

Hamlet

1.1

Enter Barnardo and Francisco, two sentinels, at several doors

BARNARDO Who's there?

FRANCISCO

Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

BARNARDO

Long live the King!

FRANCISCO Barnardo?

BARNARDO

He.

FRANCISCO

You come most carefully upon your hour.

BARNARDO

'Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco. 5

FRANCISCO

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

BARNARDO

Have you had quiet guard?

FRANCISCO

Not a mouse stirring.

BARNARDO

Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste. 10

Enter Horatio and Marcellus

FRANCISCO

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

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

Barnardo has my place. Give you good night.

Exit

MARCELLUS

Holla, Barnardo! 15

BARNARDO

Say±±what, is Horatio there?

HORATIO A piece of him.

BARNARDO

Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.

MARCELLUS

What, has this thing appeared again tonight?

BARNARDO I have seen nothing. 20

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, 25
That if again this apparition come
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

HORATIO

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

BARNARDO Sit down a while,

And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story, 30
What we two nights have seen.

HORATIO Well, sit we down,

And let us hear Barnardo speak of this.

BARNARDO Last night of all,
When yon same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his course t'illumine that part of heaven 35
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one±±

*Enter the Ghost in complete armour, holding a
truncheon, with his beaver up*

MARCELLUS

Peace, break thee off. Look where it comes again.

BARNARDO

In the same figure like the King that's dead.

MARCELLUS (to Horatio)

Thou art a scholar±±speak to it, Horatio. 40

BARNARDO

Looks it not like the King?±±Mark it, Horatio.

HORATIO

Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder.

BARNARDO

It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS Question it, Horatio.

HORATIO *(to the Ghost)*

What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form 45
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? By heaven, I charge thee speak.

MARCELLUS

It is offended.

BARNARDO See, it stalks away.

HORATIO *(to the Ghost)*

Stay, speak, speak, I charge thee speak.
Exit Ghost

MARCELLUS 'Tis gone, and will not answer. 50

BARNARDO

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 55
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 th'ambitious Norway combated. 60
So frowned he once when in an angry parley
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
'Tis strange.

MARCELLUS

Thus twice before, and just at this dead hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch. 65

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 70
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: 75
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 appeared to us, 80
Was as you know by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto pricked on by a most emulate pride,
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet±±
For so this side of our known world esteemed him±±
Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a sealed compact 85
Well ratified by law and heraldry
Did forfeit with his life all those his lands
Which he stood seized on to the conqueror;
Against the which a moiety competent
Was gageÁd by our King, which had returned 90
To the inheritance of Fortinbras
Had he been vanquisher, as by the same cov'nant
And carriage of the article designed
His fell to Hamlet. Now sir, young Fortinbras,
Of unimproveÁd mettle hot and full, 95
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Sharked up a list of landless resolute
For food and diet to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in't, which is no other±±
And it doth well appear unto our state±± 100
But to recover of us by strong hand
And terms compulsative 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 105
Of this post-haste and rummage in the land.

Enter the Ghost, as before

But soft, behold±±!o where it comes again!
I'll cross it though it blast me.±±Stay, illusion.

The Ghost spreads his arms

If thou hast any sound or use of voice,
Speak to me. 110

If there be any good thing to be done
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
Speak to me.
If thou art privy to thy country's fate
Which happily foreknowing may avoid, 115
O speak!
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth±±
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death±±

The cock crows

Speak of it, stay and speak.±±Stop it, Marcellus. 120

MARCELLUS

Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

HORATIO

Do, if it will not stand.

BARNARDO

'Tis here.

HORATIO

'Tis here.

Exit Ghost

MARCELLUS 'Tis gone.

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the show of violence, 125
For it is as the air invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

BARNARDO

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 130
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,
Th'extravagant and erring spirit hies 135
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 140
The bird of dawning singeth all night long;

And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad,
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallowed and so gracious is the time. 145

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 eastern hill.
Break we our watch up, and by my advice
Let us impart what we have seen tonight 150
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 155
Where we shall find him most conveniently.

Exeunt