

Introduction

About 500 years ago, Hamlet's father, the king of Denmark, was murdered by his own brother, Claudius. Then Claudius quickly married Hamlet's mother, Gertrude. As the play opens, Hamlet's father's ghost appears and tells his son who murdered him. He urges Hamlet to seek revenge. As the play unfolds, Hamlet tries to convince himself that he should murder Claudius.

This is Shakespeare's most famous play, known for the anguished character of Hamlet.



— Cast of Characters —

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK: Son of the dead King Hamlet,
and nephew of the present King of Denmark

CLAUDIUS, PRINCE OF DENMARK: Hamlet's uncle

GERTRUDE: Queen of Denmark and Hamlet's mother

GHOST: The ghost of Hamlet's murdered father

POLONIUS: Chief adviser to Claudius

HORATIO: A commoner and loyal friend of Hamlet

LAERTES: Son of Polonius and the brother of Ophelia

OPHELIA: Daughter of Polonius and the sister of Laertes

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN: Former classmates of Hamlet

VOLTIMAND AND CORNELIUS: Danish courtiers

MARCELLUS, BERNARDO, AND FRANCISCO: Guards at the castle

REYNALDO: Polonius's servant

OSRIC: A Danish courtier

GRAVEDIGGERS, LORDS, ATTENDANTS, ACTORS, AND SERVANTS



ACT 1

Summary

赫瑞修和守衛們決定告知哈姆雷特關於其亡父鬼魂出現在艾辛諾爾城堡外一事，同時，葛簇特和克勞地希望哈姆雷特停止再為其父之死而哀悼。當他們離開該處，哈姆雷特吐露他的想法，若非神的律法，他早因悲慟父親之死和母親之恥而自戕。其母在丈夫去世不到兩個月的時間，下嫁遠不如父王的克勞地，此舉令哈姆雷特感到震驚。

當哈姆雷特聽聞父親的鬼魂出現，他決定與其對話，並要求他人保密。雷爾提在前往巴黎前，要歐菲莉亞小心哈姆雷特對她的追求，以保衛她的貞操與聲譽。波隆尼爾接著給予雷爾提行為上的建議，並要歐菲莉亞避免與哈姆雷特共處，她也答應這麼做。

午夜時分，先王的鬼魂告訴哈姆雷特王子，他被克勞地謀殺，哈姆雷特承諾要替父王報仇。





Scene 1

(**Francisco** is at his post before the castle in Elsinore.
Bernardo enters.)

BERNARDO: The clock has struck 12.

I'll take over the watch now, Francisco.

FRANCISCO: Thank you for relieving me.

It is bitter cold, and I am sick at heart.

BERNARDO: Has it been quiet tonight?

FRANCISCO: Not a mouse stirring.

BERNARDO: Well, good night. Tell my
Partners on watch to hurry.

FRANCISCO: I think I hear them now.

(**Horatio** and **Marcellus** enter as **Francisco** exits.)

MARCELLUS: Hello, Bernardo!

BERNARDO: Welcome, Horatio and Marcellus.

MARCELLUS: Has it appeared again—the *thing*?

BERNARDO: I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS: Horatio says it is only our fantasy.
He will not believe that we saw it twice!
By standing watch with us tonight, he can
See it for himself.



HORATIO: It will not appear.

BERNARDO: Sit down awhile,
And let us once again tell you about
What we have seen two nights in a row.
Last night, about this same time,
The clock was striking one—

MARCELLUS: Quiet! It's coming again!
(The **Ghost** enters, dressed in armor.)

BERNARDO: It looks just like the dead King!

MARCELLUS: Speak to it, Horatio!

HORATIO (to the Ghost): Who are you?
Why do you wear the armor in which
Our buried King did sometimes march?
By heaven, I order you to speak!

MARCELLUS: It seems to be offended.

BERNARDO: See, it stalks away!

HORATIO: Stay! Speak! I order you, speak!
(The **Ghost** exits.)

MARCELLUS: It will not answer. It is gone.

BERNARDO: What do you think now, Horatio?
You tremble and look pale.





Isn't this something more than fantasy?

HORATIO: Before my God,
I would never have believed it
Unless I saw it with my own eyes.

MARCELLUS: Isn't it like the King?

HORATIO: As like as you are to yourself!
That was the very armor he had on when
He fought the ambitious King of Norway.
And he frowned just like that once,
When angry. It is strange.
I have no idea what to think.
But it seems like a bad sign.

MARCELLUS: Tell me, if you know,
Why this quiet and watchful ghost
Has come here these past nights.
And why does our country seem
To be preparing for war?

HORATIO: I'll tell what I've heard.
Our last King, whose image just appeared,
Killed King Fortinbras of Norway.
Along with his life,
Fortinbras lost all the lands

He had risked in the battle.
If Fortinbras had won, our good King
Would have had to give up his lands.
That was their agreement, so it was only fair.
Now, sir, young Fortinbras, his son,
Rash, hot, and foolish,
Has raised an army of lawless men
To recover the land lost by his father.
This must be why we are preparing for war,
And the reason we must keep watch at night.

BERNARDO: I think you must be right.

HORATIO: Quiet! Look! Here it comes again!

(The **Ghost** enters again.)

Stay, illusion! If you have any use of voice,
Speak to me. If I may help you in any way,
Speak to me. If you know anything about
Your country's fate, which,
By knowing in advance, we may avoid,
Oh, speak!

(A rooster crows. The **Ghost** exits.)

BERNARDO: It was about to speak,
When the rooster crowed.





HORATIO: I have heard that spirits
Must leave the earth during the day,
And what we just saw proves that story!
The sun is rising. Our watch is over.
Let us report what we have seen tonight
To young Hamlet. I think that
This spirit, silent to us, will speak to him.

MARCELLUS: Let's do it. I know where he is.

(All exit.)

