

Hamlet

1.5

Enter the Ghost, and Prince Hamlet following

HAMLET

Whither 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 sulph'rous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

HAMLET

Alas, poor ghost!

GHOST

Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing 5
To what I shall unfold.

HAMLET

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,

Doomed for a certain term to walk the night, 10

And for the day confined to fast in fires

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 15

Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,

Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres,

Thy knotty and combine'd locks to part,

And each particular hair to stand on end

Like quills upon the fretful porcupine. 20

But this eternal blazon must not be

To ears of flesh and blood. List, Hamlet, list, O list!

If thou didst ever thy dear father love±±

HAMLET O God!

GHOST

Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder. 25

HAMLET Murder?

GHOST

Murder most foul, as in the best it is,
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

HAMLET

Haste, haste me to know it, that with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love 30
May sweep to my revenge.

GHOST

I find thee apt,
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear. 35
'Tis given out that, sleeping in mine orchard,
A serpent stung me. So the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forgeÁd process of my death
Rankly abused. But know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown. 40

HAMLET

O my prophetic soul! Mine uncle?

GHOST

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts±±
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power 45
So to seduce!±±won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.
O Hamlet, what a falling off was there!±±
From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand-in-hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage, and to decline 50
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine.
But virtue, as it never will be moved,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So lust, though to a radiant angel linked, 55
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.
But soft, methinks I scent the morning's air.
Brief let me be. Sleeping within mine orchard,
My custom always in the afternoon, 60
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole
With juice of curseÁd hebenon in a vial,

And in the porches of mine ears did pour
 The leperous distilment, whose effect
 Holds such an enmity with blood of man 65
 That swift as quicksilver it courses through
 The natural gates and alleys of the body,
 And with a sudden vigour it doth posset
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
 The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine; 70
 And a most instant tetter barked 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 dispatched, 75
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
 Unhouseled, dis-appointed, unaneled,
 No reck'ning made, but sent to my account
 With all my imperfections on my head.
 O horrible, O horrible, most horrible! 80
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
 A couch for luxury and damneÅd incest.
 But howsoever thou pursuest this act,
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive 85
 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. 90
 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? 95
 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, 100

That youth and observation copied there,
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain
Unmixed with baser matter. Yes, yes, by heaven.

O most pernicious woman! 105

O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!

My tables,

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. 110

He writes

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word:

It is 'Adieu, adieu, remember me'.

I have sworn't.

HORATIO AND MARCELLUS (*within*) My lord, my lord.

Enter Horatio and Marcellus

MARCELLUS (*calling*) Lord Hamlet! 115

HORATIO Heaven secure him.

HAMLET So be it.

HORATIO (*calling*) Illo, ho, ho, my lord.

HAMLET

Hillo, ho, ho, boy; come, bird, come.

MARCELLUS How is't, my noble lord? 120

HORATIO (*to Hamlet*) 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? 125

But you'll be secret?

HORATIO AND MARCELLUS Ay, by heav'n, 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'th' right, 130
And so without more circumstance at all
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part,
You as your business and desires shall point you±±
For every man has business and desire,
Such as it is±±and for mine own poor part, 135
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, 140
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, 145
Give me one poor request.

HORATIO What is't, my lord? We will.

HAMLET
Never make known what you have seen tonight.

HORATIO AND MARCELLUS
My lord, we will not.

HAMLET Nay, but swear't.

HORATIO
In faith, my lord, not I.

MARCELLUS Nor I, my lord, in faith.

HAMLET
Upon my sword.

MARCELLUS We have sworn, my lord, already. 150

HAMLET
Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.
The Ghost cries under the stage

GHOST Swear.

HAMLET
Ah ha, boy, sayst thou so? Art thou there, truepenny?±±
Come on. You hear this fellow in the cellarage.
Consent to swear.

HORATIO Propose the oath, my lord.

HAMLET

Never to speak of this that you have seen, 155

Swear by my sword.

GHOST (*under the stage*) Swear.

[*They swear*]

HAMLET

Hic et ubique? Then we'll shift our ground.±±

Come hither, gentlemen,

And lay your hands again upon my sword. 160

Never to speak of this that you have heard,

Swear by my sword.

GHOST (*under the stage*) Swear.

[*They swear*]

HAMLET

Well said, old mole. Canst work i'th' earth so fast?

A worthy pioneer.±±Once more remove, good friends. 165

HORATIO

O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAMLET

And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,

Than are dreamt of in our philosophy. But come,

Here as before, never, so help you mercy, 170

How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself±±

As I perchance hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic disposition on±±

That you at such time seeing me never shall,

With arms encumbered thus, or this headshake, 175

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase

As 'Well, we know' or 'We could an if we would',

Or 'If we list to speak', or 'There be, an if they might',

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note

That you know aught of me±±this not to do, 180

So grace and mercy at your most need help you, swear.

GHOST (*under the stage*) Swear.

[*They swear*]

HAMLET

Rest, rest, perturbed spirit.±±So, gentlemen,

With all my love I do commend me to you,

And what so poor a man as Hamlet is 185

May do t'express his love and friending to you,
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together,
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint. O curseÁd spite
That ever I was born to set it right!
Nay, come, let's go together.

190

Exeunt