

Hamlet

by William Shakespeare



Hamlet, William Shakespeare's most complex tragedy, is a profound exploration of conscience, revenge, and the nature of human existence. The play follows Prince Hamlet of Denmark, who is shaken by the appearance of his father's ghost and the revelation that King Hamlet was murdered by his own brother, Claudius. Commanded to avenge this crime, Hamlet is torn between moral duty and intellectual doubt, leading him into a state of inner conflict that shapes every action he takes.

As Hamlet struggles to reconcile thought with action, the court of Denmark becomes a world of deception, surveillance, and moral decay. His feigned madness masks a deeper philosophical inquiry into truth, justice, and the meaning of life and death. Through soliloquies of extraordinary psychological depth, Hamlet questions loyalty, love, and the reliability of human perception, exposing the tension between appearance and reality.

Contents

ACT I

Scene I. Elsinore. A platform before the Castle	9
Scene II. Elsinore. A room of state in the Castle	21
Scene III. A room in Polonius's house	37
Scene IV. The platform	44
Scene V. A more remote part of the Castle	50

ACT II

Scene I. A room in Polonius's house.....	63
Scene II. A room in the Castle	70

ACT III

Scene I. A room in the Castle.....	106
Scene II. A hall in the Castle.....	116
Scene III. A room in the Castle	142
Scene IV. Another room in the Castle.....	147

ACT IV

Scene I. A room in the Castle.....	162
Scene II. Another room in the Castle	164
Scene III. Another room in the Castle.....	167
Scene IV. A plain in Denmark.....	172
Scene V. Elsinore. A room in the Castle	176

Scene VI. Another room in the Castle.....	191
Scene VII. Another room in the Castle	193

ACT IV

Scene I. A churchyard	205
Scene II. A hall in the Castle	226

Dramatis Personæ

HAMLET, Prince of Denmark

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark, Hamlet's uncle
The GHOST of the late king, Hamlet's father

GERTRUDE, the Queen, Hamlet's mother, now
wife of Claudius

POLONIUS, Lord Chamberlain

LAERTES, Son to Polonius

OPHELIA, Daughter to Polonius

HORATIO, Friend to Hamlet

FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway

VOLTEMAND, Courtier

CORNELIUS, Courtier

ROSENCRANTZ, Courtier

GUILDENSTERN, Courtier

MARCELLUS, Officer

BARNARDO, Officer

FRANCISCO, a Soldier

OSRIC, Courtier

REYNALDO, Servant to Polonius

Players

A Gentleman, Courtier

A Priest

Two Clowns, Grave-diggers

A Captain

English Ambassadors.

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and Attendants

ACT I

SCENE I. Elsinore. A platform before the Castle.

Enter Francisco and Barnardo, 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.

MARCELLUS

And liegemen to the Dane.

FRANCISCO

Give you good night.