

**Ministry of Higher education**  
**University of Tikrit**  
**College of Basic Education / Al-**  
**Shirqat**



*An Introduction to Drama, One Act Play  
and Hamlet*

*English Department*

*Third Stage*

*First Semester*

*Instructor*  
*Shakir Hussein*

## Characters in Hamlet

**Hamlet** The Prince of Denmark, the title character, and the protagonist.

About thirty years old at the start of the play, Hamlet is the son of Queen Gertrude and the late King Hamlet, and the nephew of the present king, Claudius. Hamlet is melancholy, bitter, and cynical, full of hatred for his uncle's scheming and disgust for his mother's sexuality. A reflective and thoughtful young man who has studied at the University of Wittenberg, Hamlet is often indecisive and hesitant, but at other times prone to rash and impulsive acts.

**Claudius** The King of Denmark, Hamlet's uncle, and the play's antagonist. The villain of the play, Claudius is a calculating, ambitious politician, driven by his sexual appetites and his lust for power, but he occasionally shows signs of guilt and human feeling—his love for Gertrude, for instance, seems sincere.

**Gertrude** The Queen of Denmark, Hamlet's mother, recently married to Claudius. Gertrude loves Hamlet deeply, but she is a shallow, weak woman who seeks affection and status more urgently than moral rectitude or truth.

**Polonius** The Lord Chamberlain of Claudius's court, a pompous, conniving old man. Polonius is the father of Laertes and Ophelia.

**Horatio** Hamlet's close friend, who studied with the prince at the university in Wittenberg. Horatio is loyal and helpful to Hamlet throughout the play. After Hamlet's death, Horatio remains alive to tell Hamlet's story.

**Ophelia** Polonius's daughter, a beautiful young woman with whom Hamlet has been in love. Ophelia is a sweet and innocent young girl, who obeys her father and her brother, Laertes. Dependent on men to tell her how to behave, she gives in to Polonius's schemes to spy on Hamlet. Even in her lapse into madness and death, she remains maidenly, singing songs about flowers and finally drowning in the river amid the flower garlands she had gathered.

**Laertes** Polonius's son and Ophelia's brother, a young man who spends much of the play in France. Passionate and quick to action, Laertes is clearly a foil for the reflective Hamlet.

**Fortinbras** The young Prince of Norway, whose father the king (also named Fortinbras) was killed by Hamlet's father (also named Hamlet). Now Fortinbras wishes to attack Denmark to avenge his father's honor, making him another foil for Prince Hamlet.

**The Ghost** The specter of Hamlet's recently deceased father. The ghost, who claims to have been murdered by Claudius, calls upon Hamlet to avenge him. However, it is not entirely certain whether the ghost is what it appears to be, or whether it is something else. Hamlet speculates that the ghost might be a devil sent to deceive him and tempt him into murder, and the question of what the ghost is or where it comes from is never definitively resolved.

**Rosencrantz and Guildenstern** Two slightly bumbling courtiers, former friends of Hamlet from Wittenberg, who are summoned by Claudius and Gertrude to discover the cause of Hamlet's strange behavior.

## Themes

*Revenge , Death , Sadness , Suicide , Madness.....*

### Revenge As A Theme Of Hamlet

In the play “Hamlet,” by William Shakespeare, the main theme is that followed through plans of revenge lead to tragedy. Throughout the play, several different people want revenge on somebody. Hamlet, the prince of Denmark, wants revenge on the current King of his country, his uncle, who killed Hamlet’s father, the original King, in order to take the crown and marry the Queen. When trying to revenge his father by killing his Uncle, Hamlet accidentally kills Polonius, the father of one of his best friends Laertes. In turn, Laertes wants to revenge his father’s death by killing Hamlet. Hamlet’s father’s arch nemesis, the King of Norway, was killed by Hamlet’s father in battle. The King of Norway’s son, prince of Norway, Fortinbras, therefore wanted revenge on Denmark.

As the play begins, Hamlet is in a grieving period over the death of his father. What makes it worse is that only a few weeks after the horrible and untimely death, Hamlet’s mother, the Queen of Denmark, remarries Hamlet’s uncle, the deceased King’s brother. “Thrift Thrift, Horatio. The funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables,” Hamlet exclaimed to his best friend Horatio. The funeral of his father and the wedding of his mother and uncle were so close together, the leftover food from the funeral was used for the marriage. Hamlet is visited by the ghost of his father, who tells Hamlet that his uncle is the one who killed his father and that Hamlet should revenge his father’s death. “The serpent that did sting they father’s life now wears his crown,” said the Ghost who claimed to be Hamlet’s father. The one who now wears the crown, Hamlet’s uncle, is the one who killed him.

Hamlet becomes filled with rage and decides that he must kill his uncle. Unfortunately, Hamlet thinks that his uncle is behind a curtain, stabs through the curtain, and kills a friend named Polonius, who is the father of Laertes, in the same time, Claudius hears of Hamlet's return and he conspires with Laertes, Polonius's son, to murder Hamlet. Laertes will use a poison-tipped sword during a fight with Hamlet, and Claudius will have a poisoned drink at the ready. Hamlet stabs Claudius and forces him to drink the poisoned wine .

The revenge plot is thus concluded. Hamlet himself then dies from the wound received during the fight with Laertes. It was a tragedy play by Shakespeare .

### **Hamlet's Soliloquy:-**

"To live or not to live" (or "To live or to die"). Hamlet discusses how painful and miserable human life is, and how **death** (specifically suicide) would be preferable and the fearful uncertainty of what comes after **death**.

### **Symbols**

#### **Yorick's Skull**

In Hamlet, physical objects are rarely used to represent thematic ideas. One important exception is Yorick's skull, which Hamlet discovers in the graveyard in the first scene of Act V. As Hamlet speaks to the skull and about the skull of the king's former jester, he fixates on death's inevitability and the disintegration of the body. He urges the skull to "get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come"—no one can avoid death (V.i.178–179). He traces