

AWARD WINNING
LAZARUS THEATRE COMPANY

Hamlet by William Shakespeare

SCENE IV. The platform.

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS

HAMLET

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HORATIO

It is nipping, and an eager air.

HAMLET

What hour now?

HORATIO

I think it lacks of twelve.

HAMLET

No, it is struck.

HORATIO

Indeed? I heard it not.

It then draws near the season

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off, within

What does this mean, my lord?

HAMLET

The king doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassail and the swaggering up-spring reels,
And as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

HORATIO

Is it a custom?

HAMLET

Ay, marry is't,

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But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honoured in the breach than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations:
They clepe us drunkards and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition, and indeed it takes
From our achievements, though performed at height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So oft it chanceth in particular men
That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As in their birth wherein they are not guilty
(Since nature cannot choose his origin),
By their o'ergrowth of some complexion
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens
The form of plausible manners – that these men,
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect
(Being nature's livery or fortune's star),
Their virtues else, be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo,
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault: the dram of eale
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
To his own scandal –

Enter Ghost

HORATIO

Look, my lord, it comes.

HAMLET

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane. O answer me,
Let me not burst in ignorance but tell

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Why thy canonized bones hearsed in death
Have burst their cerements, why the sepulchre
Wherein we saw thee quietly interred
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws
To cast thee up again. What may this mean
That thou, dead corpse, again in complete steel,
Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous, and we fools of nature
So horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?

Ghost beckons HAMLET

HORATIO

It beckons you to go away with it
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

MARCELLUS

Look with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground,
But do not go with it.

HORATIO

No, by no means.

HAMLET

It will not speak: then I will follow it.

HORATIO

Do not, my lord.

HAMLET

Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life in a pin's fee,
And for my soul – what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again. I'll follow it.

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HORATIO

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other horrible form
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness? Think of it:
The very place puts toys of desperation
Without more motive into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to the sea
And hears it roar beneath.

HAMLET

It waves me still. Go on, I'll follow thee.

MARCELLUS

You shall not go, my lord.

HAMLET

Hold off your hands.

HORATIO

Be ruled, you shall not go.

HAMLET

My fate cries out
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
Still am I called – unhand me, gentlemen –
By heaven I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!
I say away! Go on! I'll follow thee.

Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET

HORATIO

He waxes desperate with imagination.

MARCELLUS

Let's follow. 'Tis not fit thus to obey him.

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HORATIO

Have after. To what issue will this come?

MARCELLUS

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HORATIO

Heaven will direct it.

MARCELLUS

Nay, let's follow him.

Exeunt