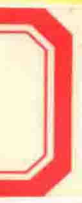




HAMLET

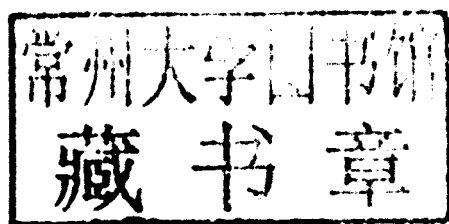
To be, or not to be, that is the question.

William Shakespeare



HAMLET

William Shakespeare



CONTENTS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE / 1

SCENE / 1

ACT I.

Scene I. A platform before the Castle. / 3

Scene II. A room of state in the Castle. / 8

Scene III. A room in the house of Polonius. / 17

Scene IV. The platform before the Castle. / 21

Scene V. The Castle Another part of the fortifications. / 24

ACT II.

Scene I. A room in the house of Polonius. / 31

Scene II. A room in the Castle. / 35

ACT III.

Scene I. A room in the Castle. / 52

Scene II. Hall in the Castle. / 57

Scene III. A room in the Castle. / 69

Scene IV. The Queen's closet. / 72

ACT IV.

Scene I. A room in the Castle. / 80

Scene II. A passage in the Castle. / 81

Scene III. A room in the Castle. / 82

Scene IV. A Plain in Denmark. / 84

Scene V. A room in the Castle. / 87

Scene VI. Another room in the Castle. / 94

Scene VII. Another room in the Castle. / 95

ACT V.

Scene I. A churchyard. / 102

Scene II. A hall in the Castle. / 110

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

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

Voltemand, courtier

Cornelius, courtier

Rosencrantz, courtier

Guildenstern, courtier

Osric, courtier

A Gentleman, courtier

A Priest

Marcellus, soldier

Bernardo, soldier

Francisco, soldier

Reynaldo, servant to Polonius

The Players

Two Clowns, grave-diggers

Fortinbras, Prince of Norway

A Captain

English Ambassadors

Gertrude, Queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet

Ophelia, daughter to Polonius

Ghost of Hamlet's Father

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

SCENE

Elsinore

ACT I.

Scene I. 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 good night.

Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier. Who hath reliev'd you?

Fran. Bernardo hath my place. Give you good night.

Exit Francisco.

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 a while,
 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 t' 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.

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 the 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 th' 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 covenant
 And carriage of the article design'd,
 His fell to Hamlet. Now sir, young Fortinbras,
 Of unimproved mettle, hot and full
 Hath in the skirts of Norway, here and there,
 Shark'd up a list of landless 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 compulsative, those foresaid lands
 So by his father lost; and this, I take it,
 Is the main motive of our preparations,
 The source of this our watch, and the chief head
 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!

Enter Ghost again.

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

Exit Ghost.

Mar. '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.

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,
Th' 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 can 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 to-night
Unto young Hamlet. For upon my life,
This spirit dumb to us will speak to him:
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

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

Exeunt.

Scene II. A room of state in the Castle.

Flourish. Enter Claudius, King of Denmark, Gertrude, the Queen, Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes and his sister Ophelia, Voltemand, Cornelius, Lords, 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,
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometimes 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, for all our thanks.
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleagued 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 bands 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 Voltemand,
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. [*Gives a paper.*]
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

Cor. In that, and all things, will we show our duty.

Volt.

King. We doubt it nothing. Heartily farewell.

Exeunt Voltemand 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' th' 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 condolement, 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 today,
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 prithee 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 today,
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.

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

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: [*To Bernardo.*] 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 pray thee do not mock me, fellow student.
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

Hor. Indeed, my lord, it followed 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. Oh! 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 a while
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 encountre'd. A figure like your father,
Arm'd at point exactly, cap-a-pe,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd,