

[A lookout post at the Royal Danish Castle at Elsinore. It's a cold night and Francisco is on duty. Another soldier, Bernardo, approaches. He stops as if he's heard a sound coming from the audience, then cries out]

Bernardo

Who's there?

Francisco

Nay

, answer me! **Stand**

and **unfold**

yourself!

Bernardo

Long live the king!

Francisco

Bernardo?

Bernardo

He.

Francisco

You come most carefully **upon your hour**

.

Bernardo

'Tis

now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco.

Francisco

For this relief much thanks. 'Tis bitter cold,

And I am **sick at heart**

.

Bernardo

Have you had quiet guard?

Francisco

Not a mouse stirring.

Bernardo

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**

! Who's there?

Horatio

Friends to this **ground**.

Marcellus

And liegemen to the Dane.

Francisco

Give you good night.

Marcellus

Oh, farewell, honest soldier.

Who has relieved you?

Francisco

Bernardo has my place.

Give you good night.

[Francisco exits]

Marcellus

Holla! Bernardo!

Bernardo

Say,

What, is Horatio there?

Horatio

A piece of him.

Bernardo

Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.

Marcellus

What, has this thing appeared again tonight?

Bernardo

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.

Horatio

Tush, tush, 'twill
not appear.

Bernardo

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

Horatio

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

Bernardo

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

[Enter a ghostly figure dressed in splendid armor — see note, line 40]

Marcellus

Peace, break thee off! Look where it comes again!

Bernardo

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

Marcellus

Thou art a scholar. Speak to it, Horatio.

Bernardo

Looks it not like the king? **Mark**
it, Horatio.

Horatio

Most like, it **harrow**s
me with fear and wonder.

Bernardo

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.

Bernardo

See, it stalks away!

Horatio

Stay! Speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

[Exit Ghost.]

Marcellus

'Tis gone and will not answer.

Bernardo

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 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.

'Tis strange.

Marcellus

Thus twice before — and just at this dead hour —
With **martial stalk**
has he gone by our watch.

Horatio

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.

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-laborer**
with the day?
Who is't that can inform me?

Horatio

That can I —

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 **heraldry**
,
Did forfeit with
his life all those his lands
Which he **stood seized of**
to the conqueror;
Against the which a **moiety competent**

Was **gaged**
by our king, which had returned
To the inheritance of Fortinbras
Had he been **vanquisher**
; as, by the same **covenant**
And **carriage**
of the **article designed**

,
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, **young Fortinbras**

,
Of **unimproved**
mettle hot and full,
Has in the **skirts**
of Norway, here and there,
Sharked up a **list**
of landless resolute,
For food and diet to some enterprise
That has a stomach in't, which is no other —
And 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 **rummage**
in the land.

[Re-enter the ghost.]

But **soft**
, behold! **Lo**
where it comes again!
I'll cross it though it blast me.
[The ghost spreads its arms.]

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,
Oh, 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,
Speak of it. Stay and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.
[The cock crows.]

Marcellus

Shall I strike at it with my **partisan**
?

Horatio

Do, if it will not **stand**

.
[They strike at the Ghost but their spears seem to pass through it without any effect]

Bernardo

'Tis here!

Horatio

'Tis here!

[Exit Ghost.]

Marcellus

'Tis gone!

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.

Bernardo

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,
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**

.
Marcellus

It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that **ever 'gainst**
that season comes
Wherein our **Savior's**

birth is celebrated,
The **bird of dawning**
singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirit dares walk abroad,
The nights are **wholesome**
, then no planets **strike**
,
No fairy takes, nor witch has power to **charm**
,
So **hallowed**
and so **gracious**
is the 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 eastern 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?

Marcellus

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