

# Hamlet

## Act I, sc. 2

**CLAUDIUS:** 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  
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,  
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 barr'd  
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  
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,  
Colleagued with this dream of his advantage,  
He hath not fail'd 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 bedrid, scarcely hears  
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, Voltemand,  
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,  
Giving to you no further personal power  
To business with the King, more than the scope  
Of These dilated articles allow. [*Gives paper.*]  
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.