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**William Shakespeare**

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**11 Unabridged Plays**

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# **HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK**

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By William Shakespeare

### PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Claudius, King of Denmark.

Hamlet, Son to the former, and Nephew to the present King.

Polonius, Lord Chamberlain.

Horatio, Friend to Hamlet.

Laertes, Son to Polonius.

Voltimand, 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, Grave-diggers.

Fortinbras, Prince of Norway.

A Captain.

English Ambassadors.

Ghost of Hamlet's Father.

Gertrude, Queen of Denmark, and Mother of Hamlet.

Ophelia, Daughter to Polonius.

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and other

Attendants.  
SCENE. Elsinore.

## **ACT I.**

SCENE I. Elsinore. A platform before the Castle.

[Francisco at his post. Enter to him Bernardo.]

Ber.

Who's there?

Fran.

Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

Ber.

Long live the king!

Fran.

Bernardo?

Ber.

He.

Fran.

You come most carefully upon your hour.

Ber.

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

Fran.

For this relief much thanks: 'tis bitter cold,

And I am sick at heart.

Ber.

Have you had quiet guard?

Fran.

Not a mouse stirring.

Ber.

Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,

The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Fran.

I think I hear them.—Stand, ho! Who is there?  
[Enter Horatio and Marcellus.]

Hor.  
Friends to this ground.  
Mar.  
And liegemen to the Dane.  
Fran.  
Give you goodnight.  
Mar.  
O, farewell, honest soldier;  
Who hath reliev'd you?  
Fran.  
Bernardo has my place.  
Give you goodnight.  
[Exit.]

Mar.  
Holla! Bernardo!  
Ber.  
Say.  
What, is Horatio there?  
Hor.  
A piece of him.  
Ber.  
Welcome, Horatio:—Welcome, good Marcellus.  
Mar.  
What, has this thing appear'd again tonight?  
Ber.  
I have seen nothing.  
Mar.  
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.

Hor.

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

Ber.

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

Hor.

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

Ber.

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

Mar.

Peace, break thee off; look where it comes again!  
[Enter Ghost, armed.]

Ber.

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

Mar.

Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

Ber.

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

Hor.

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

Ber.

It would be spoke to.

Mar.

Question it, Horatio.

Hor.

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!

Mar.

It is offended.

Ber.

See, it stalks away!

Hor.

Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee speak!

[Exit Ghost.]

Mar.

'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Ber.

How now, Horatio! You tremble and look pale:

Is not this something more than fantasy?

What think you on't?

Hor.

Before my God, I might not this believe

Without the sensible and true avouch

Of mine own eyes.

Mar.

Is it not like the King?

Hor.

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.

Mar.

Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,

With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hor.

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.  
Mar.

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?

Hor.

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,  
Dar'd 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 seiz'd 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 cov'nant,  
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 compulsory, 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.

Ber.

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.

Hor.

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 precursor of fierce events,—  
As harbingers preceding still the fates,  
And prologue to the omen coming on,—  
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
Unto our climature 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, race to me,  
Speak to me:  
If thou art privy to thy country's fate,

Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,  
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!  
Mar.  
Shall I strike at it with my partisan?  
Hor.  
Do, if it will not stand.  
Ber.  
'Tis here!  
Hor.  
'Tis here!  
Mar.  
'Tis gone!  
[Exit Ghost.]

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.  
Ber.  
It was about to speak, when the cock crew.  
Hor.  
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.  
Mar.

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 dare 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.

Hor.

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 tonight  
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?

Mar.

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

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. Elsinore. A room of state in the Castle.

[Enter the King, Queen, Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes,  
Voltimand,  
Cornelius, Lords, and Attendant.]

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  
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,—  
With an auspicious and one 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:—or 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 this 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 dilated articles allow.  
Farewell; and let your haste commend your duty.  
Cor. and Volt.  
In that and all things will we show our duty.  
King.

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 lose 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?

Laer.

Dread my lord,  
Your leave and favour 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,  
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King.

Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

Pol.

He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave  
By laboursome petition; and at last  
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:  
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—  
Ham.

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

King.

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Ham.

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

Queen.

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.

Ham.

Ay, madam, it is common.

Queen.

If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

Ham.

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 forc'd breath,

No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,

Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,

Together with all forms, moods, shows 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 passeth show;

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,

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;

A heart unfortified, a mind impatient;



An understanding simple and unschool'd;  
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,  
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 corse till he that died to-day,  
'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  
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.  
Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:  
I pray thee stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.  
Ham.  
I shall in all my best obey you, madam.  
King.  
Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:  
Be as ourself in Denmark.—Madam, come;  
This gentle and unforc'd 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 heaven shall bruit again,  
Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away.  
[Exeunt all but Hamlet.]

Ham.

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! O God!  
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
Fie on't! O 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 followed 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 mine 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.]

Hor.

Hail to your lordship!

Ham.

I am glad to see you well:

Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

Hor.

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

Ham.

Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you:

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?—

Marcellus?

Mar.

My good lord,—

Ham.

I am very glad to see you.—Good even, sir.—

But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Hor.

A truant disposition, good my lord.

Ham.

I would not hear your enemy say so;

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 to drink deep ere you depart.

Hor.

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

Ham.

I prithee do not mock me, fellow-student.

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

Hor.

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

Ham.

Thrift, thrift, Horatio! The funeral bak'd 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.

Hor.

Where, my lord?

Ham.

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Hor.

I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

Ham.

He was a man, take him for all in all,

I shall not look upon his like again.

Hor.

My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Ham.

Saw who?

Hor.

My lord, the king your father.

Ham.

The King my father!

Hor.

Season your admiration for awhile

With an attent ear, till I may deliver,

Upon the witness of these gentlemen,

This marvel to you.

Ham.

For God's love let me hear.

Hor.

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, distill'd

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.

Ham.

But where was this?

Mar.

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

Ham.

Did you not speak to it?

Hor.

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.

Ham.

'Tis very strange.

Hor.

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.

Ham.

Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.  
Hold you the watch tonight?

Mar. and Ber.

We do, my lord.

Ham.

Arm'd, say you?

Both.

Arm'd, my lord.

Ham.

From top to toe?

Both.

My lord, from head to foot.

Ham.

Then saw you not his face?

Hor.

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

Ham.

What, look'd he frowningly?

Hor.

A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

Ham.

Pale or red?

Hor.

Nay, very pale.

Ham.

And fix'd his eyes upon you?

Hor.

Most constantly.

Ham.

I would I had been there.

Hor.

It would have much amaz'd you.

Ham.

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

Hor.

While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

Mar. and Ber.

Longer, longer.

Hor.

Not when I saw't.

Ham.

His beard was grizzled,—no?

Hor.

It was, as I have seen it in his life,

A sable silver'd.

Ham.

I will watch tonight;

Perchance 'twill walk again.

Hor.

I warr'nt it will.

Ham.

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 tonight,

Give it an understanding, but no tongue:

I will requite your loves. So, fare ye well:

Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,

I'll visit you.

All.

Our duty to your honour.

Ham.

Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

[Exeunt Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo.]

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's house.

[Enter Laertes and Ophelia.]

Laer.

My necessities are embark'd: farewell:

And, sister, as the winds give benefit



And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,  
But let me hear from you.

Oph.

Do you doubt that?

Laer.

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.

Oph.

No more but so?

Laer.

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 unvalu'd persons do,  
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends  
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  
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 scopes not calumnious strokes:  
The canker galls the infants of the spring  
Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd:  
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.  
Oph.

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;  
Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads  
And recks not his own read.

Laer.

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.

Pol.

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!  
[Laying his hand on Laertes's head.]

And these few precepts in thy memory  
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,

Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.  
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.  
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-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware  
Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,  
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.  
Give every man thine 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 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 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!

Laer.

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Pol.

The time invites you; go, your servants tend.

Laer.

Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well

What I have said to you.

Oph.

'Tis in my memory lock'd,

And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laer.

Farewell.

[Exit.]

Pol.

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

Oph.

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

Pol.

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 behooves my daughter and your honour.

What is between you? give me up the truth.

Oph.

He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders

Of his affection to me.

Pol.

Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,

Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

Oph.

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

Pol.

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,

Wronging it thus,—you'll tender me a fool.

Oph.

My lord, he hath importun'd me with love

In honourable fashion.

Pol.

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

Oph.

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

Pol.

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 something scanter 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.

Oph.

I shall obey, my lord.

[Exeunt.]

#### SCENE IV. The platform.

[Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.]

Ham.

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

Hor.

It is a nipping and an eager air.

Ham.

What hour now?

Hor.

I think it lacks of twelve.

Mar.

No, it is struck.

Hor.

Indeed? I heard it not: then 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?

Ham.

The King doth wake tonight 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.

Hor.

Is it a custom?

Ham.

Ay, marry, is't;

But to my mind,—though I am native here,  
And to the manner born,—it is a custom  
More honour'd in the breach than the observance.  
This heavy-headed revel east and west  
Makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nations:  
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase  
Soil our addition; and, indeed, it takes  
From our achievements, though perform'd 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,  
Since nature cannot choose his origin,—

By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason;  
Or by some habit, that too much o'er-leavens  
The form of plausible manners;—that these men,—  
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,—  
Their virtues else,—be they as pure as grace,  
As infinite as man may undergo,—  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault: the dram of eale  
Doth all the noble substance often doubt  
To his own scandal.

Hor.

Look, my lord, it comes!

[Enter Ghost.]

Ham.

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 com'st 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 canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,  
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,  
Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,  
Hath op'd 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.]

Hor.

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

Mar.

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

Hor.

No, by no means.

Ham.

It will not speak; then will I follow it.

Hor.

Do not, my lord.

Ham.

Why, what should be the fear?

I do not set my life at 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.

Hor.

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 fadoms to the sea  
And hears it roar beneath.

Ham.

It waves me still.—