

# William Shakespeare

## Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

### Dramatis Personae

**Claudius**, King of Denmark.

**Marcellus**, Officer.

**Hamlet**, son to the former, and nephew to the present king.

**Polonius**, Lord Chamberlain.

**Horatio**, friend to Hamlet.

**Laertes**, son to Polonius.

**Voltemand**, courtier.

**Cornelius**, courtier.

**Rosencrantz**, courtier.

**Guildenstern**, courtier.

**Osric**, courtier.

**A Gentleman**, courtier.

**A Priest**.

**Marcellus**, officer.

**Bernardo**, officer.

**Francisco**, a soldier.

**Reynaldo**, servant to Polonius.

**Players**.

**Two Clowns**, gravediggers.

**Fortinbras**, Prince of Norway.

**A Norwegian Captain**.

**English Ambassadors.**

**Getrude**, Queen of Denmark, mother to Hamlet.

**Ophelia**, daughter to Polonius.

**Ghost** of Hamlet's Father.

Lords, ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors,  
Messengers, Attendants.

SCENE.- Elsinore.

## **Act I**

### **Scene I**

Elsinore. A platform before the castle.

*Francisco at his post. Enter to him Bernardo.*

**Bernardo**

Who's there?

**Francisco**

Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

**Bernardo**

Long live the king!

**Francisco**

Bernardo?

**Bernardo**

He.

**Francisco**

You come most carefully upon your hour.

**Bernardo**

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

**Francisco**

For this relief much thanks: 'tis bitter cold,  
And I am sick at heart.

**Bernardo**

Have you had quiet guard?

**Francisco**

Not a mouse stirring.

**Bernardo**

Well, good night.  
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,  
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

**Francisco**

I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who's there?

*Enter Horatio and Marcellus.*

**Horatio**

Friends to this ground.

**Marcellus**

And liegemen to the Dane.

**Francisco**

Give you good night.

**Marcellus**

O, farewell, honest soldier:  
Who hath relieved you?

**Francisco**

Bernardo has my place.  
Give you good night.

*Exit.*

**Marcellus**

Holla! Bernardo!

**Bernardo**

Say,  
What, is Horatio there?

**Horatio**

A piece of him.

**Bernardo**

Welcome, Horatio: welcome, good Marcellus.

**Marcellus**

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

**Bernardo**

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:  
Therefore I have entreated him along  
With us to watch the minutes of this night;  
That if again this apparition come,  
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

**Horatio**

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

**Bernardo**

Sit down awhile;  
And let us once again assail your ears,  
That are so fortified against our story  
What we have two nights seen.

**Horatio**

Well, sit we down,  
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

**Bernardo**

Last night of all,  
When yond same star that's westward from the  
pole  
Had made his course to illumine that part of heaven  
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,  
The bell then beating one, —

*Enter Ghost.*

**Marcellus**

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

**Bernardo**

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

**Marcellus**

Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

**Bernardo**

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

**Horatio**

Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

**Bernardo**

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!

**Marcellus**

It is offended.

**Bernardo**

See, it stalks away!

**Horatio**

Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

*Exit Ghost.*

**Marcellus**

'Tis gone, and will not answer.

### **Bernardo**

How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:  
Is not this something more than fantasy?  
What think you on't?

### **Horatio**

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

### **Marcellus**

Is it not like the king?

### **Horatio**

As thou art to thyself:  
Such was the very armour he had on  
When he the ambitious Norway combated;  
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,  
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.  
'Tis strange.

### **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**

Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,  
Why this same strict and most observant watch  
So nightly toils the subject of the land,  
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,  
And foreign mart for implements of war;  
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore  
task

Does not divide the Sunday from the week;  
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste  
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:  
Who is't that can inform me?

### **Horatio**

That can I;  
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,  
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,  
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,  
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,  
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant  
Hamlet —

For so this side of our known world esteem'd  
him —

Did slay this Fortinbras; who by a seal'd compact,  
Well ratified by law and heraldry,  
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands

Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror:  
Against the which, a moiety competent  
Was gaged by our king; which had return'd  
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,  
Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same  
covenant,  
And carriage of the article design'd,  
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,  
Of unimproved mettle hot and full,  
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there  
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute,  
For food and diet, to some enterprise  
That hath a stomach in't; which is no other —  
As it doth well appear unto our state —  
But to recover of us, by strong hand  
And terms compulsatory, those foresaid lands  
So by his father lost: and this, I take it,  
Is the main motive of our preparations,  
The source of this our watch and the chief head  
Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

### **Bernardo**

I think it be no other but e'en so:  
Well may it sort that this portentous figure  
Comes armed through our watch; so like the king  
That was and is the question of these wars.

## Horatio

A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.  
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,  
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead  
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets:  
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,  
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star  
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands  
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse:  
And even the like precurse of fierce events,  
As harbingers preceding still the fates  
And prologue to the omen coming on,  
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
Unto our climatures and countrymen. —  
But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!

*Re-enter Ghost*

I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!  
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,  
Speak to me:  
If there be any good thing to be done,  
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,  
Speak to me:

*Cock crows*



And our vain blows malicious mockery.

### **Bernardo**

It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

### **Horatio**

And then it started like a guilty thing  
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,  
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,  
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat  
Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,  
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,  
The extravagant and erring spirit hies  
To his confine: and of the truth herein  
This present object made probation.

### **Marcellus**

It faded on the crowing of the cock.  
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes  
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,  
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:  
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;  
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,  
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,  
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

### **Horatio**

So have I heard and do in part believe it.

But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill:  
Break we our watch up; and by my advice,  
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.  
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,  
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

### **Marcellus**

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

*Exeunt.*

## **Scene II**

A room of state in the castle.

*Enter King Claudius, Queen Gertrude,  
Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes, Voltimand, Cornelius,  
Lords, and Attendants.*

### **King Claudius**

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother'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 sister, now our queen,  
The imperial jointress to this warlike state,  
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy, —  
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,  
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
In equal scale weighing delight and dole, —  
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd  
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.  
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,  
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,  
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death  
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,  
Colleagu'd with the dream of his advantage,  
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,  
Importing the surrender of those lands  
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,  
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.  
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting:  
Thus much the business is: we have here writ  
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras, —  
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears  
Of this his nephew's purpose, — to suppress  
His further gait herein; in that the levies,  
The lists and full proportions, are all made

Out of his subject: and we here dispatch  
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,  
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;  
Giving to you no further personal power  
To business with the king, more than the scope  
Of these delated articles allow.  
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

### **Cornelius Voltimand**

In that and all things will we show our duty.

### **King Claudius**

We doubt it nothing: heartily farewell.

*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.*

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?  
You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?  
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,  
And loose your voice: what wouldst thou beg,  
Laertes,  
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?  
The head is not more native to the heart,  
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,  
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.  
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?



## **King Claudius**

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

## **Hamlet**

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

## **Queen Gertrude**

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,  
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.  
Do not for ever with thy veiled lids  
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:  
Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity.

## **Hamlet**

Ay, madam, it is common.

## **Queen Gertrude**

If it be,  
Why seems it so particular with thee?

## **Hamlet**

Seems, madam! nay it is; I know not 'seems.'  
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,



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, cousin, and our son.

### **Queen Gertrude**

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

### **Hamlet**

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

### **King Claudius**

Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:  
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;  
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet  
Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,  
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,  
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,  
And the king's rouse the heavens all bruit again,  
Re-speaking earthly thunder. 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!  
Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in  
nature

Possess it merely. That it should come to this!  
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:  
So excellent a king; that was, to this,  
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother  
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!  
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,  
As if increase of appetite had grown  
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month —  
Let me not think on't-Frailty, thy name is  
woman! —

A little month, or ere those shoes were old  
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,  
Like Niobe, all tears:-why she, even she —  
O, God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,  
Would have mourn'd longer-married with my

uncle,  
My father's brother, but no more like my father  
Than I to Hercules: within a month:  
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,  
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post  
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!  
It is not nor it cannot come to good:  
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

*Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo.*

**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**

Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with  
you:  
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?  
Marcellus?

## **Marcellus**

My good lord —

## **Hamlet**

I am very glad to see you. Good even, sir.  
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

## **Horatio**

A truant disposition, good my lord.

## **Hamlet**

I would not hear your enemy say so,  
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,  
To make it truster of your own report  
Against yourself: I know you are no truant.  
But what is your affair in Elsinore?  
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**

I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

**Hamlet**

He was a man, take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again.

**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**

Season your admiration for awhile  
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,  
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,  
This marvel to you.

## **Hamlet**

For God's love, let me hear.

## **Horatio**

Two nights together had these gentlemen,  
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,  
In the dead vast and middle of the night,  
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,  
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,  
Appears before them, and with solemn march  
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd  
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,  
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they,  
distilled

Almost to jelly with the act of fear,  
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me  
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;  
And I with them the third night kept the watch;  
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,

Form of the thing, each word made true and good,  
The apparition comes: I knew your father;  
These hands are not more like.

### **Hamlet**

But where was this?

### **Marcellus**

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

### **Hamlet**

Did you not speak to it?

### **Horatio**

My lord, I did;  
But answer made it none: yet once methought  
It lifted up its head and did address  
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;  
But even then the morning cock crew loud,  
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,  
And vanish'd from our sight.

### **Hamlet**

'Tis very strange.

### **Horatio**

As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true;  
And we did think it writ down in our duty

To let you know of it.

**Hamlet**

Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.  
Hold you the watch to-night?

**Marcellus Bernardo**

We do, my lord.

**Hamlet**

Arm'd, say you?

**Marcellus Bernardo**

Arm'd, my lord.

**Hamlet**

From top to toe?

**Marcellus Bernardo**

My lord, from head to foot.

**Hamlet**

Then saw you not his face?

**Horatio**

O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.

**Hamlet**

What, look'd he frowningly?

**Horatio**

A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

**Hamlet**

Pale or red?

**Horatio**

Nay, very pale.

**Hamlet**

And fix'd his eyes upon you?

**Horatio**

Most constantly.

**Hamlet**

I would I had been there.

**Horatio**

It would have much amazed you.

**Hamlet**

Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?

**Horatio**

While one with moderate haste might tell a

hundred.

**Marcellus Bernardo**

Longer, longer.

**Horatio**

Not when I saw't.

**Hamlet**

His beard was grizzled-no?

**Horatio**

It was, as I have seen it in his life,  
A sable silver'd.

**Hamlet**

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

**Horatio**

I warrant it will.

**Hamlet**

If it assume my noble father's person,  
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape  
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,  
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,  
Let it be tenable in your silence still;

And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,  
Give it an understanding, but no tongue:  
I will requite your loves. So, fare you well:  
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,  
I'll visit you.

**All**

Our duty to your honour.

**Hamlet**

Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;  
I doubt some foul play: would the night were  
come!  
Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,  
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's  
eyes.

*Exit.*

## Scene III

A room in Polonius' house.  
*Enter Laertes and Ophelia.*

### Laertes

My necessaries are embark'd: farewell:  
And, sister, as the winds give benefit  
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,  
But let me hear from you.

### Ophelia

Do you doubt that?

### Laertes

For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour,  
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,  
A violet in the youth of primy nature,  
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,  
The perfume and suppliance of a minute; No  
more.

### Ophelia

No more but so?

### Laertes

Think it no more;  
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone

In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes,  
The inward service of the mind and soul  
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,  
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch  
The virtue of his will: but you must fear,  
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;  
For he himself is subject to his birth:  
He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends  
The safety and health of this whole state;  
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed  
Unto the voice and yielding of that body  
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves  
you,

It fits your wisdom so far to believe it  
As he in his particular act and place  
May give his saying deed; which is no further  
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.  
Then 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 sister,  
And keep you in the rear of your affection,  
Out of the shot and danger of desire.  
The chariest maid is prodigal enough,  
If she unmask her beauty to the moon:  
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes:

The canker galls the infants of the spring,  
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,  
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth  
Contagious blastments are most imminent.  
Be wary then; best safety lies in fear:  
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

### **Ophelia**

I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,  
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,  
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,  
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;  
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,  
And recks not his own rede.

### **Laertes**

O, fear me not.  
I stay too long: but here my father comes.

*Enter Polonius*

A double blessing is a double grace,  
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

### **Lord Polonius**

Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!  
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,

And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with  
thee!

And these few precepts in thy memory  
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.  
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.  
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;  
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware  
Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,  
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.  
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;  
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy  
judgment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;  
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,  
And they in France of the best rank and station  
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.  
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
This above all: to thine ownself be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!

**Laertes**

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

**Lord Polonius**

The time invites you; go; your servants tend.

**Laertes**

Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well  
What I have said to you.

**Ophelia**

'Tis in my memory lock'd,  
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

**Laertes**

Farewell.

*Exit.*

**Lord Polonius**

What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

**Ophelia**

So please you, something touching the Lord  
Hamlet.

**Lord Polonius**

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,  
You do not understand yourself so clearly  
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.  
What is between you? give me up the truth.

### **Ophelia**

He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders  
Of his affection to me.

### **Lord Polonius**

Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,  
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.  
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

### **Ophelia**

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

### **Lord Polonius**

Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby;  
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,  
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more  
dearly;  
Or-not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,

Running it thus-you'll tender me a fool.

### **Ophelia**

My lord, he hath importuned me with love  
In honourable fashion.

### **Lord Polonius**

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

### **Ophelia**

And hath given countenance to his, my lord,  
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

### **Lord Polonius**

Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,  
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul  
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,  
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,  
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,  
You must not take for fire. From this time  
Be somewhat scanted of your maiden presence;  
Set your entreatments at a higher rate  
Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,  
Believe so much in him, that he is young  
And with a larger tether may he walk  
Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,  
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,  
Not of that dye which their investments show,

But mere implorators of unholy suits,  
Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,  
The better to beguile. This is for all:  
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**

I shall obey, my lord.

*Exeunt.*

## **Scene IV**

The platform.

*Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.*

### **Hamlet**

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.

**Hamlet**

No, it is struck.

**Horatio**

Indeed? I heard it not: then it draws near the  
season  
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off,  
within.*

What does this mean, my lord?

**Hamlet**

The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,  
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring  
reels;  
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,  
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out  
The triumph of his pledge.

**Horatio**

Is it a custom?

**Hamlet**

Ay, marry, is't:



## **Horatio**

Look, my lord, it comes!

*Enter Ghost.*

## **Hamlet**

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!  
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,  
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from  
hell,

Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
Thou comest in such a questionable shape  
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,  
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me!  
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell  
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,  
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,  
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,  
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws,  
To cast thee up again. What may this mean,  
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel  
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,  
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature  
So horridly to shake our disposition  
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?  
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

*Ghost beckons Hamlet.*

**Horatio**

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

**Marcellus**

Look, with what courteous action  
It waves you to a more removed ground:  
But do not go with it.

**Horatio**

No, by no means.

**Hamlet**

It will not speak; then I will follow it.

**Horatio**

Do not, my lord.

**Hamlet**

Why, what should be the fear?  
I do not set my life in a pin's fee;  
And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?  
It waves me forth again: I'll 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,  
And there assume some other horrible form,  
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason  
And draw you into madness? think of it:  
The very place puts toys of desperation,  
Without more motive, into every brain  
That looks so many fathoms to the sea  
And hears it roar beneath.

### **Hamlet**

It waves me still.  
Go on; I'll follow thee.

### **Marcellus**

You shall not go, my lord.

### **Hamlet**

Hold off your hands.

### **Horatio**

Be ruled; you shall not go.

### **Hamlet**

My fate cries out,  
And makes each petty artery in this body  
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.  
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.*

**Horatio**

He waxes desperate with imagination.

**Marcellus**

Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

**Horatio**

Have after. To what issue will this come?

**Marcellus**

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

**Horatio**

Heaven will direct it.

**Marcellus**

Nay, let's follow him.

*Exeunt.*

## Scene V

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.

**Ghost**

My hour is almost come,  
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames  
Must render up myself.

**Hamlet**

Alas, poor ghost!

**Ghost**

Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing  
To what I shall unfold.

**Hamlet**

Speak; I am bound to hear.



## **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  
As meditation or the thoughts of love,  
May sweep to my revenge.

## **Ghost**

I find thee apt;  
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed  
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,  
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:  
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,  
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark  
Is by a forged process of my death  
Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown.



Hold's such an enmity with blood of man  
That swift as quicksilver it courses through  
The natural gates and alleys of the body,  
And with a sudden vigour doth posset  
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,  
The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;  
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,  
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,  
All my smooth body.

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand  
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd:  
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,  
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd,  
No reckoning made, but sent to my account  
With all my imperfections on my head:  
O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!  
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;  
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
A couch for luxury and damned incest.  
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,  
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven  
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,  
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!  
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,  
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:  
Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.

*Exit.*

## **Hamlet**

O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?  
And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my  
heart;

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,  
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee!  
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat  
In this distracted globe. Remember thee!

Yea, from the table of my memory  
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,  
That youth and observation copied there;  
And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain,  
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!

O most pernicious woman!  
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!  
My tables, — meet it is I set it down,  
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;  
At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark:

*Writing.*

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;  
It is 'Adieu, adieu! remember me.'  
I have sworn 't.

**Marcellus Horatio** [*Within*]

My lord, my lord, —

**Marcellus** [*Within*]

Lord Hamlet, —

**Horatio** [*Within*]

Heaven secure him!

**Hamlet**

So be it!

**Horatio** [*Within*]

Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!

**Hamlet**

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

*Enter Horatio and Marcellus.*

**Marcellus**

How is't, my noble lord?

**Horatio**

What news, my lord?

**Hamlet**

O, wonderful!

**Horatio**

Good my lord, tell it.

**Hamlet**

No; you'll reveal it.

**Horatio**

Not I, my lord, by heaven.

**Marcellus**

Nor I, my lord.

**Hamlet**

How say you, then; would heart of man once  
think it?

But you'll be secret?

**Horatio Marcellus**

Ay, by heaven, my lord.

**Hamlet**

There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark  
But he's an arrant knave.

**Horatio**

There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the  
grave

To tell us this.

## **Hamlet**

Why, right; you are i' the right;  
And so, without more circumstance at all,  
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part:  
You, as your business and desire shall point you;  
For every man has business and desire,  
Such as it is; and for mine own poor part,  
Look you, I'll go pray.

## **Horatio**

These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

## **Hamlet**

I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;  
Yes, 'faith heartily.

## **Horatio**

There's no offence, my lord.

## **Hamlet**

Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,  
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,  
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:  
For your desire to know what is between us,  
O'ermaster 't as you may. And now, good friends,  
As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,  
Give me one poor request.