

The Characters

Hamlet Prince of Denmark
Claudius King of Denmark, and Hamlet's uncle
Gertrude Queen of Denmark, Hamlet's mother, now wife of Claudius
The Ghost of the late king, Hamlet's father
Polonius counselor of state
Laertes son of Polonius
Ophelia daughter of Polonius
Horatio friend and confidant of Hamlet

Rosencrantz / Guildenstern courtiers, and former fellow students of Hamlet

Fortinbras Prince of Norway

Voltemand / Cornelius Danish councilors and ambassadors to Norway

Marcellus / Barnardo members of the king's guard

Osric a fashionable courtier
Reynaldo a servant of Polonius
Gravedigger
Gravedigger's Mate
Captain in the command of Fortinbras
Players actors of a touring company
Ambassadors from England
A Gentleman of the Danish court
A Priest
Sailors
Lords, Ladies, Soldiers, Guards, Messengers, and Attendants

Act 1, Scene 1

(Elsinore at midnight. FRANCISCO, a guard with SPEAR, is waiting to go off-duty. Enter BARNARDO, also with SPEAR.)

BARNARDO

Who's there?

FRANCISCO

No, answer me. Halt and reveal yourself!

BARNARDO

Long live the king.

FRANCISCO

Barnardo?

BARNARDO

Ay.

FRANCISCO

You come most carefully upon your hour.

BARNARDO

'Tis struck twelve now. Get to a bed Francisco.

FRANCISCO

Much thanks for the relief. 'Tis bitter cold, and I am sick at heart.

BARNARDO

Have you had quiet guard?

FRANCISCO

Not a mouse stirring.

BARNARDO

Well goodnight, and if you see the others on watch, Horatio
and Marcellus, bid them make haste.

FRANCISCO

I think I hear them.

*(Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS
with SPEAR.)*

FRANCISCO (CON'T)

Stand ho! Who is there?

HORATIO

Friends of Denmark.

MARCELLUS

And loyal subjects to the Dane.

FRANCISCO

Long live the king. I bid you good night.

MARCELLUS

Good night, good soldier—who has relieved you?

FRANCISCO

Barnardo has my place. I bid you good night.

(Exit Francisco.)

MARCELLUS

Holla—Barnardo!

BARNARDO

Ho Marcellus! Is Horatio there?

HORATIO

(offering hand to shake)

A part of him.

BARNARDO

(shaking hands)

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, and will not let his belief
take hold regarding this dreaded sight twice seen by us. Therefore
I have asked him along to watch the minutes of this night, that
if this apparition comes again he may see himself, and perhaps
speak to it.

HORATIO

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

BARNARDO

Sit down a moment, and let us once again tell your ears that
are so against hearing, what we have seen these past two nights.

HORATIO

Well then, let us sit down and hear you speak of it.

BARNARDO

Last night, when the North Star made its course to light
that part of heaven where it now burns, Marcellus and myself,
the bell then striking one—

(Enter GHOST.)

MARCELLUS

Peace. Say no more. Look where it comes again.

BARNARDO

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

MARCELLUS

You are learned, Horatio—speak to it.

BARNARDO

Does he not look like the king, Horatio?

HORATIO

Most like. It fills me with fear and wonder.

BARNARDO

It would be spoken to.

MARCELLUS

Question it, Horatio.

HORATIO

(to Ghost)

What art thou, to take up this time of night, together in that fair and warlike form—the majesty in which the buried king of Denmark did sometimes march? By heaven I charge thee, speak.

(Ghost turns to exit.)

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. Is this not something more than fantasy? What do you think of it?

HORATIO

Before my God, this I would not have believed without the sense and assurance of mine own eyes.

MARCELLUS

Is it not like the king?

HORATIO

Just as you are to yourself. The very armor he had on in combat against the ambitious king of Norway—the same frown when, after that angry dispute, he struck down the Polish soldiers who advanced by sled on ice. 'Tis strange.

MARCELLUS

Thus twice before at this dead hour, with martial stride, has he moved past our watch like this.

HORATIO

In what particular way to think of this I do not know, but in my opinion it does not bode well, like some strange eruption in our state.

MARCELLUS

Good, now sit down, and tell me he who can, why this strict and observant duty of guard burdens us these nights? Why is there so much brass going to cannons, and all this trade in the tools of war? Why are shipwrights building ships seven days a week? What is the threat and purpose that accounts for all this sweaty haste day and night? Who can answer that?

HORATIO

That I can, at least so far as whispers go. Our last king, whose image has just appeared to us now, was as you know, dared to combat by King Fortinbras of Norway. They each put up lands to be seized if vanquished. Valiant King Hamlet did slay proud Fortinbras, who by heraldry and law ratified did forfeit, with his life, those lands—by the same article of which would have gone our king's lands to the inheritance of Fortinbras had he been vanquisher. Now, sir, young Fortinbras, as yet untested, hot and full to prove his mettle, has been moving

about Norway to marshal an army in the enterprise to recover what his father lost—that this is what accounts for our preparations, the reason for our watch, and these hasty actions throughout the land.

BARNARDO

I think it be nothing other, and why this figure, armed, cuts through our watch, just as the king that was and is the question of these wars.

HORATIO

'Tis a mote which troubles the mind's eye. When Rome was high and triumphant, just before the mighty Julius Caesar fell, they say graves opened up and the shrouded dead went shrieking through the streets. Stars with trails of fire and dews of blood, disasters in the sun—and the watery moon, upon whose influence stand the tides of Neptune's empire, was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse. Such feared events, as harbingers of fates coming on, have heaven and earth together demonstrated to us now.

(Ghost re-enters.)

HORATIO (CONT'D)

But soft, behold—look where it comes again. I'll stand in its way even though it may blast me.

(Ghost spreads arms.)

HORATIO (CONT'D)

Stay illusion—if you have any sound or use of voice, speak to me.

(No reply.)

HORATIO (CONT'D)

If there is anything to be done that may bring peace to you and grace to me—speak to me. If you have knowledge of your country's fate which our knowing it can help avoid—oh speak.

Or if you have treasure, extorted in life and buried in the womb of earth, for which in death they say spirits often walk, speak of it. Stay and speak!

(A COCK CROWS. Ghost turns to exit.)

HORATIO (CONT'D)

Stop it, Marcellus.

MARCELLUS

Shall I strike at it with my spear?

HORATIO

Ay, if it will not stop.

BARNARDO

'Tis here.

HORATIO

'Tis here.

(Exit Ghost.)

MARCELLUS

'Tis gone.

(Beat.)

MARCELLUS (CONT'D)

We have done it wrong to show violence to such a majestic form—for it is as the air, invulnerable, and our vain blows but a malicious mockery.

BARNARDO

It was about to speak when the cock crowed.

HORATIO

And then it started like a guilty thing upon fearing a summons. I have heard that when the cock—the trumpet of the morning—does 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, ghosts hurry to their graves. What we have just seen proves the truth of this.

MARCELLUS

It did fade at the crowing of the cock. Some say that on the eve our Savior's birth is celebrated, this bird of dawn sings all night long, and no spirits dare roam, no fairies dare mischief, nor witches dare cast spells—so holy, graced, and wholesome is that time.

HORATIO

So too have I heard, and do in part believe it. (Turning to horizon.) But look, the morn, in reddish robes clothed, walks over the dew of high eastern hills. Let us break our watch, and by my advice, report what we have seen tonight to Prince Hamlet—for upon my life, this spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him. Do you agree, out of friendship, and in fitting with our duty?

MARCELLUS

Let's do it, and most conveniently, I know where we shall find him this morning.

(They exit.)

Act 1, Scene 2

(Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, ATTENDANTS, and council, including VOLTEMAND, CORNELIUS, POLONIUS, LAERTES, and HAMLET.)

CLAUDIUS

(to all)

Of King Hamlet, our dear brother's death, the memory still green in our minds, it befits our hearts to bear its grief as a kingdom, in a single brow of woe. Yet necessity fights these natural feelings, so that we must think on him in wisest sorrow, while remembering still our responsibilities as royals. Therefore our once sister, now our queen, the joint-ruler to this war-like state—as it were—with a defeated joy, eyes saddened yet smiling, bringing mirth to sorrow, in equal scale weighing both—have we taken as our wife. Nor have we barred your better wisdom and advice which have supported and freely gone along with us in this path. And for that, our thanks.

(Applause.)

CLAUDIUS (CONT'D)

Now, as you know, young Fortinbras, thinking that by our late dear brother's death we are disjointed and out of frame,

coupled with his ambitious dreams, has not failed to pester us with messages demanding we surrender those lands lost by his father to our most valiant brother. So much for him. (Taking DOCUMENT from pocket.) For ourself, and for the business of this meeting, we have written to the bedridden King of Norway—who scarcely knows of his nephew’s purpose—requesting he suppress those steps from proceeding any further. We here dispatch you, good Cornelius, and you, Voltemand, as the bearers of this, giving you no personal powers past the scope these articles allow. (Handing document to Cornelius.) Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

CORNELIUS

In this, and in all things, we will perform our duty.

CLAUDIUS

We doubt it not. A hearty farewell.

(Exit Cornelius and Voltemand.)

CLAUDIUS

And now Laertes, what’s the news with you? You told us of some request, what is it? You cannot ask anything reasonable where it be a waste of your breath. The head could not be more closely related to the heart, nor the hand more instrumental to the mouth, than is your father to the throne of Denmark. What is your wish?

LAERTES

My revered lord, your permission to return to France. I willingly 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 to your gracious blessings.

CLAUDIUS

And you have your father’s blessings? What does Polonius say?

POLONIUS

He has, my lord, wrung from me with constant petitions, and at last upon his will I have sealed my hard consent.

CLAUDIUS

Very well. Enjoy your youth Laertes, the time be thine. And your talents, spend them how you will.

(Beat.)

CLAUDIUS (CONT’D)

But now, cousin Hamlet, and my son—

HAMLET

(to himself)

A little more than kin, and less than kind.

CLAUDIUS

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET

Not so my lord, I am too much in the sun.

GERTRUDE

Good Hamlet, cast off this melancholy and look upon the king with kindness. Do not forever look down, as if seeking your noble father in the dust. You know that what has happened is natural, all that lives must one day die. Everything passes through nature into eternity.

HAMLET

Ay, madam, ’tis true.

GERTRUDE

If it is, then why does it seem so particular with you?

HAMLET

Seems, madam? No, it is. I do not know your “seems.” ’Tis not alone my dark mood, good mother, nor the customary suit of solemn black, nor heavy sigh—no. Nor river from the eye, nor dejected look, together with all forms, modes, and shows

of grief that can denote me truly. These indeed seem for they are all actions anyone might play. But I have that within which goes deep below these other trappings and the suits of woe.

CLAUDIUS

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet, to give mourning to your father so. But you must know, your father lost a father, and that father lost, lost his. And each was bound to carry the burden for a term. But to persevere in obstinate sorrow is a course of impious stubbornness, 'tis unmanly grief. It shows a will most incorrect to heaven, a heart unfortified, a frustrated mind and childish understanding. For if what we know must be, and is as common to the living of any sense, why should we in a peevish opposition take it to heart? For shame! 'Tis an offense to heaven, the dead, and nature to reason so absurdly against it—when from the first to they who die today, we all cry “This must be so.” We beg you, throw down this woe to no avail, and think of us as a father—for let the world take note, you are the most immediate to the throne. And with no less nobility in love than that which a father bears towards a son, do I so impart toward you. As for your intent in going back to school in Wittenberg, it is most contrary to our desire. And we beg you, bend to remain here, in cheer and comfort to your mother—our chief courtier, son, and highest member of the court.

GERTRUDE

Let not your mother lose her prayers, Hamlet. I pray that you stay with us, do not go back to Wittenberg.

HAMLET

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

CLAUDIUS

Why, 'tis a loving and fair reply. We shall be as our royal selves in Denmark. Madam, come. This gentle consent of Hamlet sits smiling to my heart. In honor of it, each merry

drink of health today, the great cannons shall tell to the clouds, the heavens speaking again their thunder from earth below. Come, away.

(All exit. Hamlet remains.)

HAMLET

Oh, that this too too solid flesh would melt, thaw and resolve itself into a dew, or that taking one's own life were not a crime. Oh God! God! How weary, stale, flat and without purpose the world seems! Curse it, oh curses! 'Tis a garden gone to seed, weeds rank and gross possess it. That it should come to this! Not two months dead—no, not even so much, not two—so excellent a king, that was to this low beast a god of the sun. So loving with the queen that he would not let the wind blow too roughly on her face. Heaven and earth, must I remember? Why, she would hang on him as if her appetite grew from which it fed, and yet within a month—let me not think on it. Frailty, thy name is woman—a little month, before the shoes were old in which she followed my poor father's body like Niobe, all tears—why she, even she—oh God, an animal unable to reason would have mourned longer! And married with my uncle, my father's brother, who is no more like my father than I to Hercules. Within a month, before the red and salt of tears had left her eyes, she married. Oh most wicked speed, to post with such dexterity into those sheets! It is not, nor can it come to good. But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

(Enter Horatio, Barnardo, and Marcellus.)

HORATIO

Hail to your lordship.

HAMLET

(distracted)

I am glad to see you well. *(Recognizing him.)* Horatio, or do I forget myself?

HORATIO

The same, my lord, and your humble servant as ever.

HAMLET

(embracing Horatio)

My good friend, I'll trade the name servant with you—but what are you doing away from Wittenberg, Horatio? (Noticing Marcellus.) Marcellus.

MARCELLUS

My good lord.

HAMLET

I am very glad to see you. (To Barnardo.) Good evening, sir. (To Horatio.) But what brings you here from Wittenberg?

HORATIO

A tendency to truancy, my good lord.

HAMLET

I would not hear your enemy say so, nor take such violence to my ear from you yourself. I know you are no truant. But what is your business here at Elsinore? We'll teach you to drink deep before you depart.

HORATIO

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

HAMLET

Please, do not mock me, my fellow student. I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

HORATIO

Indeed, my lord, it followed soon after.

HAMLET

Thrift, thrift, Horatio. The baked fare from the funeral was served cold upon the wedding tables. I would have rather met my worst foe in heaven than ever seen that day, Horatio!

(*Beat.*)

HAMLET (CONT'D)

My father—I think I see my father.

HORATIO

Where, my lord?

HAMLET

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

HORATIO

I saw him once. He was a fine king.

HAMLET

He was a man, take him for all in all. I shall not look upon his likes again.

HORATIO

My lord, I think I saw him last night.

HAMLET

Saw? Who?

HORATIO

My lord, the king, your father.

HAMLET

The king, my father?

HORATIO

Season your astonishment with a careful ear, until I deliver, upon the witness of these gentlemen, this marvel to you.

HAMLET

For God's love, let me hear!

HORATIO

For two nights, Marcellus and Barnardo, while on their watch in the dead and middle of night, a figure dressed head to toe and armed just like your father appeared before them. Three times, at a truncheon's length, he walked slow and stately before them. Distilled almost to jelly with fear, they stood and did not speak. In dreadful secrecy they imparted this to me,

I with them kept watch the following night, where, as true and good as they had told, the apparition appeared. I knew your father. (Holding up hands.) It looked as much like him as one hand to the other.

HAMLET

But where was this?

MARCELLUS

My lord, upon the battery where we watch.

HAMLET

Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO

My lord, I did, but it made no answer. Yet once it lifted up its head as if to speak, but then the morning cock crew loud, and at the sound it shrank away in haste and vanished from our sight.

HAMLET

'Tis very strange.

HORATIO

As I do live, my honored lord, 'tis true, and we thought it our duty to let you know of it.

HAMLET

Indeed, sirs, but this troubles me. Do you hold the watch tonight?

ALL

We do, my lord.

HAMLET

Armed, you say?

ALL

Armed, my lord.

HAMLET

From top to toe?

ALL

My lord, from head to foot.

HAMLET

Then did you not see his face?

HORATIO

Oh yes, my lord, he wore his visor up.

HAMLET

How did he look? Frowningly?

HORATIO

A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

HAMLET

Pale, or red?

HORATIO

No, very pale.

HAMLET

And fixed his eyes upon you?

HORATIO

Most constantly.

HAMLET

I wish I had been there.

HORATIO

It would have amazed you.

HAMLET

Very likely. Did it stay long?

HORATIO

The time it takes to count to one hundred with haste.

MARCELLUS & BARNARDO

Longer, longer.

HORATIO

Not when I saw it.

HAMLET

His beard was gray?

HORATIO

It was as I have seen it in his life, a sable silvered.

HAMLET

I will watch tonight, perchance it will walk again.

HORATIO

I warrant it will.

HAMLET

If I see it as my noble father, I'll speak to it, even if hell itself should gape and bid me hold my peace. And I ask you all, if you have kept this sight a secret up to now, remain silent still. And whatever else shall happen tonight, give it an understanding but no tongue. Your loyalty shall be repaid. So fare you well. Upon the battery between eleven and twelve tonight, I'll visit you.

ALL

Our duty to your honor.

HAMLET

Your love, even as you have mine. Farewell.

(Exit Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo.)

HAMLET (CONT'D)

My father's spirit in arms? All is not well. I suspect some foul play. Oh that the night would come. Till then sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will rise though all the earth would overwhelm them to our eyes.

(Exit Hamlet.)

Act 1, Scene 3

(Enter Laertes and OPHELIA.)

LAERTES

My luggage is aboard. Farewell. And when there is a ship ready to sail, do not sleep until you have written me.

OPHELIA

Do you doubt that?

LAERTES

As for Hamlet and his favor towards you, hold it not, 'tis but a toy in the blood, a violet of youth in Spring, not permanent—sweet, but not lasting—the perfume and pastime of a minute, nothing more.

OPHELIA

Nothing more?

LAERTES

Think it no more. For in nature our crescent does not grow in sinew and bulk alone, but as our body-temple waxes, the service of mind and soul grows as well. Perhaps he loves you now and his intent is true, but you must fear, his greatness weighed, his will is not his own. He himself is subject to his birth and may not please himself as less valued persons do. For the safety and health of this whole state depend on his choice,

it must agree with the body of which he is head. If he says he loves you, be wise to believe it only so far as to what the shifting voice of Denmark would say. Weigh what loss your heart, your chastity, and your honor may sustain if you place too much in his song. Fear it Ophelia, fear it my dear sister, and keep in the rear of your affection, stand clear of the shot and danger of desire. Virtue by itself alone does not escape slanders, and the promise of an entire life can be ruined with a single misstep in youth. Be wary then, your safety lies in fearing the worst. For now, unmask your beauty to the moon and let not your youth rebel against itself.

OPHELIA

I shall keep this good lesson as watchman over my heart. But my good brother, do not as ungracious preachers do, point out the steep, thorny path to heaven while you yourself—like a reckless libertine—tread the primrose path below, dallying with hearts, heeding not your own counsel.

LAERTES

Oh, fear it not.

(Enter Polonius.)

LAERTES (CONT'D)

But I stay too long, here our father comes. A double blessing is a double grace, occasion smiles upon a second leave.

POLONIUS

Yet still here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard—for shame. The wind is in the shoulder of your sail and you are waited upon. (Showing affection.) There, take my blessing with you, and see that these few precepts remain in memory: Give your thoughts no tongue, nor hasty thoughts an action. Be friendly, but by no means vulgar, do not dull your palm with each new-hatched acquaintance. Those friends you have, that friendship proven

true, bond to your soul as with hoops of steel. Beware of entering a quarrel, but being in one, bear it that the opposed may beware of you. Give everyone your ear, but few your voice. Receive each opinion, but reserve your judgment. Purchase the finest clothes you can afford, but not those expressed in fancy—rich, not gaudy—for apparel often proclaims a man and they in France of the best rank and station are most select in that. Neither a borrower nor a lender be, for a loan often loses both itself and friend, while borrowing dulls the edge of thrift. And this above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow as the night the day that you cannot then be false to anyone. Farewell, may my blessings season all this in you.

LAERTES

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POLONIUS

The time invests you. Go, your servants await.

LAERTES

Farewell Ophelia, and remember well what I have said to you.

OPHELIA

'Tis locked in my memory and only you yourself keep its key.

LAERTES

Farewell.

(Exit Laertes.)

POLONIUS

What is it, Ophelia, he has said to you?

OPHELIA

So it please you, some things touching upon Lord Hamlet.

POLONIUS

Indeed, a timely thought. 'Tis been told he has given private time to you of late, and you have been most free in audience.

If this is so—and so 'tis been put to me in a way of caution—
I must tell you, you do not understand yourself so clearly what
is becoming of my daughter and your honor. What is between
you? Give me the truth.

OPHELIA

He has, my lord, of late made many tenders of his affection
to me.

POLONIUS

Affection? Pooh! You speak like a green girl unskilled
in such serious matters. Do you believe these tenders, as you
call them?

OPHELIA

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

POLONIUS

Well, I will teach you. Think of yourself as a child who
has taken these tenders as true pay, but which are not sterling.
Tender yourself more dearly or—not to crack the poor phrase
using it thus—you'll tender me a fool.

OPHELIA

My lord, he has offered his love in an honorable fashion.

POLONIUS

Ay, fashion you call it—

OPHELIA

And has given his words, my lord, with almost all the holy
vows of heaven.

POLONIUS

Ay, traps to catch silly birds. I do know when the blood
burns how the soul lends the tongue prodigal vows. These
blazes, daughter, which give more light than heat, extinct in
both even in their promise as it's made, you must not take for
fire. From this time on make scant your maiden's presence—

set your discourse at a higher rate than just any request to
engage in idle discussion. As for Lord Hamlet, believe him
only so much in that he is young, and given a longer tether to
walk than is given to you. In short, Ophelia, do not believe his
vows, for they are not the true color in which they are spoken,
but mere pleadings for unholy suits, sounding sanctified and
pious—the better to beguile. From this moment forth, in plain
terms, no leisure time of yours will be spent on words or talk
with the Lord Hamlet. Look to it, those are my orders. Come
along in your ways.

OPHELIA

I shall obey, my lord.

(They exit.)

Act 1, Scene 4

*(The castle walls. Enter Hamlet with SWORD,
Horatio, and Marcellus.)*

HAMLET

The air bites shrewdly, it is very cold.

HORATIO

It is an air that bites eagerly.

HAMLET

What hour is it now?

HORATIO

Before twelve I think.

MARCELLUS

No, it has struck.

HORATIO

Indeed? I did not hear it. It then draws near the time where
this spirit walks.

(TRUMPETS and CANNON SHOTS are heard.)

HORATIO (CONT'D)

What does this mean, my lord?

HAMLET

The king wakes the night in drinking and carousing. As he
drains down a draught of wine, he is fond of the drum, trumpet,
and cannon blast to mark the triumph of his toasts.

HORATIO

Is it a custom?

HAMLET

Ay, it is, but to my mind, even though I am native here and
to the manner born, it is a custom better broken than observed.
Such heavy-headed revelry causes nations east and west to slander
and dishonor us. They call us drunkards and swine, it soils our
reputation, and indeed, takes away from our achievements even
though performed at height in the pith and marrow of their
celebration. And so often it is with the single person. As if there
is some vicious mole in their nature, either from birth—of which
they are not guilty, since one cannot choose one's ancestors—or
an overgrowth which breaks the forts of reason, or by that habit
which spills past common manners. Even if they be pure as grace
and worthy of infinite praise, in the public opinion the stamp of
this one defect corrupts it all. This one speck of evil weighs
more than all one's good, to their scandal.

(Enter Ghost.)

HORATIO

Look, my lord, it comes.

HAMLET

Angels and ministers of grace defend us! Be you a spirit
good or spirit damned, bringing airs from heaven or blasts from
hell, your intent wicked or fair, you come in such form that I
will speak to you. I'll call you Hamlet, king, father, royal Dane.
Oh, answer me. Do not let me burst from a lack of understanding,
but tell why your bones, buried with rites, have burst from
marbled jaws to cast you up again. What does this mean that
you, dead, visit us in full armor, shining by the light of the moon,
making night hideous and we fools of nature, shaking us with
thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls? Say why this is. Why?
What should we do?