

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

William Shakespeare

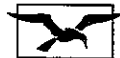
HAMLET



TEXT OF THE PLAY
THE ACTORS' GALLERY
CONTEXTS
CRITICISM
AFTERLIVES
RESOURCES

Edited by

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The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

I.I [THE GUARD PLATFORM OF EL SINORE CASTLE AT MIDNIGHT]

Enter [separately] BARNARDO and FRANCISCO, two sentinels.

BARNARDO Who's there?

FRANCISCO Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

BARNARDO Long live the King!

FRANCISCO Barnardo?

BARNARDO He.

5

FRANCISCO You come most carefully upon your hour.

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

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

BARNARDO Have you had quiet guard?

10

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.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

FRANCISCO I think I hear them.—Stand, ho! Who is there?

15

HORATIO Friends to this ground.

MARCELLUS And liegemen to the Dane.

FRANCISCO [*Leaving*] Give you good night.

MARCELLUS O, farewell, honest soldier. Who hath relieved
you?

FRANCISCO Barnardo hath my place. Give you good night.

Exit.

MARCELLUS Holla, Barnardo.

20

2. unfold: reveal

14. rivals: partners

15. ho!: stop!

16. liegemen . . . Dane: sworn servants of the Danish king

17. Give: i.e., may God give

20. Holla: Hello

BARNARDO Say, what, is Horatio there?
 HORATIO A piece of him.
 BARNARDO Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.
 HORATIO What, has this thing appeared again tonight?
 BARNARDO I have seen nothing.
 MARCELLUS Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy, 25
 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 30
 He may approve our eyes and speak to it.
 HORATIO Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.
 BARNARDO 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, 35
 And let us hear Barnardo speak of this.
 BARNARDO Last night of all,
 When yond same star that's westward from the pole
 Had made his course t'illuminate that part of heaven
 Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself, 40
 The bell then beating one—
Enter GHOST [in armor].
 MARCELLUS Peace, break thee off! Look where it comes again!
 BARNARDO In the same figure like the King that's dead.
 MARCELLUS Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.
 BARNARDO Looks 'a not like the King? Mark it, Horatio. 45
 HORATIO Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder.
 BARNARDO It would be spoke to.
 MARCELLUS Speak to 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 50
 Did sometimes march? By heaven, I charge thee, speak!

25. fantasy: imagination

31. approve our eyes: confirm our observation

32. Tush: (an expression of impatient dismissal or contempt)

35. What: i.e., with what

37. Last . . . all: this very last night

38. yond: yonder, that distant; pole: Pole Star, the North Star

39. t'illuminate: to illuminate

45. 'a: he

46. harrows: lacerates, disturbs

48. usurp'st: wrongfully appropriates

50. majesty . . . Denmark: buried King of Denmark

51. sometimes: formerly

MARCELLUS It is offended.
 BARNARDO See, it stalks away.
 HORATIO Stay, speak, speak! I charge thee speak!
Exit GHOST.

MARCELLUS 'Tis gone and will not answer.
 BARNARDO How now, Horatio, you tremble and look pale. 55
 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? 60
 HORATIO As thou art to thyself.
 Such was the very armor he had on
 When he the ambitious Norway combated;
 So frowned he once when, in an angry parle,
 He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice. 65
 '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 mine opinion, 70
 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 cost of brazen cannon 75
 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-laborer with the day? 80
 Who is't that can inform me?

55. *How now*: How is it now (often used as an interjection)

59. *sensible*: attested by the senses; *avouch*: testimony

63. *Norway*: King of Norway

64. *parle*: parley, encounter

65. *sledded Polacks*: Polish soldiers on sleds

67. *jump*: precisely

68. *stalk*: walk

69. *In . . . work*: for which specific reason

70. *gross and scope*: general drift

72. *Good now*: (an expression of entreaty)

73. *watch*: watchfulness

74. *toils the subject*: causes the subjects to toil

76. *foreign mart*: expenditure abroad

77. *impress*: draft, conscription

79. *toward*: coming

Comes armèd 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, 115
 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
 The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets
 At stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
 Disasters in the sun; and the moist star, 120
 Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
 Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
 And even the like precurse of feared events,
 As harbingers preceding still the Fates
 And prologue to the omen coming on, 125
 Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
 Unto our climatures and countrymen.

Enter GHOST.

But, soft, behold, lo, where it comes again!
 I'll cross it though it blast me.—Stay, illusion! *It spreads*
 If thou hast any sound or use of voice, *his arms.* 130
 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!
 If thou art privy to thy country's fate, 135
 Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,
 Oh, speak!
 Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life

114. mote: speck of dust. The phrasing echoes Matthew 7:3: "And why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and perceives not the beam that is in thine own eye?" See also Luke 6:42.

115. palmy: triumphant

116. Julius: Julius Caesar, assassinated 44 BCE. Plutarch's *Caesar* (75 CE) describes some of the portents recalled here, and Shakespeare includes some of them in his *Julius Caesar* (1599); see Polonius's reference to playing Caesar below, 3.2.96–97.

117. sheeted: shrouded

120. Disasters: unfavorable influences; moist star: the moon (which controls tides)

121. Neptune: Roman god of the sea

122. doomsday: the end of the world and the dark day of the Last Judgment. See Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:12.

123. precurse: foreshadowing

124. As . . . Fates: as forerunners always preceding the goddesses who control human destiny

125. omen: calamity

127. climatures: regions

128. soft: stop, be quiet; lo: look

129. s.d. *his*: its

136. happily: (1) by chance; (2) fortunately

Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
 For which, they say, your spirits oft walk in death, 140
 Speak of it! *The cock crows.*
 Stay, and speak!—Stop it, Marcellus!
 MARCELLUS Shall I strike it with my partisan?
 HORATIO Do, if it will not stand. [*They strike at it.*]
 BARNARDO 'Tis here!
 HORATIO 'Tis here! [*Exit GHOST.*] 145
 MARCELLUS 'Tis gone.
 We do it wrong, being so majestic,
 To offer it the show of violence,
 For it is as the air invulnerable,
 And our vain blows malicious mockery. 150
 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
 The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
 Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat 155
 Awake the god of day, and at his warning,
 Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
 Th'extravagant and erring spirit hies
 To his confine; and of the truth herein
 This present object made probation. 160
 MARCELLUS It faded on the crowing of the cock.
 Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
 Wherein our Savior's birth is celebrated,
 This bird of dawning singeth all night long.
 And then they say no spirit dare stir abroad, 165
 The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,
 No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm—
 So hallowed and so gracious is that time.
 HORATIO So have I heard, and do in part believe it.
 But look, the morn in russet mantle clad 170
 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 tonight

139. Extorted: wrongfully obtained

142. partisan: spear mounted with an axe blade

156. god of day: Phoebus Apollo, i.e., the sun

158. extravagant and erring: wandering beyond bounds; hies: hastens

159. confine: place of confinement

160. probation: proof

162. 'gainst: before

166. strike: destroy by evil influence

167. takes: (1) steals (children, especially); (2) bewitches

168. gracious: filled with divine grace

170. russet: reddish brown

Unto young Hamlet, for upon my life
 This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him. 175
 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 convenient.

Exeunt.

1.2 [ELSINORE CASTLE]

Flourish. Enter CLAUDIUS, *King of Denmark*, GERTRUDE
the Queen, COUNCIL, *as* POLONIUS *and his son* LAERTES,
 HAMLET, *cum aliis* [*including* CORNELIUS, VOLTEMAND,
and ATTENDANTS].

KING 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 5
 That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
 Together with remembrance of ourselves.
 Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
 Th'imperial jointress to this warlike state,
 Have we—as 'twere with a defeated joy, 10
 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 barred
 Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone 15
 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

179. convenient: conveniently

0.1.s.d. *Flourish*: fanfare sounded on a trumpet or cornet

0.2.s.d. *as*: including

0.3.s.d. *cum aliis*: with others. The Folio names Ophelia here.

1. brother: (Succession by a brother is permissible in Denmark, which has an elective monarchy, as is clear from 5.2.64.)

2. green: i.e., fresh; befitted: suited

4. contracted . . . woe: contorted into one expression of grief

5. discretion . . . nature: reason overmastered natural affection

8. sometime sister: former sister-in-law

9. jointress: widow who possesses property formerly held in common with her husband

11. auspicious . . . eye: one eye glad and the other weeping

13. dole: sorrow

17. follows . . . know: it follows that you be told that

18. weak supposal: low estimate

Our state to be disjoint and out of frame, 20
 Colleagued with this dream of his advantage,
 He hath not failed to pester us with message
 Importing the surrender of those lands
 Lost by his father, with all bands of law,
 To our most valiant brother—so much for him. 25
 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 bedrid, scarcely hears
 Of this his nephew's purpose—to suppress 30
 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, Voltemand,
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway, 35
 Giving to you no further personal power
 To business with the King more than the scope
 Of these dilated articles allow. [*He gives them a paper.*]
 Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

COR. }
 VOL. } In that and all things will we show our duty. 40

KING We doubt it nothing. Heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt CORNELIUS and VOLTEMAND.*]

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 lose your voice. What wouldst thou beg, Laertes, 45
 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?

LAERTES My dread lord, 50

20. disjoint: ill connected; out of frame: disordered. Both are metaphors from carpentry.
 21. Colleagued: allied
 24. bands: binding agreements
 28. uncle: (In Norway, as in Denmark, the brother of the dead king, rather than the son
 and namesake, has succeeded to the throne.)
 29. bedrid: confined to bed
 31. gait: proceeding
 32. proportions: numbers, especially of soldiers
 33. Out . . . subject: from his people
 38. dilated: articulated
 39. commend: advertise
 47. native: related
 48. instrumental: serviceable

Your leave and favor to return to France,
 From whence, though willingly, I came to Denmark
 To show my duty in your coronation.
 Yet now I must confess, that duty done,
 My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France, 55
 And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

KING Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?
 POLONIUS He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
 By laborsome petition, and at last
 Upon his will I sealed my hard consent. 60
 I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

KING Take thy fair hour, Laertes. Time be thine,
 And thy best graces spend it at thy will.
 But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son—

HAMLET A little more than kin and less than kind. 65

KING How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
 HAMLET Not so, my lord. I am too much in the sun.

QUEEN Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,
 And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
 Do not forever with thy vailèd lids 70
 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 If it be,
 Why seems it so particular with thee? 75

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, 80
 Nor the dejected havior of the visage,

56. bow them: they bow

60. sealed: officially granted (as if placing a seal on a document); hard: reluctant

62. Take . . . hour: (1) go when you please; (2) enjoy your youth

63. thy . . . will: may your virtuous qualities guide you in spending time

64. cousin: kinsman

65. more than kin: more than a simple relative (since now you claim to be my father); kind: (1) natural; (2) charitable. Hamlet's opening line, sometimes read as an aside, seems rather the first of his edgy, punning responses here.

67. sun: (with a pun on "son")

68. nighted color: black mourning garments

69. Denmark: (1) king; (2) country

70. vailèd lids: lowered eyes

72. common: universal. Hamlet plays on the word as meaning "vulgar," 74.

77. inky: black. The color symbolized mourning and melancholy, a distemper similar to modern depression, thought to occur from an excess of black bile in the body.

79. suspiration: sighing

81. dejected . . . visage: downcast expression

Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
 That can denote me truly. These indeed "seem,"
 For they are actions that a man might play;
 But I have that within which passes show, 85
 These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
 To give these mourning duties to your father,
 But you must know your father lost a father,
 That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound 90
 In filial obligation for some term
 To do obsequious sorrow. But to persevere
 In obstinate condolment is a course
 Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief.
 It shows a will most incorrect to heaven, 95
 A heart unfortified or mind impatient,
 An understanding simple and unschooled.
 For what we know must be and is as common
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
 Why should we in our peevish opposition 100
 Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven,
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
 To reason most absurd, whose common theme
 Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried
 From the first corpse till he that died today, 105
 "This must be so." 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 110
 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 115

86. trappings: ornaments

90. That father lost: i.e., your grandfather

92. obsequious: appropriate to a funeral rite (obsequy)

93. condolment: sorrowing

96. impatient: incapable of suffering

99. sense: (1) perception; (2) understanding

103. reason: philosophy, as well as the rational power of the mind

104. still: always

105. first corpse: that of Abel, according to Genesis 4:8, the first fratricide. See similar allusions at 3.3.37-38, 5.1.68-69.

107. unprevailing: ineffectual

113. school in Wittenberg: famous German Lutheran university

114. retrograde: contrary

115. bend you: incline yourself

Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

QUEEN 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. 120

KING 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 today 125

But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,

And the King's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,

Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away.

Flourish. Exeunt all but HAMLET.

HAMLET Oh, that this too, too solid flesh would melt,

Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew, 130

Or that the Everlasting had not fixed

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 135

That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature

Possess it merely. That it should come thus,

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, 140

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— 145

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

120. in . . . best: to the best of my ability

124. grace: thanksgiving

125. health: toast

127. rouse: draft of liquor; bruit: report

128. Respeaking: echoing

129. solid: (A famous crux as both quartos read "sallied," which could mean "assailed" and the Folio reads "solid." Many have plausibly emended to "sullied," as lowercase "a" and "u" could frequently be confused by readers of Shakespeare's handwriting and "sallies" appears in Q2 for "sullies" at 2.1.40. See pp. xxiv-xxvii.)

132. canon: decree. Auditors may hear "cannon" as well.

137. merely: entirely

138. two months: (Hamlet will claim that his father died within "a month," 145, and later within "two hours," only to receive Ophelia's correction, "Nay, 'tis twice two months," 3.2.117-118.)

140. Hyperion . . . satyr: Titan, god of the sun, compared to satyr, a lecherous mythological creature, half-man, half-goat

141. beteem: allow

A little month, or ere those shoes were old
 With which she followed my poor father's body,
 Like Niobe, all tears, why she—
 O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason 150
 Would have mourned 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 gallèd eyes, 155
 She married. Oh, 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* BARNARDO.

HORATIO Hail to your lordship. 160
 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! 165
 MARCELLUS My good lord.
 HAMLET I am very glad to see you. [*To* BARNARDO] 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, 170
 Nor shall you do my 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 for to drink ere you depart. 175

147. ere: before

149. Niobe: a mythological figure of grief who became a perpetually weeping stone

150. wants: lacks

153. Hercules: mythological figure of strength and courage. See also 1.4.83 and Appendix 2, Folio passage 2, line 22 (p. 148)

155. gallèd: irritated

156. post: rush

157. incestuous: (In Shakespeare's time, some considered the marriage of a man and his brother's widow incestuous; see Leviticus 18:16; 20:21.)

163. change that name: exchange the name of "good friend"

164. make: do

167. even: evening

169. truant: idle

174. Elsinore: modern Helsingør, on the northeast coast of the island of Zealand, Denmark. Some of Shakespeare's fellow actors had toured there.

HORATIO My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.
HAMLET I prithee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.
HORATIO Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.
HAMLET Thrift, thrift, Horatio. The funeral baked meats 180
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. 185
HORATIO I saw him once. 'A was a goodly king.
HAMLET 'A 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. 190
HAMLET The King my father?
HORATIO Season your admiration for a while
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! 195
HORATIO Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch
In the dead waste and middle of the night,
Been thus encountered: a figure like your father,
Armèd at point exactly, cap-à-pie, 200
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them. Thrice he walked
By their oppressed and fear-surprisèd eyes
Within his truncheon's length, whilst they, distilled
Almost to jelly with the act of fear, 205
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did,

176. funeral: (The funeral of a king may have occurred a considerable time after his death and may have been an elaborate public spectacle.)

177. prithee: beg of you

179. hard upon: quickly thereafter

182. dearest: cruelest (from Old English *déor*)

183. Or ever: before

186. 'A: he

187. all in all: all things in all respects

192. Season your admiration: restrain your astonishment

193. attent: attentive

200. at point: in readiness; cap-à-pie: head to foot

204. truncheon: an officer's staff; distilled: dissolved

205. act: effect

And I with them the third night kept the watch.
 Where, as they had delivered, both in time,
 Form of the thing, each word made true and good, 210
 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.

HAMLET Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO My lord, I did,
 But answer made it none. Yet once methought 215
 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 vanished from our sight.

HAMLET 'Tis very strange. 220

HORATIO As I do live, my honored lord, 'tis true.

And we did think it writ down in our duty
 To let you know of it.

HAMLET Indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.

Hold you the watch tonight?

ALL We do, my lord. 225

HAMLET Armed, say you?

ALL Armed, my lord.

HAMLET From top to toe?

ALL 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 looked he, frowningly? 230

HORATIO A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

HAMLET Pale or red?

HORATIO Nay, very pale.

HAMLET And fixed his eyes upon you?

HORATIO Most constantly.

HAMLET I would I had been there.

HORATIO It would have much amazed you.

HAMLET Very like. 235

Stayed it long?

HORATIO While one with moderate haste might tell a
 hundred.

209-10. in . . . Form: with respect to the time and shape.

216-17. address . . . motion: begin to move

229. beaver: faceguard of a helmet

230. What: how

MAR. } Longer, longer.
 BAR. }

HORATIO Not when I saw't.
 HAMLET His beard was grizzled—no?
 HORATIO It was as I have seen it in his life, 240
 A sable silvered.
 HAMLET I will watch tonight.
 Perchance 'twill walk again.
 HORATIO I warr'nt 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, 245
 If you have hitherto concealed this sight,
 Let it be tenable in your silence still;
 And whatsoever else shall hap tonight,
 Give it an understanding but no tongue.
 I will requite your loves. So, fare you well. 250
 Upon the platform twixt eleven and twelve,
 I'll visit you.
 ALL Our duty to your honor.
 HAMLET Your loves, as mine to you; farewell.

Exeunt [HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BARNARDO].

My father's spirit in arms? All is not well;
 I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come. 255
 Till then sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will rise,
 Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes. *Exit.*

1,3 [UNLOCALIZED, PERHAPS THE HOME OF POLONIUS]

Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA, his sister.

LAERTES My necessaries are embarked. Farewell.
 And, sister, as the winds give benefit
 And convey is assistant, do not sleep
 But let me hear from you.
 OPHELIA Do you doubt that?
 LAERTES For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favor, 5
 Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,

239. grizzled: gray

241. sable silvered: black mixed with gray

242. warr'nt: guarantee

247. tenable: withheld

248. hap: occur by chance

255. doubt: fear

3. convey is assistant: means of conveyance are ready

5. trifling: frivolous conduct

6. toy in blood: flirtation

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. 10
 For nature crescent does not grow alone
 In thews and bulks, 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 15
 The virtue of his will, but you must fear,
 His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own.
 He may not, as unvalued persons do,
 Carve for himself, for on his choice depends 20
 The safety and health of this whole state,
 And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
 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 25
 May give his saying deed, which is no further
 Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
 Then weigh what loss your honor may sustain
 If with too credent ear you list his songs,
 Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open 30
 To his unmastered importunity.
 Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
 And keep you in the rear of your affection,

7. *primy*: flourishing
8. *Forward*: early blooming
9. *suppliance*: (1) supply; (2) supplication
11. *crescent*: growing
12. *thews and bulks*: bodily proportions and mass; *temple waxes*: i.e., body grows
13. *inward service*: i.e., inner life (the activity within the temple)
14. *Grows wide withal*: enlarges with it (the body). Laertes implies that the contrary is the case with Hamlet, in other words, that he is immature.
15. *soil nor cautel*: blemish nor deceit; *besmirch*: discolor, make dirty
16. *will*: (1) intention; (2) desire
17. *weigh'd*: properly considered
19. *Carve*: i.e., choose (a metaphor from cutting meat at table)
- 21–22. *circumscrib'd Unto*: restricted by
26. *give . . . deed*: put his words into action
27. *main voice*: popular will; *goes withal*: consents in addition
29. *credent*: believing; *list*: listen to
31. *unmastered importunity*: uncontrolled solicitation
33. *rear . . . affection*: i.e., out of the way of your own amorous feeling (here imagined as an attacking army)

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 th'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, a puffed and reckless libertine,

Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,

And recks not his own rede.

LAERTES Oh, fear me not.

I stay too long.

Enter POLONIUS.

But here my father comes.

A double blessing is a double grace;

Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

POLONIUS Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!

The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,

And you are stayed for. There—my blessing with thee.

And these few precepts in thy memory

Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,

Nor any unproportioned thought his act.

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.

34. shot: (1) range; (2) gunfire

35, 37, 38: (Quotation marks indicate proverbial language or wise sayings.)

35. chariest: most cautious; prodigal: extravagant and reckless

36. unmask: show; moon: symbol of chastity

37. calumnious: slanderous

38. canker . . . spring: cankerworm destroys spring blossoms

39. buttons be disclosed: buds be opened

40. liquid dew: i.e., time when dew is fresh and bright

41. blastments: blights

43. to . . . near: loses self-control even when alone

48. puffed: swollen with pride

49. primrose . . . dalliance: flowery road of pleasure. See Matthew 7:13: "Enter in at the strait gate; for it is the wide gate, and broad way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat."

50. recks: heeds; rede: advice

52. double blessing: second leave-taking. Laertes has already said good-bye to his father.

53. Occasion: opportunity (often personified)

58. Look thou character: be sure that you inscribe

59. unproportioned: intemperate

Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
 Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel,
 But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
 Of each new-hatched, unfledged courage. Beware
 Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in, 65
 Bear't that th'opposèd 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 expressed in fancy; rich not gaudy, 70
 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, 75
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
 This above all—to thine own self 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. 80

LAERTES Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.
 POLONIUS The time invests you. Go, your servants tend.
 LAERTES Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well
 What I have said to you.
 OPHELIA 'Tis in my memory locked,
 And you yourself shall keep the key of it. 85
 LAERTES Farewell. *Exit* LAERTES.
 POLONIUS What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?
 OPHELIA So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.
 POLONIUS Marry, well bethought.
 'Tis told me he hath very oft of late 90
 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,

61. tried: tested

62. Grapple . . . hoops: (The metaphor derives from naval warfare, specifically the practice of seizing ships with grapnels, or metal hooks on ropes.)

63. dull thy palm: wear out your hand (by handshaking)

64. unfledged: immature; courage: high-spirited youth

68. censure: opinion

69. habit: clothing

70. fancy: caprice, excessive ornament

73. select . . . chief: excellent and noble preeminence

76. husbandry: household management

80. season this: ripen my advice

82. invests: presses; tend: wait

89. Marry: i.e., by the Virgin Mary (an oath); bethought: purposed

93. put on: told to

- And that in way of caution—I must tell you
 You do not understand yourself so clearly 95
 As it behooves my daughter and your honor.
 What is between you? Give me up the truth.
- OPHELIA He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
 Of his affection to me.
- POLONIUS "Affection"? Pooh, you speak like a green girl, 100
 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.
- POLONIUS Marry, I will teach you. Think yourself a baby
 That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay, 105
 Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly,
 Or—not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
 Wronging it thus—you'll tender me a fool.
- OPHELIA My lord, he hath importuned me with love
 In honorable fashion. 110
- POLONIUS Ay, "fashion" you may call it. Go to, go to.
- OPHELIA And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
 With almost all the holy vows of heaven.
- POLONIUS Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
 When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul 115
 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 something scunter of your maiden presence; 120
 Set your entreatments at a higher rate
 Than a command to parle. For Lord Hamlet,
 Believe so much in him, that he is young,
 And with a larger tether may he walk

96. behooves: suits

98. tenders: offers

101. Unsifted: inexperienced

106. sterling: legal currency; Tender . . . dearly: (1) regard yourself more lovingly;
 (2) offer yourself at a higher rate

107. crack the wind: exhaust by overuse

108. tender . . . fool: (1) make me into a fool; (2) make a fool of yourself to me;
 (3) present me with a grandchild

112. countenance: credibility

114. springes: snares; woodcocks: birds supposed to be gullible

115. prodigal: liberally

118. it: i.e., the promise

121. entreatments: conversations

122. command to parle: i.e., Hamlet's wish to speak with you. In other words: "Value yourself and your conversation more highly than to speak with Hamlet simply because he wishes to speak to you." The metaphors are primarily military.

123. in: of

Than may be given you. In few, Ophelia, 125
 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: 130
 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. 135

Exeunt.

1.4 [THE GUARD PLATFORM OF ELSINORE CASTLE AT MIDNIGHT]

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.
 MARCELLUS No, it is struck.
 HORATIO Indeed? I heard it not.
 It then draws near the season 5
 Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.
A flourish of trumpets, and two pieces go off.
 What does this mean, my lord?
 HAMLET The King doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,
 Keeps wassail, and the swagg'ring upspring reels,
 And as he drains his drafts of Rhenish down, 10
 The kettledrum and trumpet thus bray out
 The triumph of his pledge.

125. In few: briefly

126. brokers: go-betweens, especially in love affairs

127. investments: clothes

128. implorators: solicitors

129. Breathing: speaking; bawds: pimps

130. for all: once for all

132. moment: moment's

134. Come your ways: come along

1. shrewdly: sharply

2. eager: biting

3. lacks of: is just before

5. season: time

6. held his wont: was accustomed

6.s.d. *pieces go off*: cannons fire offstage

8. rouse: carousal, drinking bout

9. Keeps wassail: revels; upspring: wild German dance; reels: dances (drunkenly)

10. Rhenish: Rhine wine

11. bray out: sound loudly and harshly

12. pledge: (1) promise to drink (1.2.125-28); (2) feat of drinking a full cup in one draft

HORATIO Is it a custom?
 HAMLET Ay, marry, is't,
 But to my mind, though I am native here
 And to the manner born, it is a custom 15
 More honored in the breach than the observance.
 This heavy-headed revel east and west
 Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations;
 They clepe us drunkards and with swinish phrase
 Soil our addition; and indeed it takes 20
 From our achievements, though performed at height,
 The pith and marrow of our attribute.
 So, oft it chances in particular men
 That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
 As in their birth—wherein they are not guilty, 25
 Since nature cannot choose his origin—
 By their o'ergrowth of some complexion,
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
 Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens
 The form of plausible manners—that these men, 30
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
 Being nature's livery or fortune's star,
 His virtues else, be they as pure as grace,
 As infinite as man may undergo,
 Shall in the general censure take corruption 35
 From that particular fault. The dram of evil
 Doth all the noble substance often dout
 To his own scandal.

Enter GHOST.

HORATIO Look, my lord, it comes!

16. in the breach: by neglect
17. east and west: i.e., everywhere
18. traduced: defamed; taxed of: reproved by
19. clepe: call; swinish phrase: calling us swine
20. addition: titles of honor
21. at height: excellently
22. pith . . . attribute: substance of our good reputation
24. mole of nature: natural defect (in morals)
26. his: its
27. o'ergrowth . . . complexion: excess in one of the four humors thought to govern the human body and temperament
28. pales and forts: fences and fortifications. Reason is here imagined as the commander of a fortress.
29. o'erleavens: radically changes (as yeast in dough)
30. plausible manners: pleasing conduct
32. livery: provision (i.e., the "vicious mole" or the "o'ergrowth of some complexion"); fortune's star: i.e., the result of chance
33. His virtues else: the other virtues of these men
34. undergo: sustain
35. general censure: common opinion
- 36–38. The dram . . . scandal: A small quantity (dram) of evil blots out (Doth . . . dout) the essential good (noble substance) of a person or thing and brings disrepute (scandal).

- HAMLET Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
 Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned, 40
 Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
 Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
 Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
 That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,
 King, father, royal Dane. Oh, answer me! 45
 Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell
 Why thy canonized bones, hearsèd in death,
 Have burst their cerements, why the sepulcher,
 Wherein we saw thee quietly interred,
 Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws 50
 To cast thee up again. What may this mean,
 That thou, dead corpse, again in complete steel
 Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,
 Making night hideous, and we fools of nature
 So horribly to shake our disposition 55
 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 60
 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 at a pin's fee, 65
 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 70

40. spirit of health: good angel; goblin: ugly, mischievous demon
 47. canonized: duly buried according to church law; hearsèd: confined
 48. cerements: waxed wrappings for the dead
 52. complete steel: full armor
 53. glimpses . . . moon: fitful moonlight
 54. fools of nature: men naturally afraid of the supernatural
 59. impartment: communication
 65. fee: value
 69. flood: sea

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, 75
 Without more motive, into every brain
 That looks so many fathoms to the sea
 And hears it roar beneath.

HAMLET It waxes me still.—Go on. I'll follow thee.

MARCELLUS You shall not go, my lord. [*They hold him.*]

HAMLET Hold off your hands! 80

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.

[*GHOST beckons.*]

Still am I called. Unhand me, gentlemen!
 By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me! 85
 [*Breaking free*] 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. 90

HORATIO Heaven will direct it.

MARCELLUS Nay, let's follow him.

Exeunt.

1.5 [THE BATTLEMENTS OF ELSINORE CASTLE]

Enter GHOST and HAMLET.

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 sulf'rous and tormenting flames
 Must render up myself.

71. beetles: projects

73. sovereignty of reason: reason of its ability to govern you

75. toys of desperation: fancies of desperate actions (especially suicide)

82. petty artery: small conduit for blood and vital spirits

83. Nemean lion's nerve: strong tendon of the mythical beast slain by Hercules

85. lets: hinders

89. Have after: let's go after him

91. it: i.e., the issue (89)

2. Mark: heed

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. 40

HAMLET O my prophetic soul! My 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
 So to seduce—won to his shameful lust 45
 The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.
 O Hamlet, what 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 air;
 Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
 My custom always of the afternoon, 60
 Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
 With juice of cursèd hebona in a vial,
 And in the porches of my 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 vigor it doth possess
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
 The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine, 70

37. forgèd process: falsified narrative
 42. adulterate: defiled by adultery
 52. To: compared to
 53. moved: induced to fall
 54. shape of heaven: beautiful celestial form
 56. sate . . . bed: satiate itself with the pleasure of a lawful marriage
 61. secure: free from care, relaxed
 62. hebona: (a) poison
 63. porches: entranceways (to the body)
 64. leperous distilment: distillation causing the disfigurement of leprosy (scales and sores)
 69. eager: sour, acid

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, disappointed, 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 damned incest.
 But, howsoever thou pursues 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, adieu. Remember me. [Exit.]
 HAMLET O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
 And shall I couple hell? Oh, fie! Hold, hold, my heart,
 And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
 But bear me swiftly up. Remember thee? 95
 Ay, thou poor ghost, whiles 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,

71. tetter: scab; barked: grew like tree bark

72. lazar-like: leper-like. Lazar derives from Lazarus, the leper in Luke 16:20.

77. Unhouseled: without having received the Eucharist (housel); disappointed: unprepared spiritually, here, without having received the sacrament of Penance and absolution; unaneled: unanointed, without having received the sacrament of the dying, Extreme Unction

78. reck'ning: settling of spiritual accounts (by confession of sins)

81. nature: natural filial affection

83. luxury: lechery

86. aught: anything

89. glow-worm: lightning bug; matin: morning (echoing "matins," prayers said at daybreak)

92. host: army

93. couple: (1) add (to the invocations); (2) join with

94. sinews: muscles; instant: suddenly. Hamlet asks to be speedily carried to his revenge, 94-95.

97. globe: (1) head; (2) world

98. table: writing tablet. Some believe Hamlet produces and writes in a tablet at 107ff.

99. fond: foolish

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, by heaven.
 O most pernicious woman! 105
 O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain!
 My tables—meet it is I set it down
 That one may smile and smile and be a villain.
 At least, I am sure, it may be so in Denmark.
 So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word. 110
 It is “Adieu, adieu. Remember me.”
 I have sworn’t.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS [calling].

HORATIO My lord, my lord!
 MARCELLUS Lord Hamlet!
 HORATIO Heavens secure him. 115
 HAMLET [*Aside*] So be it.
 MARCELLUS Illo, ho, ho, my lord!
 HAMLET Hillo, ho, ho, boy! Come and come.
 MARCELLUS How is’t, my noble lord?
 HORATIO What news, my lord? 120
 HAMLET Oh, wonderful!
 HORATIO Good my lord, tell it.
 HAMLET No, you will reveal it.
 HORATIO Not I, my lord, by heaven.
 MARCELLUS Nor I, my lord. 125
 HAMLET How say you, then? Would heart of man once think it?
 But you’ll be secret?
 HOR. }
 MAR. } Ay, by heaven.
 HAMLET There’s never a villain dwelling in all Denmark
 But he’s an arrant knave. 130
 HORATIO There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave
 To tell us this.
 HAMLET Why, right, you are in 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— 135

100. saws: wise sayings; forms . . . pressures: shapes or images on the tablet

107. meet: fitting

115. secure: protect

117. Illo, ho, ho: a falconer's cry to a bird. Hamlet mimics the summons in response.

126. once: ever

130. arrant knave: thorough good-for-nothing

133. circumstance: ado

For every man hath business and desire,
 Such as it is—and for my own poor part,
 I will go pray.

HORATIO These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

HAMLET I am sorry they offend you, heartily; 140
 Yes, faith, heartily.

HORATIO There's no offense, my lord.

HAMLET Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,
 And much offense too. Touching this vision here,
 It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you.
 For your desire to know what is between us, 145
 O'ermaster't as you may. And now, good friends,
 As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
 Give me one poor request.

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

HAMLET Never make known what you have seen tonight.

HOR. } My lord, we will not. 150
 MAR. }

HAMLET Nay, but swear't.

HORATIO In faith, my lord, not I.

MARCELLUS Nor I, my lord, in faith.

HAMLET [*Holding out his sword*] Upon my sword.

MARCELLUS We have sworn, my lord, already. 155

HAMLET Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

GHOST [*Cries under the stage*] Swear.

HAMLET Ha, 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. 160

HAMLET Never to speak of this that you have seen,
 Swear by my sword.

GHOST [*Beneath*] Swear.

HAMLET *Hic et ubique?* Then we'll shift our ground.
 [*He moves to another place.*]

Come hither, gentlemen, 165
 And lay your hands again upon my sword.
 Swear by my sword
 Never to speak of this that you have heard.

142. Saint Patrick: associated with Purgatory because of Saint Patrick's Purgatory, a cave in Donegal that was a popular place of penance and pilgrimage

143. offense: i.e., Claudius's crimes

144. honest: real

152. In faith . . . I: by my faith, I swear I shall not reveal what the ghost said

154. sword: i.e., the cross made by the intersection of the hilt and blade

158. truepenny: honest fellow

159. cellarage: cellars

164. *Hic et ubique*: Latin: here and everywhere

GHOST [*Beneath*] Swear by his sword.

HAMLET Well said, old mole! Canst work i' th' earth so fast? 170
A worthy pioner.—Once more remove, good friends.

[*He moves again.*]

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 your philosophy. But come. 175

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
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 times seeing me, never shall, 180
With arms encumbered thus, or this headshake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase
As "Well, 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 185

That you know aught of me—this do swear;
So grace and mercy at your most need help you.

GHOST [*Beneath*] Swear. [*They swear.*]

HAMLET Rest, rest, perturbèd spirit.—So, gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you, 190

And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
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 cursèd spite, 195
That ever I was born to set it right!

Nay, come, let's go together.

Exeunt.

171. pioner: soldier, especially one who digs

173. as . . . welcome: (Hamlet here invokes the tradition of hospitality to strangers.)

175. philosophy: traditional philosophical inquiry and natural science

176. so . . . mercy: as you hope to receive God's mercy

177. soe'er: so ever

179. antic: grotesque, fantastic

181. encumbered: folded

182. doubtful: ambiguous

183. an if: if

184. list: wished

186. aught: anything

188. s.d. *They swear*: (Hamlet's following injunction to rest appears to confirm this swearing. Many envision a triple oath, the first two instances occurring at 163 and 169.)

192. friending: friendship

194. still: ever

195. out of joint: dislocated (said of bones)

2.1 [POLONIUS'S CHAMBERS]

Enter old POLONIUS with his man [REYNALDO].

POLONIUS Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.
[He gives money and papers.]

REYNALDO I will, my lord.

POLONIUS You shall do marvelous wisely, good Reynaldo,
 Before you visit him, to make inquire
 Of his behavior.

REYNALDO My lord, I did intend it. 5

POLONIUS Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir,
 Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris,
 And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
 What company, at what expense; and finding
 By this encompassment and drift of question 10
 That they do know my son, come you more nearer
 Than your particular demands will touch it.
 Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him,
 As thus, "I know his father and his friends,
 And in part him"—do you mark this, Reynaldo? 15

REYNALDO Ay, very well, my lord.

POLONIUS "And in part him, but," you may say, "not well.
 But if't be he I mean, he's very wild,
 Addicted so and so," and there put on him
 What forgeries you please—marry, none so rank 20
 As may dishonor him, take heed of that—
 But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips
 As are companions noted and most known
 To youth and liberty.

REYNALDO As gaming, my lord.

POLONIUS Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, 25
 Quarreling, drabbing—you may go so far.

REYNALDO My lord, that would dishonor him.

POLONIUS Faith, no, as you may season it in the charge.

- 4. inquire: inquiry
- 6. Look you: take care you do this
- 7. Danskers: Danes
- 8. means: wealth (they have); keep: lodge
- 10. encompassment . . . question: roundabout talking
- 11–12. come . . . it: you will come closer to the truth in this way than by asking specific questions (particular demands)
- 13. Take you: assume
- 19. put on: tell of
- 20. rank: offensive
- 23. companions: accompaniments
- 24. gaming: gambling
- 26. drabbing: visiting prostitutes
- 28. season . . . charge: temper the accusation in your choice of phrasing