

	CLAUDIUS From Hamlet? Who brought them?	CLAUDIUS From Hamlet? Who delivered them?
40	MESSENGER Sailors, my lord, they say. I saw them not. They were given me by Claudio. He received them Of him that brought them.	MESSENGER Sailors, my lord, or so they say. I didn't see them. Claudio gave them to me, and he got them from the one who delivered them.
	CLAUDIUS Laertes, you shall hear them.—Leave us.	CLAUDIUS Laertes, I want you to hear what they say. Leave us alone now.
	<i>Exit MESSENGER</i>	<i>The MESSENGER exits.</i>
	(reads) “High and mighty, You shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. Tomorrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes, when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return. Hamlet.”	(reads) “High and Mighty one, You know I've been set down naked, you might say, in your kingdom. Tomorrow I'll beg permission to look into your kingly eyes, at which point I'll tell you the story (after first apologizing) of how I came back to Denmark so strangely and suddenly. Hamlet”

Act 4, Scene 7, Page 3

	Original Text	Modern Text
	What should this mean? Are all the rest come back? Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?	What does this mean? Has everyone else come back too? Or is it all a lie—and no one has yet returned?
	LAERTES Know you the hand?	LAERTES Do you recognize the handwriting?
50	CLAUDIUS 'Tis Hamlet's character. "Naked"? And in a postscript here, he says "alone." Can you advise me?	CLAUDIUS It's Hamlet's writing. "Naked," he says. And in a P.S. he adds, "alone." Can you help me out with this?
55	LAERTES I'm lost in it, my lord. But let him come. It warms the very sickness in my heart That I shall live and tell him to his teeth, “Thus diddest thou.”	LAERTES I have no clue, my lord. But let him come. It warms my weary heart to think I'll get the chance to look him in the eye and say, “You did this.”
	CLAUDIUS If it be so, Laertes— As how should it be so? How otherwise?— Will you be ruled by me?	CLAUDIUS If that's how you feel, Laertes—and why shouldn't you? Will you let me guide and direct you?
	LAERTES Ay, my lord— So you will not o'errule me to a peace.	LAERTES Yes, my lord, as long as you won't lead me toward peace.
60 65	CLAUDIUS To thine own peace. If he be now returned, 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 devise, Under the which he shall not choose but fall. And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe, But even his mother shall uncharge the practice And call it accident.	CLAUDIUS No, just toward your own peace of mind. If he's come back to Denmark without plans to continue on his trip, then I'll trick him into an undertaking, which I'm working out now, that's sure to kill him. When he dies, no one will be blamed, even his mother will call it an accident.
	LAERTES My lord, I will be ruled The rather if you could devise it so That I might be the organ.	LAERTES My lord, I'll let you make the decision. I only ask to be in on your plans, the agent of his death.

Act 4, Scene 7, Page 4

	Original Text	Modern Text
70	CLAUDIUS It falls right. You have been talked of since your travel much— And that in Hamlet's hearing—for a quality Wherein, they say, you shine. Your sum of parts Did not together pluck such envy from him As did that one, and that, in my regard, Of the unworthiest siege.	CLAUDIUS That'll be fine. Since you left, people have been talking about—and within earshot of Hamlet—a certain quality of yours in which, they say, you shine. All your talents and gifts didn't arouse as much envy from him as this one quality did, though to me it's far from your best attribute.
	LAERTES What part is that, my lord?	LAERTES What quality is that, my lord?
75 80 85	CLAUDIUS A very ribbon in the cap of youth, Yet needful too, for youth no less becomes The light and careless livery that it wears Than settled age his sables and his weeds, Importing health and graveness. Two months since, Here was a gentleman of Normandy. I've seen myself, and served against, the French, And they can well on horseback. But this gallant Had witchcraft in 't. He grew unto his seat, And to such wondrous doing brought his horse As he had been encorpsed and demi-natured With the brave beast. So far he topped my thought, That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks, Come short of what he did.	CLAUDIUS A trivial little ribbon on the cap of youth—yet an important one, too, since casual clothes suit young people as much as serious business suits and overcoats suit the middle-aged. Two months ago I met a gentleman from Normandy. I've fought against the French and have seen how well they ride, but this man was a magician on horseback. It was as if he were part of the horse, so skillful that even having seen him, I can hardly conceive of the tricks he did.
	LAERTES A Norman was 't?	LAERTES Hmm, he was from Normandy, you say?
	CLAUDIUS A Norman.	CLAUDIUS Yes, from Normandy.
90	LAERTES Upon my life, Lamond!	LAERTES I bet it was Lamond.
	CLAUDIUS The very same.	CLAUDIUS Yes, that's the one.
	LAERTES I know him well. He is the brooch indeed And gem of all the nation.	LAERTES I know him well. He's his homeland's jewel.

Act 4, Scene 7, Page 5

	Original Text	Modern Text
95 100	CLAUDIUS He made confession of you, And gave you such a masterly report For art and exercise in your defense, And for your rapier most especially, That he cried out 'twould be a sight indeed If one could match you. The 'scrimers of their nation, He swore, had had neither motion, guard, nor eye, If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy That he could nothing do but wish and beg Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.	CLAUDIUS He mentioned you to me, giving you such high marks in fencing that he exclaimed it would be a miracle if someone could match you. French fencers wouldn't be good enough for you, he said, since they don't have the right moves or skills. Hamlet was so jealous when he heard Lamond's report that he talked about nothing else but having you come over and play against him. Now, the point is ...

	Now, out of this—	
	LAERTES What out of this, my lord?	LAERTES What's the point, my lord?
105	CLAUDIUS Laertes, was your father dear to you? Or are you like the painting of a sorrow, A face without a heart?	CLAUDIUS Laertes, did you love your father? Or is your grief just an illusion—a mere painting of sorrow?
	LAERTES Why ask you this?	LAERTES How could you ask?
110	CLAUDIUS Not that I think you did not love your father But that I know love is begun by time, And that I see, in passages of proof, Time qualifies the spark and fire of it. There lives within the very flame of love A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it. And nothing is at a like goodness still. For goodness, growing to a pleurisy, Dies in his own too-much. That we would do, We should do when we would, for this “would” changes And hath abatements and delays as many As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents. And then this “should” is like a spendthrift sigh That hurts by easing.—But to the quick of th' ulcer: Hamlet comes back. What would you undertake To show yourself in deed your father's son More than in words?	CLAUDIUS Not that I suspect you didn't love your father, but I've seen it happen that, as the days go by, time dampens the flame of love. The fire of love always burns itself out, and nothing stays the way it began. Even a good thing can grow too big and die from its own excess. We should do what we intend to do right when we intend it, since our intentions are subject to as many weakenings and delays as there are words in the dictionary and accidents in life. And then all our “woulds” and “shoulds” are nothing but hot air. But back to my point: Hamlet's coming back. What proof will you offer—in action, not just words—that you're your father's son?

Act 4, Scene 7, Page 6

	Original Text	Modern Text
	LAERTES To cut his throat i' th' church.	LAERTES I'll cut Hamlet's throat in church.
125	CLAUDIUS No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize. Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes, Will you do this, keep close within your chamber. Hamlet returned shall know you are come home. We'll put on those shall praise your excellence And set a double varnish on the fame The Frenchman gave you, 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.	CLAUDIUS It's true, no place—not even a church—should offer refuge to that murderer. Revenge should have no limits. But Laertes, will you do this: stay in your room? When Hamlet comes home he'll learn you're here. I'll have people praise your excellence and put a double coat on the fame the Frenchman gave you. In short, we'll get you together and place bets on you. Hamlet's so careless, high-minded, and unsuspecting that he won't examine the swords beforehand, so you can easily choose one with a sharpened point and in one thrust avenge the death of your father.
140	LAERTES I will do 't. And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword. I bought an unction of 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 scratched withal. I'll touch my point With this contagion, that if I gall him slightly It may be death.	LAERTES I'll do it, and I'll put a little dab of something on my sword as well. From a quack doctor I bought some oil so poisonous that if you dip a knife in it, no medicine in the world can save the person who's scratched by it. If I even graze his skin slightly, he's likely to die.

	CLAUDIUS Let's further think of this, Weigh what convenience both of time and means May fit us to our shape. If this should fail, And that our drift look through our bad performance, 'Twere better not assayed. Therefore this project	CLAUDIUS Let's think about this, and consider what time and what method will be most appropriate. If our plan were to fail, and people found out about it, it would be better never to have tried it. We should have a backup ready in case the first plan doesn't work. Let me think. We'll place bets on you and Hamlet—that's it! When the two of you have gotten all sweaty and hot—keep him jumping around a lot for that purpose—Hamlet will ask for something to drink. I'll have a cup ready for him. If by chance he
--	--	--

Act 4, Scene 7, Page 7

	Original Text	Modern Text
150 155	Should have a back or second that might hold If this should blast in proof.—Soft, let me see.— We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings.— I ha't! 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 prepared him A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping, If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck, Our purpose may hold there.—But stay, what noise?	escapes your poisoned sword tip, the drink will kill him. But wait, what's that sound?
	<i>Enter GERTRUDE</i>	<i>GERTRUDE enters.</i>
160	GERTRUDE One woe doth tread upon another's heel, So fast they follow.—Your sister's drowned, Laertes.	GERTRUDE The bad news just keeps on coming, one disaster after another. Your sister's drowned, Laertes.
	LAERTES Drowned? Oh, where?	LAERTES Drowned? Oh, where?
165 170 175	GERTRUDE 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 crowsflowers, 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 pendant boughs her coronet weeds Clambering 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 a while they bore her up, Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds As one incapable of her own distress, Or like a creature native and indued Unto that element. 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.	GERTRUDE There's a willow that leans over the brook, dangling its white leaves over the glassy water. Ophelia made wild wreaths out of those leaves, braiding in crowsflowers, thistles, daisies, and the orchises that vulgar shepherds have an obscene name for, but which pure-minded girls call "dead men's fingers." Climbing into the tree to hang the wreath of weeds on the hanging branches, she and her flowers fell into the gurgling brook. Her clothes spread out wide in the water, and buoyed her up for a while as she sang bits of old hymns, acting like someone who doesn't realize the danger she's in, or like someone completely accustomed to danger. But it was only a matter of time before her clothes, heavy with the water they absorbed, pulled the poor thing out of her song, down into the mud at the bottom of the brook.

Act 4, Scene 7, Page 8

	Original Text	Modern Text
180	LAERTES Alas, then she is drowned.	LAERTES So she is drowned.
	GERTRUDE Drowned, drowned.	GERTRUDE Drowned, drowned.
	LAERTES Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,	LAERTES You've had too much water already, poor Ophelia, so I won't shed watery tears for

185	And therefore I forbid my tears. But yet It is our trick. Nature her custom holds, Let shame say what it will. When these are gone, The woman will be out.—Adieu, my lord. I have a speech of fire that fain would blaze, But that this folly doubts it.	you. But crying is what humans do. We do what's in our nature, even if we're ashamed of it. After I stop crying I'll be through acting like a woman. Good-bye, my lord. I have some fiery words I could speak now, but my foolish tears are drowning them out.
	<i>Exit LAERTES</i>	<i>LAERTES exits.</i>
190	CLAUDIUS Let's follow, Gertrude. How much I had to do to calm his rage! Now fear I this will give it start again. Therefore let's follow.	CLAUDIUS Let's follow him, Gertrude. I worked so hard to calm him down, and now I'm worried he's getting all excited again. Let's follow him.
	<i>Exeunt</i>	<i>They exit</i>

Act 5, Scene 1

	Original Text	Modern Text
	<i>Enter a GRAVEDIGGER and the OTHER gravedigger</i>	<i>A GRAVEDIGGER and the OTHER gravedigger enter.</i>
	GRAVEDIGGER Is she to be buried in Christian burial when she willfully seeks her own salvation?	GRAVEDIGGER Are they really going to give her a Christian burial after she killed herself?
	OTHER I tell thee she is. Therefore make her grave straight. The crowner hath sat on her and finds it Christian burial.	OTHER I'm telling you, yes. So finish that grave right away. The coroner examined her case and says it should be a Christian funeral.
	GRAVEDIGGER How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defense?	GRAVEDIGGER But how, unless she drowned in self-defense?
	OTHER Why, 'tis found so.	OTHER That's what they're saying she did.
	GRAVEDIGGER It must be <i>se offendendo</i> . It cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act. And an act hath three branches—it is to act, to do, to perform. Argal, she drowned herself wittingly.	GRAVEDIGGER Sounds more like “self-offense,” if you ask me. What I'm saying is, if she knew she was drowning herself, then that's an act. An act has three sides to it: to do, to act, and to perform. Therefore she must have known she was drowning herself.
	OTHER Nay, but hear you, Goodman Delver—	OTHER No, listen here, gravedigger sir—
	GRAVEDIGGER Give me leave. Here lies the water. Good. Here stands the man. Good. If the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he nill he, he goes. Mark you that. But if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself. Argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.	GRAVEDIGGER Let me finish. Here's the water, right? And here's a man, okay? If the man goes into the water and drowns himself, he's the one doing it, like it or not. But if the water comes to him and drowns him, then he doesn't drown himself. Therefore, he who is innocent of his own death does not shorten his own life.
	OTHER But is this law?	OTHER Is that how the law sees it?

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 2

	Original Text	Modern Text
20	GRAVEDIGGER Ay, marry, is 't. Crowner's quest law.	GRAVEDIGGER It sure is. The coroner's inquest law.
	OTHER Will you ha' the truth on 't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.	OTHER Do you want to know the truth? If this woman hadn't been rich, she wouldn't have been given a Christian burial.
	GRAVEDIGGER Why, there thou sayst. And the more pity that great folk should have	GRAVEDIGGER Well there, now you've said it. It's a pity that the rich have more freedom to hang

	countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentleman but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers. They hold up Adam's profession.	or drown themselves than the rest of us Christians. Come on, shovel. The most ancient aristocrats in the world are gardeners, ditch-diggers, and gravediggers. They keep up Adam's profession.
30	OTHER Was he a gentleman?	OTHER Was he an aristocrat? With a coat of arms?
	GRAVEDIGGER He was the first that ever bore arms.	GRAVEDIGGER He was the first person who ever had arms.
	OTHER Why, he had none.	OTHER He didn't have any.
	GRAVEDIGGER What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says Adam digged. Could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee. If thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—	GRAVEDIGGER What, aren't you a Christian? The Bible says Adam dug in the ground. How could he dig without arms? I'll ask you another question. If you can't answer it—
	OTHER Go to.	OTHER Go ahead!
	GRAVEDIGGER What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?	GRAVEDIGGER What do you call a person who builds stronger things than a stonemason, a shipbuilder, or a carpenter does?
	OTHER The gallows-maker, for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.	OTHER The one who builds the gallows to hang people on, since his structure outlives a thousand inhabitants.
	GRAVEDIGGER I like thy wit well, in good faith. The gallows does well, but how does it well? It does well to those that do ill.	GRAVEDIGGER You're funny, and I like that. The gallows do a good job. But how? It does a good job for those who do bad.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 3

	Original Text	Modern Text
	Now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church. Argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To 't again, come.	Now, it's wrong to say that the gallows are stronger than a church. Therefore, the gallows may do <i>yousome</i> good. Come on, your turn.
	OTHER “Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?”	OTHER Let's see, “Who builds stronger things than a stonemason, a shipbuilder, or a carpenter?”
	GRAVEDIGGER Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.	GRAVEDIGGER That's the question, so answer it.
	OTHER Marry, now I can tell.	OTHER Ah, I've got it!
50	GRAVEDIGGER To 't.	GRAVEDIGGER Go ahead.
	OTHER Mass, I cannot tell.	OTHER Damn, I forgot.
	<i>Enter HAMLET and HORATIO afar off</i>	<i>HAMLET and HORATIO enter in the distance.</i>
	GRAVEDIGGER Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating. And when you are asked this question next, say “A grave-maker.” The houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee in. Fetch me a stoup of liquor.	GRAVEDIGGER Don't beat your brains out over it. You can't make a slow donkey run by beating it. The next time someone asks you this riddle, say “a gravedigger.” The houses he makes last till Judgment Day. Now go and get me some booze.
	<i>Exit OTHER</i>	<i>The OTHER GRAVEDIGGER exits.</i>
	<i>(digs and sings)</i> <i>In youth when I did love, did love,</i> <i>Methought it was very sweet</i>	<i>(the GRAVEDIGGER digs and sings)</i> <i>In my youth I loved, I loved,</i> <i>And I thought it was very sweet</i>

	<i>To contract—o—the time, for—a—my behove, Oh, methought, there—a—was nothing—a—meet.</i>	<i>To set—ohh—the date for—ahh—my duty Oh, I thought it—ahh—was not right.</i>
	HAMLET Has this fellow no feeling of his business? He sings at grave- making.	HAMLET Doesn't this guy realize what he's doing? He's singing while digging a grave.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 4

	Original Text	Modern Text
60	HORATIO Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.	HORATIO He's gotten so used to graves that they don't bother him anymore.
	HAMLET 'Tis e'en so. The hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.	HAMLET Yes, exactly. Only people who don't have to work can afford to be sensitive.
	GRAVEDIGGER (sings) <i>But age with his stealing steps Hath clawed me in his clutch, And hath shipped me into the land As if I had never been such. (throws up a skull)</i>	GRAVEDIGGER (sings) <i>But old age has sneaked up on me And grabbed me in his claws, And has shipped me into the ground As if I'd never been like that. (he throws up a skull)</i>
	HAMLET That skull had a tongue in it and could sing once. How the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jawbone, that did the first murder! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'erreaches, one that would circumvent God, might it not?	HAMLET That skull had a tongue in it once and could sing. That jackass is throwing it around as if it belonged to Cain, who did the first murder! It might be the skull of a politician once capable of talking his way around God, right? And now this idiot is pulling rank on him.
70	HORATIO It might, my lord.	HORATIO Indeed, my lord.
	HAMLET Or of a courtier, which could say, "Good morrow, sweet lord!" "How dost thou, good lord?" This might be my Lord Such-a-one that praised my Lord Such-a-one's horse when he meant to beg it, might it not?	HAMLET Or a courtier, who could say things like, "Good night, my sweet lord! How are you doing, good lord?" This might be the skull of Lord So-and-So, who praised Lord Such-and-Such's horse when he wanted to borrow it, right?
75	HORATIO Ay, my lord.	HORATIO Yes, my lord.
	HAMLET Why, e'en so. And now my Lady Worm's, chapless and knocked about the mazard with a sexton's spade. Here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see 't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding but to play at loggets with them? Mine ache to think on 't.	HAMLET Exactly. And now it's the property of Lady Worm, its lower jaw knocked off and thwacked on the noggin with a shovel. That's quite a reversal of fortune, isn't it, if we could only see it? Are these bones worth nothing more than bowling pins now? It makes my bones ache to think about it.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 5

	Original Text	Modern Text
	GRAVEDIGGER (sings) <i>A pickax and a spade, a spade, For and a shrouding sheet, Oh, a pit of clay for to be made For such a guest is meet. (throws up another skull)</i>	GRAVEDIGGER (sings) <i>A pickax and a shovel, a shovel, And a sheet for a funeral shroud, Oh, a pit of dirt is what we need For a guest like this one here. (he throws up another skull)</i>
	HAMLET There's another. Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quillities, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in 's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his	HAMLET There's another. Could that be a lawyer's skull? Where's all his razzle-dazzle legal jargon now? Why does he allow this idiot to knock him on the head with a dirty shovel, instead of suing him for assault and battery? Maybe this guy was once a great landowner, with his deeds and contracts, his tax shelters and his annuities. Is it part of his deed of ownership to have his skull filled up with dirt? Does he only

	recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries. Is this the fine of his fines and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? Will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box, and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?	get to keep as much land as a set of contracts would cover if you spread them out on the ground? The deeds to his properties would barely fit in this coffin—and the coffin's all the property he gets to keep?
	HORATIO Not a jot more, my lord.	HORATIO No more than that, my lord.
	HAMLET Is not parchment made of sheepskins?	HAMLET Isn't the parchment of a legal document made of sheepskin?
	HORATIO Ay, my lord, and of calfskins too.	HORATIO Yes, my lord, and calfskin too.
100	HAMLET They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow.—Whose grave's this, sirrah?	HAMLET Anyone who puts his trust in such documents is a sheep or a calf. I'll talk to this guy.—Excuse me, sir, whose grave is this?
	GRAVEDIGGER Mine, sir. (sings)	GRAVEDIGGER It's mine, sir.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 6

	Original Text	Modern Text
	<i>Oh, a pit of clay for to be made For such a guest is meet.</i>	(sings) <i>Oh, a pit of dirt is what we need For a guest like this one here.</i>
	HAMLET I think it be thine, indeed, for thou liest in 't.	HAMLET I think it really must be yours, since you're the one lying in it.
	GRAVEDIGGER You lie out on 't, sir, and therefore it is not yours. For my part, I do not lie in 't, and yet it is mine.	GRAVEDIGGER And you're lying outside of it, so it's not yours. As for me, I'm not lying to you in it—it's really mine.
	HAMLET Thou dost lie in 't, to be in 't and say it is thine. 'Tis for the dead, not for the quick. Therefore thou liest.	HAMLET But you <i>are</i> lying in it, being in it and saying it's yours. It's for the dead, not the living. So you're lying.
	GRAVEDIGGER 'Tis a quick lie, sir. 'Twill away gain from me to you.	GRAVEDIGGER That's a lively lie, sir—it jumps so fast from me to you.
110	HAMLET What man dost thou dig it for?	HAMLET What man are you digging it for?
	GRAVEDIGGER For no man, sir.	GRAVEDIGGER For no man, sir.
	HAMLET What woman, then?	HAMLET What woman, then?
	GRAVEDIGGER For none, neither.	GRAVEDIGGER For no woman, either.
	HAMLET Who is to be buried in 't?	HAMLET Who's to be buried in it?
115	GRAVEDIGGER One that was a woman, sir, but, rest her soul, she's dead.	GRAVEDIGGER One who used to be a woman but—bless her soul—is dead now.
	HAMLET How absolute the knave is! We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken a note of it. The age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier he galls his kibe.—How long hast thou been a	HAMLET How literal this guy is! We have to speak precisely, or he'll get the better of us with his wordplay. Lord, Horatio, I've been noticing this for a few years now. The peasants have become so clever and witty that they're nipping at the heels of noblemen.—How long have you been a gravedigger?

	grave-maker?	
	GRAVEDIGGER Of all the days i' the year, I came to 't that day that our last King Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.	GRAVEDIGGER Of all the days in the year, I started the day that the late King Hamlet defeated Fortinbras.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 7

	Original Text	Modern Text
	HAMLET How long is that since?	HAMLET How long ago was that?
	GRAVEDIGGER Cannot you tell that? Every fool can tell that. It was the very day that young Hamlet was born, he that is mad and sent into England.	GRAVEDIGGER You don't know that? Any fool could tell you, it was the day that young Hamlet was born—the one who went crazy and got sent off to England.
	HAMLET Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?	HAMLET Why was he sent to England?
	GRAVEDIGGER Why, because he was mad. He shall recover his wits there, or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.	GRAVEDIGGER Because he was crazy. He'll recover his sanity there. Or if he doesn't, it won't matter in England.
	HAMLET Why?	HAMLET Why not?
	GRAVEDIGGER 'Twill not be seen in him there. There the men are as mad as he.	GRAVEDIGGER Because nobody will notice he's crazy. Everyone there is as crazy as he is.
	HAMLET How came he mad?	HAMLET How did he go crazy?
135	GRAVEDIGGER Very strangely, they say.	GRAVEDIGGER In a strange way, they say.
	HAMLET How "strangely"?	HAMLET What do you mean, "in a strange way"?
	GRAVEDIGGER Faith, e'en with losing his wits.	GRAVEDIGGER By losing his mind.
	HAMLET Upon what ground?	HAMLET On what grounds?
	GRAVEDIGGER Why, here in Denmark. I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.	GRAVEDIGGER Right here in Denmark. I've been the church warden here for thirty years, since childhood.
	HAMLET How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?	HAMLET How long will a man lie in his grave before he starts to rot?

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 8

	Original Text	Modern Text
	GRAVEDIGGER Faith, if he be not rotten before he die—as we have many pocky corses nowadays that will scarce hold the laying in—he will last you some eight year or nine year. A tanner will last you nine year.	GRAVEDIGGER Well, if he's not rotten before he dies (and there are a lot of people now who are so rotten they start falling to pieces even before you put them in the coffin), he'll last eight or nine years. A leathermaker will last nine years.
	HAMLET Why he more than another?	HAMLET Why does he last longer?
	GRAVEDIGGER Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade that he will keep out water a great while, and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. <i>(indicates a skull)</i> Here's a skull now. This skull has lain in the earth	GRAVEDIGGER Because his hide is so leathery from his trade that he keeps the water off him a long time, and water is what makes your goddamn body rot more than anything. Here's a skull that's been here twenty-three years.

	three-and-twenty years.	
	HAMLET Whose was it?	HAMLET Whose was it?
	GRAVEDIGGER A whoreson mad fellow's it was. Whose do you think it was?	GRAVEDIGGER A crazy bastard. Who do you think?
	HAMLET Nay, I know not.	HAMLET I really don't know.
155	GRAVEDIGGER A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! He poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.	GRAVEDIGGER Damn that crazy madman! He poured a pitcher of white wine on my head once. This is the skull of Yorick, the king's jester.
	HAMLET This?	HAMLET This one?
	GRAVEDIGGER E'en that.	GRAVEDIGGER Yes, that one.
	HAMLET Let me see. <i>(takes the skull)</i> 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 set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning? Quite chapfallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come. Make her laugh at that.—Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.	HAMLET Let me see. <i>(he takes the skull)</i> Oh, poor Yorick! I used to know him, Horatio—a very funny guy, and with an excellent imagination. He carried me on his back a thousand times, and now—how terrible—this is him. It makes my stomach turn. I don't know how many times I kissed the lips that used to be right here. Where are your jokes now? Your pranks? Your songs? Your flashes of wit that used to set the whole table laughing? You don't make anybody smile now. Are you sad about that? You need to go to my lady's room and tell her that no matter how much makeup she slathers on, she'll end up just like you some day. That'll make her laugh. Horatio, tell me something

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 9

	Original Text	Modern Text
	HORATIO What's that, my lord?	HORATIO What's that, my lord?
	HAMLET Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' th' earth?	HAMLET Do you think Alexander the Great looked like this when he was buried?
175	HORATIO E'en so.	HORATIO Exactly like that.
	HAMLET And smelt so? Pah! <i>(puts down the skull)</i>	HAMLET And smelled like that, too? Whew! <i>(he puts down the skull)</i>
	HORATIO E'en so, my lord.	HORATIO Just as bad, my lord.
	HAMLET To what base uses we may return, Horatio. Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bung-hole?	HAMLET How low we can fall, Horatio. Isn't it possible to imagine that the noble ashes of Alexander the Great could end up plugging a hole in a barrel?
	HORATIO 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.	HORATIO If you thought that you'd be thinking too much.
190	HAMLET No, faith, not a jot. But to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it, as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust, the dust is earth, of earth we make loam—and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer barrel? Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay, Might stop a hole to keep the wind away. Oh, that that earth, which kept the world in awe, Should patch a wall t' expel the winter's flaw!	HAMLET No, not at all. Just follow the logic: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returned to dust, the dust is dirt, and dirt makes mud we use to stop up holes. So why can't someone plug a beer barrel with the dirt that used to be Alexander? The great emperor Caesar, dead and turned to clay, might plug up a hole to keep the wind away. Oh, to think that the same body that once ruled the world could now patch up a wall! But quiet, be quiet a minute.

	But soft, but soft a while.	
	<i>Enter King CLAUDIUS, Queen GERTRUDE, LAERTES, and a coffin, with a PRIEST and other lords attendant.</i>	<i>CLAUDIUS enters with GERTRUDE, LAERTES, and a coffin, with a PRIEST and other lords attendant.</i>
195	Here comes the king, The queen, the courtiers—who is this they follow, And with such maimèd rites? This doth betoken The corse they follow did with desperate hand Fordo its own life. 'Twas of some estate. Couch we a while and mark.	Here comes the king, the queen, and the noblemen of court. Who are they following? And with such a plain and scrawny ceremony? It means the corpse they're following took its own life. Must have been from a wealthy family. Let's stay and watch a while.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 10

	Original Text	Modern Text
	<i>HAMLET and HORATIO withdraw</i>	<i>HAMLET and HORATIO step aside.</i>
	LAERTES What ceremony else?	LAERTES What other rites are you going to give her?
	HAMLET That is Laertes, a very noble youth, mark.	HAMLET That's Laertes, a very noble young man. Listen.
	LAERTES What ceremony else?	LAERTES What other rites are you going to give her?
200 205	PRIEST Her obsequies have been as far enlarged As we have warranty. Her death was doubtful, And, but that great command o'ersways the order, She should in ground unsanctified have lodged Till the last trumpet. For charitable prayers Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her. Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants, Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home Of bell and burial.	PRIEST I've performed as many rites as I'm permitted. Her death was suspicious, and were it not for the fact that the king gave orders to bury her here, she'd have been buried outside the church graveyard. She deserves to have rocks and stones thrown on her body. But she has had prayers read for her and is dressed up like a pure virgin, with flowers tossed on her grave and the bell tolling for her.
	LAERTES Must there no more be done?	LAERTES Isn't there any other rite you can perform?
210	PRIEST No more be done. We should profane the service of the dead To sing a requiem and such rest to her As to peace-parted souls.	PRIEST No, nothing. We would profane the other dead souls here if we sang the same requiem for her that we sang for them.
215	LAERTES Lay her i' th' earth, And from her fair and unpolluted flesh May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest, A ministering angel shall my sister be When thou liest howling.	LAERTES Lay her in the ground, and let violets bloom from her lovely and pure flesh! I'm telling you, you jerk priest, my sister will be an angel in heaven while you're howling in hell.
	HAMLET (to HORATIO) What, the fair Ophelia?	HAMLET (to HORATIO) What, the beautiful Ophelia?

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 11

	Original Text	Modern Text
220	GERTRUDE Sweets to the sweet. Farewell! (<i>scatters flowers</i>) I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife. I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid, And not have strewed thy grave.	QUEEN Sweet flowers for a sweet girl. Goodbye! (<i>she scatters flowers</i>) I once hoped you'd be my Hamlet's wife. I thought I'd be tossing flowers on your wedding bed, my sweet girl, not on your grave.

225	LAERTES Oh, treble woe Fall ten times treble on that cursèd head, Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth awhile Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.	LAERTES Oh, damn three times, damn ten times the evil man whose wicked deed deprived you of your ingenious mind. Hold off burying her until I've caught her in my arms once more.
	<i>(leaps into the grave)</i>	<i>(he jumps into the grave)</i>
230	Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead, Till of this flat a mountain you have made, T' o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head Of blue Olympus.	Now pile the dirt onto the living and the dead alike, till you've made a mountain higher than Mount Pelion or Mount Olympus.
	HAMLET <i>(comes forward)</i> What is he whose grief Bears such an emphasis, whose phrase of sorrow Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I, Hamlet the Dane. <i>(leaps into the grave)</i>	HAMLET <i>(coming forward)</i> Who is the one whose grief is so loud and clear, whose words of sadness make the planets stand still in the heavens as if they've been hurt by what they've heard? It's me, Hamlet the Dane. <i>(he jumps into the grave)</i>
235	LAERTES The devil take thy soul!	LAERTES To hell with your soul!
	<i>HAMLET and LAERTES grapple</i>	<i>HAMLET and LAERTES wrestle with each other.</i>
240	HAMLET Thou pray'st not well. I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat, For though I am not splenitive and rash, Yet have I something in me dangerous, Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand.	HAMLET That's no way to pray. <i>(they fight)</i> Please take your hands off my throat. I may not be rash and quick to anger, but I have something dangerous in me which you should beware of. Take your hands off.
	CLAUDIUS Pluck them asunder.	CLAUDIUS Pull them apart.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 12

	Original Text	Modern Text
	GERTRUDE Hamlet, Hamlet!	GERTRUDE Hamlet! Hamlet!
	ALL Gentlemen—	ALL Gentlemen!
	HORATIO <i>(to HAMLET)</i> Good my lord, be quiet.	HORATIO <i>(to HAMLET)</i> Please, my lord, calm down.
	<i>Attendants separate HAMLET and LAERTES</i>	<i>Attendants separate HAMLET and LAERTES</i>
245	HAMLET Why, I will fight with him upon this theme Until my eyelids will no longer wag.	HAMLET I'll fight him over this issue till I don't have the strength to blink.
	GERTRUDE O my son, what theme?	GERTRUDE Oh, my son, what issue is that?
	HAMLET I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers Could not with all their quantity of love Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?	HAMLET I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers, if you added all their love together, couldn't match mine. What are you going to do for her?
250	CLAUDIUS O, he is mad, Laertes.	CLAUDIUS Oh, he's crazy, Laertes!
	GERTRUDE For love of God, forbear him.	GERTRUDE For the love of God, be patient with him.

255	HAMLET 'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do. 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. And if thou prate of mountains let them throw Millions of acres on us, till our ground, 260 Singeing his pate against the burning zone, Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth, I'll rant as well as thou.	HAMLET Damn it, show me what you're going to do for her. Will you cry? Fight? Stop eating? Cut yourself? Drink vinegar? Eat a crocodile? I'll do all that. Did you come here to whine? To outdo me by jumping into her grave so theatrically? To be buried alive with her? So will I. And if you rattle on about mountains, then let them throw millions of acres over us. It will be so high a peak that it scrapes against heaven and makes Mount Ossa look like a wart. See? I can talk crazy as well as you.
265	GERTRUDE This is mere madness. And thus a while the fit will work on him. Anon, as patient as the female dove When that her golden couplets are disclosed, His silence will sit drooping.	GERTRUDE This is pure insanity. He'll be like this for a little while. Then he'll be as calm and quiet as a dove waiting for her eggs to hatch.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 13

	Original Text	Modern Text
270	HAMLET Hear you, sir. What is the reason that you use me thus? I loved you ever. But it is no matter. Let Hercules himself do what he may, The cat will mew and dog will have his day.	HAMLET Listen, sir, why do you treat me like this? I always loved you. But it doesn't matter. Even a hero like Hercules can't keep cats from acting like cats, and dogs like dogs.
	<i>Exit HAMLET</i>	<i>HAMLET exits.</i>
	CLAUDIUS I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.	CLAUDIUS Please, Horatio, go with him.
	<i>Exit HORATIO</i>	<i>HORATIO exits.</i>
275	(to LAERTES) Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech. We'll put the matter to the present push.— Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.— This grave shall have a living monument. An hour of quiet shortly shall we see. Till then in patience our proceeding be.	(to LAERTES) Don't forget our talk last night, and try to be patient. We'll take care of this problem soon.—Gertrude, have the guards keep an eye on your son. A monument shall be built for Ophelia that will last forever, I promise. We'll have the quiet we need soon. In the meantime, let's proceed patiently.
	<i>Exeunt</i>	<i>They exit.</i>