* of
faithfulness. LN.

176. document] piece of instruction
(the literal sense, from *L. docere*).

177. fitted] bestowed where they fit
or belong.

180. *a*] As at II. ii. 383, the weakened
form of the O.E. prep. *on* (see *OED A*
prep. 8), common in Elizabethan
English and still surviving dialectally.
Cf. *nowadays*.

181. *a difference*] a variation in a
coat-of-arms (usually indicating a
junior member or branch of the
family).

184.] A line from a popular song.
LN.

Laer. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

Oph. (sings)

*And will a not come again?
And will a not come again?*

No, no, he is dead,

Go to thy death-bed,

He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,

All flaxen was his poll.

He is gone, he is gone,

And we cast away moan.

God a mercy on his soul.

And of all Christian souls. God buy you.

Laer. Do you see this, O God?

King. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,

Or you deny me right. Go but apart,

Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,

And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.

If by direct or by collateral hand

They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,

Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours

To you in satisfaction; but if not,

Be you content to lend your patience to us,

185. Thought and affliction] *F*; Thought and afflictions *Q*₂; Thoughts & afflictions *Q*₁, *Q*₅. 187, 188. a] *Q*₂; he *F*, *Q*₁. 189-90, 194-5.] 2 lines Johnson; one line *Q*₂, *F*. 192. was] *Q*₂; not in *F*, *Q*₁. 193. All] *F*, *Q*₁; not in *Q*₂. 196. God a mercy] *Q*₂, *Q*₁; Gramercy *F*. 197. Christian] *F*; Christians *Q*₂; christen *Q*₁. souls] *Q*₂; Soules, I pray God. *F*, *Q*₁. God buy you] *Q*₂; God buy ye *F*; God be with you *Q*₁. 197 S.D.] *F* (subst.); not in *Q*₂. 198. see] *F*; not in *Q*₂. O God] *Q*₂; you Gods *F*. 199. commune] *Q*₂, *F*₂; common *F*.

185. Thought] (often used for melancholy contemplation, hence) sadness, sorrow. Cf. iii. iv. 51 ('thought-sick'); *Ant.* iv. vi. 35-6 (where Enobarbus expects 'thought' to break his heart); *Arrival of Edw. IV* (Camden Soc., 1838), p. 13, 'in great trouble, thought, and heaviness'. *passion*] suffering. Cf. *Mac.* iii. iv. 57. 186. favour] charm.

187-96.] LN.

195. cast away] i.e. to no purpose; scatter uselessly.

197. of] For the interchangeability of *on* and *of*, see Abbott 175, 181. Cf. i. i. 92.

God buy you.] See ii. i. 69 n.

199. commune with] participate in. (*F* common is but a variant form.)

203. direct . . . collateral] our own . . . our agent's.

204. touch'd] i.e. with guilt.

And we shall jointly labour with your soul
To give it due content.

Laer.

Let this be so.

His means of death, his obscure funeral—

No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,

No noble rite, nor formal ostentation—

Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,

That I must call't in question.

King.

So you shall.

And where th' offence is, let the great axe fall.

I pray you go with me.

215
Exeunt.

[SCENE VI]

Enter HORATIO and a Servant.

Hor. What are they that would speak with me?

Serv. Seafaring men, sir. They say they have letters for you.

Hor. Let them come in.

[*Exit Servant.*]

210. funeral] *Q*₂; buriall *F*. 211. trophy, sword] *F*; trophie sword *Q*₂; trophy sword *Pope*. 212. rite] *F*; right *Q*₂. 214. call't] *Q*₂; call *F*.

Scene VI

SCENE VI] *Capell.* S.D. and a Servant] *Capell*; with an Attendant / *F*; and others / *Q*₂. 2. Serv.] *F* (*Ser.*); Gent. *Q*₂. Seafaring men] *Q*₂; Saylor's *F*. 3 S.D.] *Hammer*.

211.] It was an ancient custom, of which relics may still be seen in churches, that when a knight was buried, his helmet, sword, and coat-of-arms were hung over his tomb. trophy] memorial. Originally one erected in celebration of a victory and consisting of arms and other objects taken in war. Possibly we should read trophy sword, i.e. take trophy as adjectival.

hatchment] a tablet or painting displaying the coat-of-arms of the deceased, normally placed outside the house of mourning, and then, after the burial, over the tomb.

212. ostentation] ceremony.

Scene VI

iv. vi.] In *Q*₁ this scene is replaced by one in which Horatio tells the Queen of the letter he has received from Hamlet announcing his return, and, further, reporting the exchange of commissions (from v. ii. 13-53), so that the Queen is now apprised of the King's villainy.

2. letters] The plural (following *L. litterae*) is common in a singular sense. N.B. l. 8 below, 'a letter'. Cf. *Oth.* iv. i. 232 ('the letter'), 272 ('the letters').