

1.1 On the guards' platform at Elsinore, Horatio waits with Barnardo and Marcellus to question a ghost that has twice before appeared. The Ghost, in the form of the late King Hamlet, appears but will not speak. Horatio decides to tell his fellow student, Prince Hamlet, about the Ghost's appearance.

2. unfold yourself: disclose your identity  
14. The rivals of my watch: my fellow sentries

(ACT 1)

(Scene 1)  
*Enter Barnardo and Francisco, two sentinels.*

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.  
BARNARDO 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 ho! Who is there?  
HORATIO Friends to this ground.

*Hamlet*

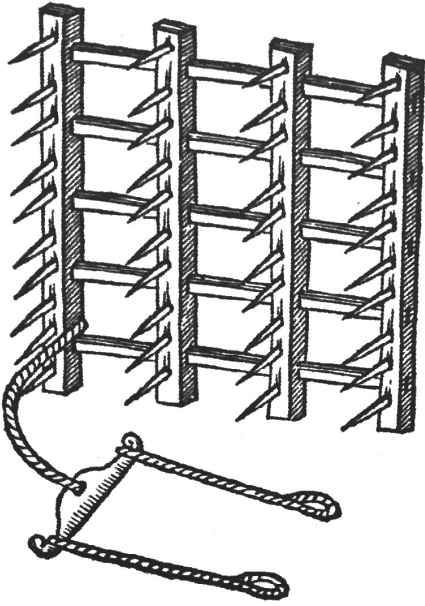
- 17. *the Dane*: the Danish king
- 30. *of us*: by us
- 43. *pole*: Polaris, the North Star
- 44. *h's: its*



Sledded warriors: "sledded Polacks on the ice." (1.1.74)  
 From Cesare Vecellio, *Habiti antichi et moderni* (1598).

9  
 MARCELLUS And liegemen to the Dane.  
 FRANCISCO Give you good night. 20  
 MARCELLUS Who hath relieved  
 FRANCISCO O Egrewell, honest (soldier.) Who hath relieved  
 you?  
 FRANCISCO Give you good night.  
 FRANCISCO exis.  
 FRANCISCO hath my place. Give you good night.  
 MARCELLUS Holla, Barnardo.  
 BARNARDO Say, what, is Horatio there?  
 MARCELLUS A piece of him. 25  
 HORATIO Welcome, good Marcellus.  
 HORATIO Welcome, Horatio.—Welcome, good Marcellus.  
 HORATIO What, has this thing appeared again tonight?  
 BARNARDO I have seen nothing.  
 MARCELLUS I have seen nothing.  
 HORATIO 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. 35  
 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 yond same star that's westward from the pole  
 Had made his course t' illumine that part of heaven  
 Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,  
 The bell then beating one— 45

51. **harrows:** torments (A harrow is a farm implement used to break up the ground.)  
 57. **sometimes:** formerly  
 67. **sensible:** attested by the senses; **avouch:** guarantee, testimony



The harrow. (1.1.51)  
 From Gervase Markham, *The English husbandman* (1613).

Enter Ghost.

MARCELLUS  
 Peace, break thee off! Look where it comes again.  
 BARNARDO  
 In the same figure like the King that's dead.  
 MARCELLUS, [to Horatio]  
 Thou art a scholar. Speak to it, Horatio.  
 BARNARDO  
 Looks he not like the King? Mark it, Horatio. 50  
 HORATIO  
 Most like. It (harrows) me with fear and wonder.  
 BARNARDO  
 It would be spoke to.  
 MARCELLUS  
 Speak to it, Horatio.  
 HORATIO  
 What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,  
 Together with that fair and warlike form 55  
 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. 60  
 HORATIO  
 Stay! speak! speak! I charge thee, speak!  
 Ghost exits.  
 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? 65  
 HORATIO  
 Before my God, I might not this believe  
 Without the sensible and true avouch  
 Of mine own eyes.

72. **Norway:** i.e., the king of Norway (the elder Fortinbras)  
 73. **parle:** parley, meeting  
 74. **smote:** attacked or, perhaps, defeated; **sledded Polacks:** Polish military riding in sleds  
 76. **jump:** exactly  
 78-79. **In what . . . opinion:** i.e., I cannot be precise, but in my general opinion  
 81. **tell . . . knows:** i.e., let him who knows tell me  
 83. **toils:** causes to labor; wearies; **subject of the land:** i.e., subjects of the realm  
 85. **foreign mart:** international trade  
 86. **impress:** enforced service  
 88. **toward:** approaching, about to happen  
 95. **Thereto . . . pride:** stirred to do this (i.e., to dare King Hamlet to combat) by a proud desire to rival the Danish king  
 99. **heraldry:** the law of arms, regulating tournaments and battles  
 101. **stood seized of:** legally possessed

*Hamlet*

13  
 MARCELLUS Is it not like the King? 70  
 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. 75  
 '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. 80  
 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, 85  
 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? 90  
 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, 95  
 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. 100

- 102. a moiety competent: an appropriate portion
- 103. gagéd: engaged, i.e., pledged
- 105. comart: bargain
- 106. carriage of the article designed: an appropriate portion carried by the agreement
- 108. unimprovéd: uncontrolled
- 110. Sharked up: uncontrolled
- 112. stomach: spirit of adventure
- 118. head: fountainhead, source
- 119. rummage: bustle, commotion
- 121. Well may it sort: i.e., it would thus be fitting
- 125. palmy: triumphant, worthy to 'bear the palm'
- 127. sheeted: wrapped in their shrouds
- 129-30. As stars . . . sun: These lines are awkward; probably some text has been lost.
- 130. Disasters: threatening signs; moist star: the moon, which governs the tides
- 131. Upon . . . stands: i.e., by whose influence the sea is controlled
- 133. precursor: Neptune: Roman god of the sea
- 134. harbingers: those that announce someone's or something's approach; still: always
- 135. omen: i.e., ominous event

15  
 Against the which a moiety competent  
 Was gagéd by our king, which had (returned)

Against the which a moiety competent 105

Was gagéd by our king, which had (returned)

To the inheritance of Fortinbras,

Had he been vanquisher, as, by the same comart,

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

(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 posthaste and rummage in the land.

[BARNARDO

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.

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;

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 'feared' events,

As harbingers preceding still the fates

And prologue to the omen coming on,

120

115

110

105

125

130

135

17

Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
Unto our climatures and countrymen.]  
*Enter Ghost.*

But soft, behold! Lo, where it comes again!  
I'll cross it though it blast me.—Stay, illusion!  
*It spreads his arms.*

140

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.

145

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,  
Speak of it.

150

*The cock crows.*  
Stay and speak!—Stop it, Marcellus.

MARCELLUS

Shall I strike it with my partisan?

HORATIO Do, if it will not stand.

BARNARDO 'Tis here.

HORATIO 'Tis here.

155

*(Ghost exits.)*

MARCELLUS '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.

160

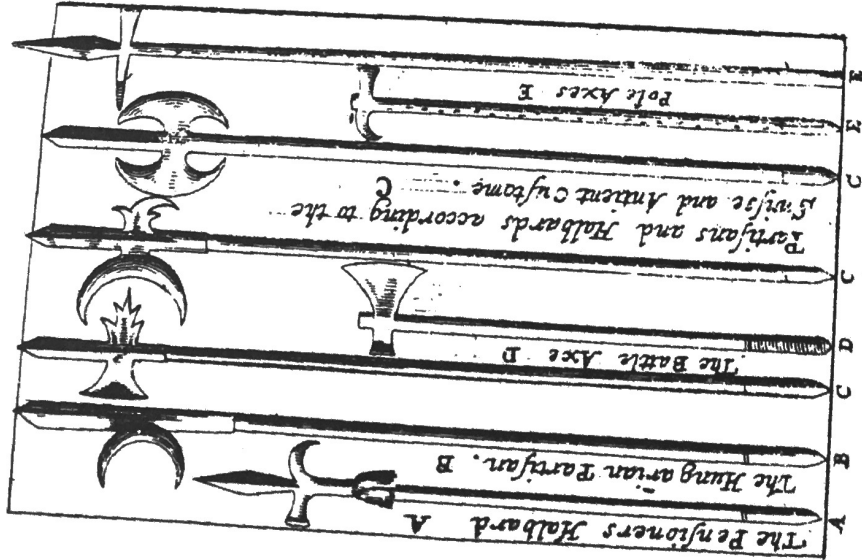
BARNARDO

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

137. climatures: geographic regions  
138. soft: "wait a minute"  
146. happily: perhaps; or, fortunately



Partisans and other weapons. (1.1.153)  
From Louis de Gaya, *A treatise of the arms* . . . (1678).

16

169. **extravagant:** out of bounds; **erring:** wander-  
ing

171. **made probation:** demonstrated

173. **'gainst:** just before

177. **strike:** destroy through malign influence

178. **takes:** puts under a magic spell

19

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.

170

MARCELLUS

It faded on the crowing of the cock.  
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes  
Wherein our Savior's birth is celebrated,  
This 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 hallowed and so gracious is that time.

175

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 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?

180

MARCELLUS

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

190

*They exit.*