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HAM/THELLO:

THE MOOR OF DENMARK

**A new play by
William Shakespeare
& Jeff Goode**

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HAM/THELLO: THE MOOR OF DENMARK

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#1806-B

GENERAL PREFACE TO THE SERIES

They say that “familiarity breeds contempt” and there is no playwright, living or dead, whose work is more familiar to audiences the world over, than William Shakespeare. Four hundred years of almost continuous production, adaptation and recitation have ensured that even the completely uninitiated have a working knowledge of the Bard that can render some of his finest works formulaic.

What grade-schooler doesn’t know that the love affair in *ROMEO AND JULIET* turns out badly? Or that the famous speech in *HAMLET* goes: “To be, or not to be, yadda yadda yadda...”? And in a medium where suspense is everything—where dramatic twists and comic turns both depend upon the element of surprise—having such a well-versed fan-base can be problematic. Ironically, the most gifted dramatist in history is often hard-pressed to impress our jaded modern audience, simply because it is impossible to remove their foreknowledge of the story and allow them to experience the plays in the unadulterated context in which Shakespeare’s contemporaries saw them for the very first time.

The New Plays of William Shakespeare were developed as a means to a fresh perspective on these classic texts. Each play in the series intertwines two of the extant works to create an original script with authentically Shakespearean language, verse and characters, in new and unexpected situations whose outcome may still be in doubt.

The plays in this series are designed to be read, performed and enjoyed just as you would the traditional works of Shakespeare. Performers familiar with the canon will find that great lengths have been taken to preserve the integrity and intention of the original verse, rhyme and imagery. Conventions of Elizabethan stagecraft, dramaturgical analysis and scansion apply to the new plays as to the originals. Only the action is up in the air.

The series also seeks to address challenges common to present day production companies, such as cast size and imbalance of male and female roles.

It is hoped that these plays might offer both performers and audiences new insight into the genius and mastery of Shakespeare, freed of a few centuries’ preconception, and perhaps with a few surprises still intact.

HAM/THELLO: THE MOOR OF DENMARK was first performed September 1st, 2007, at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, as part of the Page-to-Stage New Play Festival, a production of the Washington Shakespeare Company.

Directed by Gaurav Gopalan

Featuring:

Robert Rector
as Hamlet

Theo Hadjimichael
as Othello

Leslie Sarah Cohen
as Ophelia

Suejin Song
as Desdemona

elisha efua bartels
as Iago

Jessica Lynn Roderiguez
as Bianca and Player Queen

Frank Britton
as Player King and Clown

Melissa Hmelnicky
as Horatio

John Geoffrion

J.J. Area

William LeDent

Directorial Assistant
Lewis Stevenson

THE MOOR'S DENMARK

It is a time of war in peace-loving Denmark, and only the heroics of their Moorish general Othello have saved the pacifist Danes from the invading Poles.

With the sudden and unexpected death of the late King Hamlet, the Danes (and Queen Desdemona) have rewarded their victorious general with the crown of Denmark, to the consternation of those loyal to the old King and young Prince Hamlet.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

OTHELLO, *King of Denmark, a noble Moor in military service to the Danes*

HAMLET, *son to the late King*

IAGO, *Othello's jester*

HORATIO, *friend to Hamlet*

MARCELLUS, *a soldier*

DESDEMONA, *Queen of Denmark, mother to Hamlet*

OPHELIA, *daughter to Iago, bodyguard to the Queen*

BIANCA, *a henchperson*

FRANCISCO, *a soldier*

PLAYERS

CLOWN, *servant to Ophelia*

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Herald, Gentlemen and Attendants

DOUBLING OF ROLES

In Elizabethan and Jacobean England, it was illegal for women to appear upon the public stage. Hence, the plays of Shakespeare were written to be performed by an all-male company of actors with only a handful of female characters – largely secondary roles played by boys.

These male-heavy casts present a challenge in modern-day stagings, where acting companies usually consist of a more balanced troupe of men and women. To accommodate this, gender-blind casting¹ is recommended for the plays of Shakespeare, as well as gender-reversal², to adapt the plays to the available talent pool.

For example, the following breakdown for this play yields an abbreviated cast of nine actors - five men, four women:

MALE	FEMALE
Othello	Desdemona
Hamlet	Ophelia
Iago	Bianca / Attendant / Clown
Horatio	Francisco / Herald / Player
Marcellus / Player	

¹ Casting the best actor for the part, regardless of their gender.

² Changing the sex of the character to fit the actor who will be playing the part.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

William Shakespeare is an English poet and playwright, generally regarded as the greatest writer in the English language, and by many as the greatest dramatist in history. His extant work includes 37 plays, 154 sonnets, and a number of other poems and collaborations. His plays have been translated into virtually every language and performed throughout the world.

Jeff Goode is an American director, playwright and screenwriter. He is the creator of the Disney Channel's animated series *American Dragon: Jake Long*, and the author of over 50 plays and musicals, including *The Eight: Reindeer Monologues*.

NEW PLAYS BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & JEFF GOODE:

Romeo & Julius [Caesar]

Ham/thello: the Moor of Denmark

Lear's Labour's Lost

ACT I – The Ghost on the Platform

SCENE 1 – Elsinore. A platform before the castle.

(FRANCISCO, a sentinel, at his post. Enter IAGO the king's jester.)

IAGO. Who's there?

FRANCISCO. Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

IAGO. Long live the king!

FRANCISCO. Iago?

IAGO. He.

FRANCISCO. You come most carefully upon your hour.

IAGO. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,

The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

FRANCISCO. Long live the king!

IAGO. Long live good King Othello.

(Exit FRANCISCO. Enter BIANCA, with a GHOST costume.)

BIANCA. Thou told'st me thou didst hold him in thy hate.

(IAGO helps BIANCA into her disguise.)

IAGO. I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor:

Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the city,

In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,

Off-capp'd to him: and, by the faith of man,

I know my price, I am worth no worse a place:

But he; as loving his own pride and purposes,

Nonsuits my mediators; for, 'Certes,' says he,

'I have already chose my officer.'

And what was he? Forsooth, a great politician,
Prince Hamlet, son of King Othello's queen.
He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
And I—God bless the mark!—his Moorship's jester.

BIANCA. By heaven, I rather would have been his hang-man.

IAGO. Why, there's no remedy; 'tis the curse of service,
Preferment goes by letter and affection,
And not by old gradation, where each second
Stood heir to the first. So now, be judge yourself,
Whether I in any just term am affined
To love the Moor.

BIANCA. I would not follow him then.

IAGO. O, sooth, content you;
I follow him to serve my turn upon him:
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
But seeming so, for my peculiar end.

BIANCA. What a fall fortune does the thicklips owe
If he can carry't thus!

IAGO. My cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason. Let
us be conjunctive in our revenge against him.

BIANCA. I think I hear them.

IAGO. You were best go in.
Thou art sure of me:—go, make mischief.

(Exit BIANCA.)

Alas, poor rogue! I think, i' faith, she loves me.
While I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
If I would time expend with such a snipe.
But for my sport and profit.

(Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.)

Stand, ho! Who's there?

HORATIO. Friends to this ground.

MARCELLUS. And liegemen to the
Moor.

IAGO. What, is Horatio there?

HORATIO. A piece of him.

IAGO. Welcome, Horatio: welcome, good Marcellus.

MARCELLUS. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

IAGO. I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,

And will not let belief take hold of him

Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us.

HORATIO. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

IAGO. Sit down awhile;

And let us once again assail your ears,

That are so fortified against our story

What we have two nights seen—

(Enter BIANCA, disguised as a GHOST.)

MARCELLUS. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!

IAGO. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

MARCELLUS. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

IAGO. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

HORATIO. Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

IAGO. It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS. Question it, Horatio.

HORATIO. What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,

Together with that fair and warlike form

In which the majesty of buried Denmark

Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!

IAGO. It is offended.

MARCELLUS. See, it stalks away!

HORATIO. Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

(Exit GHOST.)

IAGO. How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:

Is not this something more than fantasy?

HORATIO. Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

IAGO. Is it not like the king?

HORATIO. As thou art to thyself.

MARCELLUS. Thus twice before, and jump at this dead
hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

HORATIO. In what particular thought to work I know not;
But in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

MARCELLUS. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.

IAGO. But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!

(Re-enter GHOST.)

HORATIO. I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!

(Cock crows.)

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid, O, speak!
Speak of it: stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.

MARCELLUS. Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

HORATIO. Do, if it will not stand.

IAGO. 'Tis here!

HORATIO. 'Tis here!

MARCELLUS. 'Tis gone!

(Exit GHOST.)

IAGO. It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

MARCELLUS. Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

HORATIO. Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most conveniently.

IAGO. Pray you, lead on.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE 2 – A street.

(Enter a HERALD with a proclamation.)

HERALD. It is King Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere perdition of the Polish fleet, every man put himself into triumph; some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him: for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptial. So much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open, and there is full liberty of feasting from this present hour of five till the bell have told eleven. Heaven bless the state of Denmark and his royal majesty Othello!

(Exit.)

SCENE 3 – A room of state in the castle.

(Enter **KING OTHELLO**, **QUEEN DESDEMONA**,
OPHELIA the queen's bodyguard, Lords, and Attendants,
and **PRINCE HAMLET**, drunk.)

OTHELLO. Though yet of Hamlet our dear sovereign's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime queen, and now our wife,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,—
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
But now, lieutenant Hamlet, and my son,—

HAMLET. [*Aside*] A little more than kin, and less than kind.

OTHELLO. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET. Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.

DESDEMONA. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

OTHELLO. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,
Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father:
But now, good son, we pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father: for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne;
And with no less nobility of love
Than that which dearest father bears his son,
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,

It is most retrograde to our desire:
 And we beseech you, bend you to remain
 Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
 Our chiefest courtier, captain, and our son.

DESDEMONA. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:
 I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

HAMLET. [*To OTHELLO*] O thou foul thief, where hast thou
 stow'd my mother?
 Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her;
 For I'll refer me to all things of sense,
 If she in chains of magic were not bound,
 Whether a queen so loyal, fair and happy,
 Would ever have, to incur a general mock,
 Run from her grievage to the sooty bosom
 Of such a thing as thou, to fear, not to delight.
 It is a judgment maim'd and most imperfect
 Why this should be. I therefore vouch again
 That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
 Or with some dram conjured to this effect,
 Thou wrought upon her.

OTHELLO. To vouch this, is no proof.

DESDEMONA. Come, hold your peace.

HAMLET. 'Twill out, 'twill out: I
 peace?

No, I will speak as liberal as the north:
 Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,
 All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

(Points to a portrait of the late King hanging over the throne.)

This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:
 Here is your husband; like a mildew'd 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?
 So excellent a king; that was, to this,

Hyperion to a satyr;—

DESDEMONA. Come, you're drunk.

HAMLET. A king of shreds and patches,— Drunk!

OTHELLO. Be wise,

And get you home.

HAMLET. I will not. Let me go, sir,

Or I'll knock you o'er the mazzard.

OTHELLO. I'll make thee an example.

HAMLET. Do thy worst.

(OTHELLO threatens to strike HAMLET. DESDEMONA comes between them.)

DESDEMONA. Nay, good Othello;

I pray you, sweet, hold your hand.

[To HAMLET] For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl.

OTHELLO. Hamlet, I love thee,

But never more be officer of mine.

[To DESDEMONA] Come, my dear love,

The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue;

That profit's yet to come 'tween me and you.

Good night.

DESDEMONA. We will have more of this to-morrow.

Hamlet, good night: to-morrow with your earliest

Let me have speech with you.

HAMLET. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

OTHELLO. Go, Hamlet, look you to the guard to-night.

[To DESDEMONA] Come away.

(Exeunt all but HAMLET.)

HAMLET. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt

Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!

Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd

His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!

How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,

Seem to me all the uses of this world!
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

(Exit HAMLET. Re-enter OPHELIA and Attendant.)

ATTENDANT. O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil!

OPHELIA. But is he often thus?

ATTENDANT. 'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep:
He'll watch the horologe a double set,
If drink rock not his cradle.

OPHELIA. O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains!

ATTENDANT. O heavenly powers, restore him!

(Enter IAGO. Attendant exits.)

IAGO. What is't, Ophelia, she hath said to you?

OPHELIA. So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

IAGO. Marry, well bethought:

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous:
If it be so, as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution, I must tell you,
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so slander any moment leisure,
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you: come your ways.

OPHELIA. But, good my father,
He hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

IAGO. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,
You must not take for fire. From this time
Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence,

Else weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaster'd importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear daughter,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.

OPHELIA. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
As watchman to my heart.

IAGO. For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood;
No more.

OPHELIA. No more but so?

IAGO. Think it no more.

OPHELIA. I shall obey, my lord.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE 4 – The lobby of the castle.

(Enter HAMLET. Enter to him, HORATIO and MARCELLUS.)

HORATIO. Hail to your lordship!

HAMLET. I am glad to see you well:

Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

HORATIO. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

HAMLET. But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

HORATIO. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

HAMLET. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;

I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

HORATIO. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

HAMLET. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked meats

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!

My father!—methinks I see my father.

HORATIO. Where, my lord?

HAMLET. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

HORATIO. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAMLET. Saw? who?

HORATIO. My lord, the king your father.

HAMLET. The king my
father?

HORATIO. Two nights together had this gentlemen,

Marcellus, and Iago, on their watch,

In the dead vast and middle of the night,

Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father

Appears before them, and with solemn march

Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd

By their oppress'd and fear-surprisèd eyes.

And I with them the third night kept the watch.

HAMLET. But where was this?

MARCELLUS. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

HAMLET. I would I had been there.

HORATIO. It would have much amazed you.

HAMLET. I will watch to-night;
Perchance 'twill walk again.

HORATIO. I warrant it will.

HAMLET. Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

HORATIO & MARCELLUS. Our duty to your honour.

HAMLET. Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

(Exeunt all but HAMLET.)

Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

(Enter IAGO, with drink.)

Welcome, Iago; we must to the watch.

IAGO. Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not yet ten o' the clock.
Our general cast us thus early for the love of his Desdemonia; who let us not therefore blame: he hath not yet made wanton the night with her; and she is sport for Jove.

HAMLET. Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is woman!—

IAGO. Well, happiness to their sheets!— Come, lieutenant, I have a stoup of wine; and here without are a brace of Danish gallants that would fain have a measure to the health of black Othello.

HAMLET. Not to-night, good Iago: I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking: I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

IAGO. O, they are our friends; but one cup: I'll drink for you.

HAMLET. I have drunk but one cup to-night, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

IAGO. What, man! 'tis a night of revels: the gallants desire

it.

HAMLET. Where are they?

IAGO. Here at the door; I pray you, call them in.

HAMLET. I'll do't; but it dislikes me.

(Exit.)

IAGO. If I can fasten but one cup upon him,

With that which he hath drunk to-night already,

The better shall my purpose work on him.

Some wine, ho!

(Exit, and re-enter with HAMLET and others, singing.)

And let me the canakin clink, clink;

And let me the canakin clink

A soldier's a man;

A life's but a span;

Why, then, let a soldier drink.

Some wine, boys!

HAMLET. 'Fore God, an excellent song.

IAGO. To the health of our general!

HAMLET. To the platform, masters; come, let's set the watch.

(IAGO follows him out, singing.)

IAGO. *King Stephen was a worthy peer;*

His breeches cost him but a crown;

He held them sixpence all too dear,

With that he call'd the tailor lown—

(Exeunt.)

SCENE 5 – The platform.

(Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.)

MARCELLUS. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HORATIO. It is a nipping and an eager air.

HAMLET. What hour now?

HORATIO. I think it lacks of twelve.

MARCELLUS. No, it is struck.

HORATIO. Indeed? I heard it not: then it draws near the
season

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

(Enter HAMLET and IAGO, singing.)

IAGO & HAMLET. *He was a wight of high renown,*

And thou art but of low degree:

'Tis pride that pulls the country down;

Then take thine auld cloak about thee.

HAMLET. Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

IAGO. Some wine, ho!

HAMLET. Do not think, gentlemen. I am drunk: this is my
ancient; this is my right hand, and this is my left: I am
not drunk now; I can stand well enough, and speak
well enough.

ALL. Excellent well.

HAMLET. Why, very well then; you must not think then that
I am drunk.

HORATIO & MARCELLUS. My lord, we will not.

IAGO. Call up your father,

Rouse him: make after him, poison his delight.

What, ho, King Hamlet!

HAMLET. Father, Hamlet, ho!

IAGO. Awake! what, ho, King Hamlet! thieves! thieves!
thieves!

Look to your crown, your kingdom and your wife!
Thieves! thieves!

HAMLET. Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
Is topping your white ewe. Arise, arise;
Or else the devil will make a cuckold of you.

IAGO. Arise, I say.

You'll have your Desdemona covered with a Barbary
horse; you'll have your half-sons neigh to you; you'll
have coursers for cousins and gennets for germans.

HORATIO. Look, my lord, it comes!

(Enter BIANCA, disguised as the GHOST.)

GHOST. What is the reason of this terrible summons?
What is the matter there?

(HAMLET is stricken sober.)

HAMLET. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

IAGO. Why, but you are now well enough: how came you
thus recovered?

HAMLET. It hath pleased the devil drunkenness to give
place to the devil dread; one unperfectness shows me
another, to make me frankly despise myself.

(GHOST beckons HAMLET.)

MARCELLUS. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

HAMLET. Then I will follow it.

HORATIO. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea.

MARCELLUS. You shall not go, my lord.

HAMLET. Hold off your
hands.

HORATIO. Be ruled; you shall not go.

HAMLET. My fate cries out,
Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!
I say, away! Go on; I'll follow thee.

(Exeunt GHOST and HAMLET.)

MARCELLUS. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HORATIO. Heaven will direct it.

MARCELLUS. Nay, let's follow him.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE 6 – Another part of the platform.

(Enter **GHOST** and **HAMLET**.)

HAMLET. Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.

GHOST. Mark me.

HAMLET. I will. Speak; I am bound to hear.

GHOST. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAMLET. What?

GHOST. I am thy father's spirit,

Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul. List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

HAMLET. O God!

GHOST. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET. Murder!

GHOST. Murder most foul, as in the best it is;

But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

HAMLET. Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift,
May sweep to my revenge.

GHOST. I find thee apt;
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forgèd process of my death
Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

HAMLET. O my prophetic soul!
Othello!

GHOST. 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 Othello stole,
 With juice of cursèd hebenon in a vial,
 And in the porches of my ears did pour't.
 Thus was I, sleeping, by Othello's hand
 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd:
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.

HAMLET. My black and bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
 Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
 Till that a capable and wide revenge
 Swallow him up. Now, by yond marble heaven,
 In the due reverence of a sacred vow
 I here engage my words.

GHOST. Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.

(Exit.)

HAMLET. Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
 In this distracted globe. Remember thee!
 O most pernicious woman!
 O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain!

HORATIO & MARCELLUS.

[Within] My lord, my lord,—

(Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS and IAGO.)

MARCELLUS. Lord Hamlet,—

HORATIO. Heaven
 secure him!

HAMLET. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.

MARCELLUS. How is't, my noble lord?

HORATIO. What news, my lord?

HAMLET. O, wonderful!

IAGO. Good my lord, tell it.

HAMLET. No; you'll reveal it.

HORATIO. Not I, my lord, by heaven.

MARCELLUS. Nor I, my lord.

HAMLET. Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands upon my sword, and swear:
Never to speak of this that you have heard,
Swear by my sword.

GHOST. [*Beneath*] Swear.

HAMLET. Never make known what you have seen to-night.

HORATIO, MARCELLUS & IAGO. My lord, we will not.

GHOST. [*Beneath*] Swear.

HAMLET. Rest, rest, perturbèd spirit!

(*They swear.*)

Let us go in together;
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.

(*Exit HORATIO and MARCELLUS.*)

The time is out of joint: O cursèd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!

IAGO. What's the matter, lieutenant?

HAMLET. Iago,—

IAGO. What say'st thou, noble heart?

HAMLET. What will I do, thinkest thou?

IAGO. Why, go to bed, and sleep.

HAMLET. I will incontinently drown myself.

IAGO. If thou dost, I shall never love thee after.

Why, thou silly gentleman!

HAMLET. It is silliness to live when to live is torment; and
then have we a prescription to die when death is our
physician.

IAGO. O villainous! If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it
a more delicate way than drowning. Come, be a man.
Drown thyself! drown cats and blind puppies.

HAMLET. I do not know

Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do;'
Sith I have cause and will and not the means
To do't. The general will not speak with me.

IAGO. What, man! there are ways to recover the general
again.

HAMLET. I will ask him for my place again; he shall tell me
I am a drunkard!

IAGO. You or any man living may be drunk! at a time, man.
I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is
now the general: confess yourself freely to her; importune
her help to put you in your place again: this broken joint
between you and her husband entreat her to splinter; and, my
fortunes against any lay worth naming, this crack of your
love shall grow stronger than it was before.

HAMLET. Then is doomsday near.

IAGO. Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home.

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

IAGO. Cudgel thy brains no more about it.

HAMLET. You advise me well. And betimes in the morning
I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake
for me: I am desperate of my fortunes if they cheque
me here.

IAGO. Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure on't.

(Exit HAMLET.)

And what's he then that says I play the villain?
When this advice is free I give and honest,
Probal to thinking and indeed the course
To win the Moor again?
How am I then a villain
To counsel Hamlet to this parallel course,
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
When devils will the blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now: for whiles this honest fool
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear:
That he is too familiar with his wife.

After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
That she repeals him for her body's lust;
And by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all.

(Exit.)

ACT II – The Handkerchief

SCENE 1 – A street. Beneath Ophelia's window.

(Enter HAMLET.)

HAMLET. Hillo, ho, ho, my sweet! I do beseech you
That I may speak with you! How now, Ophelia!

(Enter CLOWN [Ophelia's Attendant].)

CLOWN. How, sir, how! What, have you lost your wits?

HAMLET. Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

CLOWN. No, I hear not your honest friend; I hear you.

HAMLET. Prithee, keep up thy quillets. There's a poor piece
of gold for thee: if the gentlewoman that attends the
general's wife be stirring, tell her there's one Hamlet
entreats her a little favour of speech: wilt thou do
this?

CLOWN. She is stirring, sir: if she will stir hither, I shall seem
to notify unto her.

HAMLET. Do, good my friend.

CLOWN. Before me! look, where she comes.

(Enter OPHELIA, armed.)

OPHELIA. What, are you mad? I charge you, get you home.

HAMLET. Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of heaven,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee all around!

OPHELIA. The worser welcome:
I have charged thee not to haunt about my doors:
In honest plainness thou hast heard me say
That I am not for thee; and now, in madness,
Being full of supper and distempering draughts,

Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come
To start my quiet.

HAMLET. Patience, good maid.—

OPHELIA. But thou must needs be sure
My spirit and my place have in them power
To make this bitter to thee.

(She draws her rapier.)

HAMLET. Diablo, ho!
God's will, Ophelia, hold!

(HAMLET offers her a pair of letters.)

Here's letters seal'd:
This to her majesty; this to yourself.
Yet, I beseech you,— Dost thou hear, Ophelia?
If you think fit, or that it may be done,
Give me advantage of some brief discourse
With Desdemona alone.

(OPHELIA seizes the letters and thrashes him with them.)

OPHELIA. Nay, get thee gone.

By the mass, 'tis morning;
Retire thee; go where thou art billeted:
Away, I say! My house is not a grange.
[to CLOWN] Come, guard the door without; let him not
pass.

(Exit OPHELIA and CLOWN. Enter IAGO.)

HAMLET. In happy time, Iago.

IAGO. You have not been a-bed, then?

HAMLET. Why, no; the day had broke
Before we parted.

IAGO. What is the matter, my lord?

HAMLET. I have made bold, Iago,
To send in to your daughter: my suit to her
Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona

Procure me some access.

There is no other way; 'tis she must do't.

IAGO. Do you withdraw yourself a little while,
I'll send her to you presently.

HAMLET. I humbly thank you for't.

(Exit HAMLET.)

IAGO. Two things are to be done:

My daughter must for Hamlet move her mistress;

I'll set her on;

Myself the while to draw the Moor apart,

And bring him jump when he may Hamlet find

Soliciting his wife: ay, that's the way

Dull not device by coldness and delay.

[Calls within] How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

(Re-enter OPHELIA.)

OPHELIA. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

IAGO. With what, i' the name of God?

OPHELIA. My lord, as I was studying my rapier

Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced;

As if he had been loosèd out of hell

To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.

IAGO. Mad for thy love?

OPHELIA. My lord, I do not know;

But truly, I do fear it.

(Gives him the letters.)

Here is a letter;

And here another: the one of them imports

His noble love in honourable fashion.

IAGO. Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

What, have you given him any hard words of late?

OPHELIA. No, my good lord, but, as you did command,

I did repel his fetters and denied

His access to me.

IAGO. That hath made him mad.
Come, go with me: I will go seek the king.
This must be known; which, being kept close, might
move
More grief to hide than hate to utter love.
Fetch Desdemona hither. The affair cries haste,
And speed must answer it.
Bid her come hither: go.

OPHELIA. I will, my lord.
(Exit OPHELIA. IAGO reads over the letters.)

IAGO. Words, words, words.
This is too long.
It shall to the barber's.
(Tears the letter in half.)
Now here's another discontented paper:
I'll tear it all to pieces.
(Tears the second letter to pieces.)
I confess it is my shame to be so rash; but it is in my
virtue to amend it;
*(Pieces the letter back together again, in a different
order.)*
Devise a new commission, write it fair:
(The task completed, IAGO admires his creation.)
O, 'tis most sweet,
When in one line two crafts directly meet.
And this may help to thicken other proofs
That do demonstrate thinly.
(Exit.)

SCENE 2 – The lobby of the castle.

(Enter KING OTHELLO, HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and Attendants.)

OTHELLO. Welcome, Marcellus and my dear Horatio!
The need we have to use you did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation; so 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,
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time: so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

(Enter IAGO.)

HORATIO. Your majesty might, by your sovereign power,
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

MARCELLUS. But we both obey.

OTHELLO. Thanks, good Marcellus and Horatio.

(Exit MARCELLUS and HORATIO.)

IAGO. This business is well ended.
And I do think, my lord, that I have found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

OTHELLO. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

IAGO. I will be brief: your noble son is mad.

OTHELLO. Mad call you it?

He is importunate, indeed distract.—

IAGO. That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true 'tis pity;

And pity 'tis 'tis true: a foolish figure.
 I have a daughter—have while she is mine—
 Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
 Hath given me this:

(Shows OTHELLO the letter.)

Know you the hand?

OTHELLO. 'Tis Hamlet's character.

IAGO. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:
 Found in the pocket of Queen Desdemona.

OTHELLO. Ha!

IAGO. Now gather, and surmise.

[Reads] To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most
 beautified— Desdemona,— In her excellent white
 bosom, these, &c.'—

OTHELLO. Came this from Hamlet to her?

IAGO. Good general, stay awhile; I will be faithful.

[Reads] 'Doubt thou the stars are fire;

Doubt that the sun doth move;

Doubt truth to be a liar;

But never doubt I love.—

'O Desdemona,— You shall know I am set naked on
 your kingdom—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.'

OTHELLO. How! is this true?

IAGO. Here's the commission: read it at more leisure.

*(OTHELLO takes the letter from IAGO, and reads it
 over.)*

OTHELLO. 'Naked'! And in a postscript here, he says 'alone.'

IAGO. 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.—

OTHELLO. What means this, my lord?

IAGO. But how hath she
Received his love?

OTHELLO. What dost thou say, Iago?

IAGO. I must tell thee this—Desdemona is directly in love
with him.

OTHELLO. With him! why, 'tis not possible.

IAGO. You have seen nothing then?

OTHELLO. Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

IAGO. Yes, you have seen Hamlet and she together.

OTHELLO. But then I saw no harm, and then I heard
Each syllable that breath made up between them.

IAGO. What, did they never whisper?

OTHELLO. Never, my lord.

IAGO. Nor send you out o' the way?

OTHELLO. Never.

IAGO. To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing?

OTHELLO. Never, my lord.

IAGO. Nay, but be wise: yet we see nothing done.

OTHELLO. I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

IAGO. Long live she so! and long live you to think so!

OTHELLO. Think so, Iago!

IAGO. I dare be sworn I think that she is honest.

OTHELLO. Think, my lord?

IAGO. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

OTHELLO. Give me a living reason she's disloyal.

IAGO. What,

If I had said I had seen him do you wrong?

Or heard him say,—

OTHELLO. Hath he said any thing?

IAGO. I think nothing, my lord.

OTHELLO. Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay,
speak.

Be even and direct with me.

IAGO. I do not like the office:

But, sith I am enter'd in this cause so far,
Prick'd to't by foolish honesty and love,
I will go on. I lay with Hamlet lately;
And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
I could not sleep.

There are a kind of men so loose of soul,
That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs:
One of this kind is Hamlet:

In sleep I heard him say 'Sweet Desdemona,
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves;'
And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,
Cry 'O sweet creature!' and then kiss me hard,
As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots
That grew upon my lips: then laid his leg
Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd; and then
Cried 'Cursèd fate that gave thee to the Moor!'

OTHELLO. Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,
Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof:
Make me to see't; or, at the least, so prove it,
That the probation bear no hinge nor loop
To hang a doubt on; or woe upon thy life!

IAGO. I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion:
I do repent me that I put it to you.
You would be satisfied?

OTHELLO. Would! nay, I will.

IAGO. And may: but, how? how satisfied, my lord?
Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on—
Behold her topp'd?

OTHELLO. Death and damnation! O!

IAGO. But yet, I say,
If imputation and strong circumstances,
Which lead directly to the door of truth,
Will give you satisfaction, you may have't.

OTHELLO. How may we try it further?

IAGO. You know, sometimes he walks four hours together
Here in the lobby.

OTHELLO. So she does as well.

IAGO. Be you and I behind an arras then;
Mark the encounter: if he love her not
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.

OTHELLO. We will try it.

IAGO. I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord.

*(They retire. Enter HAMLET and DESDEMONA, and
OPHELIA, attending.)*

HAMLET. I do beseech you
That by your virtuous means I may again
Exist, and be a member of his love
Whom I with all the office of my heart
Entirely honour.

OPHELIA. Here's a change indeed!

DESDEMONA. Trust me, I am glad on't
With all my heart; and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclined.
Be thou assured, good Hamlet, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;
I'll intermingle every thing he does
With Hamlet's suit: therefore be merry, Hamlet;
For thy solicitor shall rather die
Than give thy cause away.

OPHELIA. *[Aside]* I fear the trust my mistress puts him in.
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd.

DESDEMONA. Here comes my lord.

HAMLET. Madam, I'll take my leave.

DESDEMONA. Why, stay, and hear me speak.

HAMLET. Madam, not now: I am very ill at ease.

DESDEMONA. Well, do your discretion.

(Exit HAMLET. Re-enter OTHELLO and IAGO.)

IAGO. Ha! I like not that.

OTHELLO. What dost thou say?

IAGO. Nothing, my lord: or if—I know not what.

OTHELLO. Was not that Hamlet parted from my wife?

IAGO. Hamlet, my lord! No, sure, I cannot think it,
That he would steal away so guilty-like,
Seeing you coming.

OTHELLO. I do believe 'twas he.

IAGO. It may be, very likely.

OTHELLO. I heard thee say even now, thou likedst not that,
When Hamlet left my wife: what didst not like?—

DESDEMONA. How now, my lord!

OTHELLO. *[Aside]* If she be false,—

IAGO. *[Aside]* Work on,
My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught;
And many worthy and chaste dames even thus.

(Exit.)

DESDEMONA. I have been talking with a suitor here,
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

OTHELLO. Who is't you mean?

DESDEMONA. Why, your lieutenant, Hamlet. Good my lord.

OTHELLO. Went he hence now?

DESDEMONA. Ay, sooth; so humbled
That he hath left part of his grief with me,
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

OTHELLO. Not now, sweet Desdemona; some other time.

DESDEMONA. But shall't be shortly?

OTHELLO. The sooner, sweet, for
you.

DESDEMONA. Shall't be to-night at supper?

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