

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-00579-1 - Hamlet, Volume 7  
William Shakespeare  
Excerpt  
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*T H E*  
Tragicall Historie of  
H A M L E T,  
*Prince of Denmarke.*

By William Shakespeare.

Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much  
again as it was, according to the true and perfect  
Coppie.



AT LONDON,  
Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be sold at his  
shoppe vnder Saint Dunstons Church in  
Fleetstreet, 1605.

## The scene: Denmark

### CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

- CLAUDIUS, *King of Denmark*  
 HAMLET, *Prince of Denmark, son to the late, and nephew to the present king*  
 POLONIUS, *Principal Secretary of State*  
 HORATIO, *friend to Hamlet*  
 LAERTES, *son to Polonius*  
 VALTEMAND } *ambassadors to Norway*  
 CORNELIUS }  
 ROSENCRANTZ } *formerly fellow-students with Hamlet*  
 GUILDENSTERN }  
 OSRIC, *a fantastic fop*  
*A gentleman*  
*A Doctor of Divinity*  
 MARCELLUS } *Gentlemen of the Guard*  
 BARNARDO }  
 FRANCISCO }  
 REYNALDO, *servant to Polonius*  
*Four or five Players*  
*Two grave-diggers*  
 FORTINBRAS, *Prince of Norway*  
*A Norwegian Captain*  
*English Ambassadors*  
 GERTRUDE, *Queen of Denmark, mother to Hamlet*  
 OPHELIA, *daughter to Polonius*  
*Lords, Ladies, Soldiers, Sailors, Messenger,*  
*and Attendants*  
 The GHOST of Hamlet's father

## THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET PRINCE OF DENMARK

[1. 1.] *The castle at Elsinore. A narrow platform upon the battlements; turret-doors to right and left. Starlight, very cold*

*FRANCISCO, a sentinel armed with a partisan, paces to and fro. A bell tolls twelve. Presently BARNARDO, another sentinel likewise armed, comes from the castle; he starts, hearing Francisco's tread in the darkness*

*Barnardo.* Who's there?

*Francisco.* Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

*Barnardo.* Long live the king!

*Francisco.* Barnardo?

*Barnardo.* He.

*Francisco.* You come most carefully upon your hour.

*Barnardo.* 'Tis now struck twelve, get thee to bed, Francisco.

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

*Barnardo.* Have you had quiet guard?

*Francisco.* Not a mouse stirring. 10

*Barnardo.* Well, good night:

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

*HORATIO and MARCELLUS come forth*

*Francisco* [*listens*]. I think I hear them. Stand ho, who is there?

*Horatio.* Friends to this ground.

*Marcellus.* And liegemen to the Dane.

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## HAMLET

I. I. 16

*Francisco.* Give you good night.

*Marcellus.* O, farewell honest soldier,  
 Who hath relieved you?

*Francisco.* Barnardo hath my place;  
 Give you good night. [*Francisco goes*]

*Marcellus.* Holla, Barnardo!

*Barnardo.* Say,

What, is Horatio there?

*Horatio.* A piece of him.

20 *Barnardo.* Welcome Horatio, welcome good Mar-  
 cellus.

*Horatio.* What, has this thing appeared again to-night?

*Barnardo.* I have seen nothing.

*Marcellus.* Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,  
 And will not let belief take hold of him

'Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us,

Therefore I have entreated him along

With us to watch the minutes of this night,

'That if again this apparition come,

He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

30 *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,

And let us hear Barnardo speak of this.

*Barnardo.* Last night of all,

When yon same star that's westward from the pole

Had made his course t'illuminate that part of heaven

Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

The bell then beating one—

1.1.49 PRINCE OF DENMARK 5

*A GHOST appears; it is clad in armour from head to foot, and bears a marshal's truncheon*

*Marcellus.* Peace, break thee off, look where it  
 comes again! 40

*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.

*Horatio.* Most like, it harrows me with fear  
 and wonder.

*Barnardo.* It would be spoke to.

*Marcellus.* Question 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  
 Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee speak.

*Marcellus.* It is offended.

*Barnardo.* See, it stalks away. 50

*Horatio.* Stay, speak, speak, I charge thee speak.

*[the Ghost vanishes]*

*Marcellus.* 'Tis gone and will not answer.

*Barnardo.* How now Horatio, you tremble and  
 look pale,

Is not this something more than fantasy?

What think you on't?

*Horatio.* Before my God, I might not this believe  
 Without the sensible and true avouch  
 Of mine own eyes.

*Marcellus.* Is it not like the king?

*Horatio.* As thou art to thyself.

Such was the very armour he had on, 60  
 When he the ambitious Norway combated,  
 So frowned he once, when in an angry parle

He smote the sledged Polacks on the ice.

'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,  
 This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

70 *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 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?

*Horatio.* That can I,

80 At least the whisper goes so; our last king,  
 Whose image even but now appeared to us,  
 Was as you know by Fortinbras of Norway,  
 Thereto pricked on by a most emulate pride,  
 Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet  
 (For so this side of our known world esteemed him)  
 Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a sealed compact,  
 Well ratified by law and heraldy,  
 Did forfeit (with his life) all those his lands  
 Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror,  
 90 Against the which a moiety competent  
 Was gagéd by our king, which had returned  
 To the inheritance of Fortinbras,

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**1.1.93 PRINCE OF DENMARK 7**

Had he been vanquisher; as by the same co-mart,  
 And carriage of the article designed,  
 His fell to Hamlet; now sir, young Fortinbras,  
 Of unimprovéd mettle hot and full,  
 Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there  
 Sharked up a list of lawless resolute  
 For food and diet to some enterprise  
 That hath a stomach in't, which is no other, 100  
 As it doth well appear unto our state,  
 But to recover of us by strong hand  
 And terms compulsatory, 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.

*Barnardo.* I think it be no other but e'en so;  
 Well may it sort that this portentous figure  
 Comes arméd through our watch so like the king 110  
 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,  
 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
 The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead  
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets,  
 †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 120  
 Unto our climatures and countrymen,  
 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.

*The GHOST reappears*

- But soft, behold, lo where it comes again!  
 I'll cross it though it blast me...[*he 'spreads his arms'*  
     Stay, illusion!  
 If thou hast any sound or use of voice,  
 Speak to me.
- 130 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,  
*[a cock crows*
- 140 *Marcellus.* Shall I strike at it with my partisan?  
*Horatio.* Do if it will not stand.  
*Barnardo.* 'Tis here!  
*Horatio.* 'Tis here!  
*Marcellus.* 'Tis gone! *[the Ghost vanishes*
- We do it wrong being so majestical  
 To offer it the show of violence,  
 For it is as the air, invulnerable,  
 And our vain blows malicious mockery.  
*Barnardo.* It was about to speak when the cock crew.  
*Horatio.* And then it started like a guilty thing,  
 Upon a fearful summons; I have heard  
 150 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,



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I. I. 154 PRINCE OF DENMARK 9

Th'extravagant and erring spirit hies  
 To his confine, and of the truth herein  
 This present object made probation.

*Marcellus.* It faded on the crowing of the cock.  
 Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes  
 Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated  
 This bird of dawning singeth all night long, 160  
 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 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  
 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 170  
 This spirit dumb to us, will speak to him:  
 Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,  
 As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

*Marcellus.* Let's do't, I pray, and I this morning know  
 Where we shall find him most convenient. [*they go*]

[I. 2.] *The Council Chamber in the castle*

*A 'flourish' of trumpets. 'Enter CLAUDIUS King of Denmark, GERTRUDE the Queen, Councillors, POLONIUS and his son LAERTES, VALTEMAND and CORNELIUS, all clad in gay apparel, as from the coronation; and last of all Prince HAMLET in black, with downcast eyes. The King and Queen ascend steps to the thrones*

*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

10

## HAMLET

1.2.4

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,  
 10 Have we as 'twere with a defeated joy,  
 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  
 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  
 20 Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,  
 Colleaguéd 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:  
 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  
 30 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 Valtemand,  
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,  
 Giving to you no further personal power  
 To business with the king, more than the scope