

That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia. Her father and myself,
We'll so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseem,
We may of their encounter frankly judge,
And gather by him, as he is behav'd,
If't be th' affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

Queen. I shall obey you.
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness. So shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honors.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may. [*Exit Queen.*]

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here.—Gracious, so please
you,
We will bestow ourselves. [*To Ophelia.*] Read on this
book,

That show of such an exercise may color
Your [loneliness]. We are oft to blame in this—
'Tis too much prov'd—that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

King. [*Aside.*] O, 'tis too true!
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word.
O heavy burthen!

Pol. I hear him coming. Withdraw, my lord.
[*Exeunt King and Polonius.*]

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. To be, or not to be, that is the question: 55
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 60
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep—
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come, 65
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,
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, 70
The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns

31. Affront: meet. 33. frankly: freely.
44. exercise: i.e. religious exercise (as the next sentence makes clear).
44-45. color Your loneliness: make your solitude seem natural.
46. too much prov'd: too often proved true.
47. action: demeanor.
51. to...it: in comparison with the paint that makes it look beautiful.
55-89. See the Textual Notes for the version of this soliloquy in Q1.
56. suffer: submit to, endure patiently.
62. consummation: completion, end.
64. rub: obstacle (a term from the game of bowls).
66. shuffled off: freed ourselves from. this mortal coil: the turmoil of this mortal life. 67. respect: consideration.
68. of...life: so long-lived. 69. time: the world.

30 That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make,
With a bare bodkin; who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
35 The undiscover'd 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 pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.—Soft you now,
The fair Ophelia. Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins rememb'ed.

Oph. Good my lord,
How does your honor for this many a day? 90

Ham. I humbly thank you, well, [well, well].

Oph. My lord, I have remembrances of yours
That I have longed long to redeliver.
I pray you now receive them.

Ham. No, not I,
I never gave you aught. 95

Oph. My honor'd lord, you know right well you
did,

And with them words of so sweet breath compos'd
As made these things more rich. Their perfume lost,
Take these again, for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind. 100
There, my lord.

Ham. Ha, ha! are you honest?

Oph. My lord?

Ham. Are you fair?

Oph. What means your lordship? 105

Ham. That if you be honest and fair, [your
honesty] should admit no discourse to your beauty.

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better com-
merce than with honesty? 109

Ham. Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will
sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd
than the force of honesty can translate beauty into
his likeness. This was sometime a paradox, but now
the time gives it proof. I did love you once. 114

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believ'd me, for virtue
cannot so [inoculate] our old stock but we shall relish of
it. I lov'd you not.

Oph. I was the more deceiv'd. 119

74. his quietus make: write paid to his account.
75. bare bodkin: mere dagger. fardels: burdens.
78. undiscover'd: not disclosed to knowledge; about which men have
no information. bourn: boundary, i.e. region.
79. puzzles: paralyzes.
82. conscience: reflection (but with some of the modern sense, too).
83. native hue: natural (ruddy) complexion.
84. pale cast: pallor. thought: i.e. melancholy thought, brooding.
85. pitch: loftiness (a term from falconry, signifying the highest point of
a hawk's flight). 88. orisons: prayers. 102. honest: chaste.
113. sometime: formerly. paradox: tenet contrary to accepted
belief.
116-18. virtue...it: virtue, engrafted on our old stock (of vicious-
ness), cannot so change the nature of the plant that no trace of the
original will remain.