



# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

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**ABSTRACT:** The play was set in Denmark and it talks about Prince Hamlet who wanted to take revenge on his Uncle Claudius who had murdered his father. After killing his father he goes ahead to take the throne and marry Gertrude the mother of Prince Hamlet and the wife to the late king. In my discussion, I will discuss the plot and characters and themes in the play. The story starts with appearance of a ghost to two watchmen Barnado and Marcellus. It was the ghost of the late king of Denmark. Horatio looked at the armor which was worn by the ghost and declared that it was exactly like the one the king used to put on. Barnado, Marcellus and Horatio suggested that the ghost must have had a very important message to pass to the people concerning the preparation of war with Norway. Horatio pleads with the ghost to say something to him but the ghost refuses and disappears as the cock crows. Horatio decides to tell Prince Hamlet because he is sure that he ghost can only pass the message through his son. Next, King Claudia of Denmark is giving a speech on the death of his brother and his marriage to Queen Gertrude. He sends two of his watchmen Cornelius and Voltimand to Norway to maintain peace. Claudia commends about the long time that Hamlet has taken to mourn his father's death and pleads with him that he should behave himself like a man. He tells Hamlet that his father lost a father and the fathers before him went through the same. Claudia and his wife plead with him not to return for his studies in Wittenberg and he accepts. He is disgusted by his mother's incestuous behavior of marrying his uncle in a period of one month after his father's death. Hamlet is then visited by Horatio, Marcellus and Barnado who informs him on the ghost appearance of his father on the castle wall.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Hamlet is shocked and disturbed by this news. The three people described the appearance of the ghost to Hamlet which like his father had silvered beard, pale and sorrowful countenance, dressed in his full armour after which he excitedly agreed to meet with them at the platform. Laertes who is leaving to France warns Ophelia his sister that Hamlet's love for her will not last for a long period. Since he was to be crowned the next king, he would concentrate much on the interests of Denmark citizens. He tells her that Hamlet will heart break her later. His father Polonius is also against the relationship between Hamlet and his daughter. He told her not to see Hamlet again which she obeyed. During midnight, Hamlet and Horatio meet on the battlement of the castle and wait in the darkness. Sound of men dancing and singing in the castle are heard. Hamlet explains to his friends that he dislikes the character of drinking. According to Hamlet excessive drinking has ruined the whole nation which he calls land full of drunken swine abroad. He argues that drinking leads to the failure of accomplishing the countries plans and it also makes men weak and corrupt. Horatio spots the ghost as it approaches. Hamlet calls the ghost which tells him to come after it. His friends are afraid that the ghost may be dangerous to him but Hamlet agrees to accompany the ghost and the two figures disappear in the darkness. Hamlet demands a talk from the ghost. He realizes that it's the ghost of his father. The ghost tells him that he was murdered by his brother Claudius. Claudius had poisoned him. The ghost then leaves him in a very terrifying state. He vows to take revenge against his uncle who had killed his father. Hamlet threatens his friends not to say anything about what had happened that very night. Upon his sword, both of them take an oath of assuring him that they will not say anything about it. He then calls his father's spirit to rest in peace. [1,2]

## II. DISCUSSION

Two months after Hamlet had seen his ghost, Polonius told his servant Reynaldo to Paris to visit Laertes. He says that he is concerned with the well being of his son who is far away. Ophelia tells her father that she was visited by Hamlet while she was sewing and the incidence was terrifying. Polonius thinks failure of her daughter love towards Hamlet her old boyfriend has mad him mad. He regrets for telling his daughter to heartbreak the prince who was sick due to lack of love. Polonius decides to let the king know that the prince has gone mad. Claudius had noticed the strange behavior even before Polonius could tell him. Claudius called two of his classmates at Wittenburg Guildenstern and Rosencrantz so that they can help in determining which such changes have happened to Hamlet. Polonius tells the king and the Queen that Hamlet's madness has resulted from love and he as an evidence gave them a letter he had written to, her daughter Ophelia. The queen agrees with Polonius but she is still aware that her marriage to Claudius and the death of his father have also contributed to this state. A troop of players comes to Elsinore and they are instructed by Hamlet



perform an old play called “The Murder of Gonzago” which was adapted so that that the victim is killed as described by the ghost. Claudius reacts in a way to imply that he is guilty . He plans to take Hamlet to England immediately. During his journey to England, he stole the letter from Claudius which was to be taken to the King of England. He finds that it was an order for his immediate death. He changes it so that it can command the death of the bearers Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and then he goes back. The two people end up dying. After realizing that Hamlet had escaped death, Claudius arranged with Laertes to kill him. They blamed him for the death of Ophelia and Polonius. He inserted pearl in a cup so that Hamlet can drink. Gertrude drinks from the cup before her husband can warn her. Laertes wounds Hamlet with a sword he had been given by Claudius which was poisoned. They started fighting and Hamlet also wounded him. When Gertrude was about to die, Laertes tells Hamlet about his tricks. Hamlet kills Claudius and they reconcile with Laertes who was about to die. He also dies after a short while and bids farewell to Horatia.[3,4]

### III. RESULT

Madness is among the main themes in Hamlet. Hamlet pretended to be made so that people can not understand that he wanted to take revenge against his father’s death. During his conversation with Polonius he answered him in a childish and rude way which made Polonius to believe that it was because of insanity. He was pretending to be made so that he can take time in deciding whether to avenge his father’s death or continue with his life and forgo his death rite of becoming the next king. Polonius thought that Hamlet had gone mad because of his love for his daughter. This was however not the case. The task of revenge was the excuse for his pretence of being mad. Another theme in the novel is revenge. Hamlets father had been killed by his brother Claudius through poison and Hamlet wanted to take revenge for that. I think at long last he revenged because he killed Claudius even though he also died .[5]

### IV. CONCLUSION

The theme of Death: Many people have died in the novel. To start with is the Hamlets father the king. Secondly, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who had been sent by Polonius to the English king with a letter which demanded death of Hamlet. He altered the contents of the letter so that they can be the target which happened. At the end of the story, Claudius, Gertrude, Hamlet and Laertes all die within the same period. Another theme ‘in the story is irony. Polonius believed that the love of Hamlet for her daughter had caused madness which was not true. Gertrude pretended to agree with Polonius on the cause of the madness but she knew that her incestuous marriage with Claudius and death of his father had contributed to the condition. It’s ironical that the litter which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern took to the English king led to their death. If they knew it they could not have taken it to him .[6]

Prince Hamlet is urged by is urged by the ghost of his father to revenge for his death on Claudius who has also married his wife. He pretends to mad so that people may not understand his plans. Hamlet, Claudius, his mother and Laertes dies later in the story. According to me he should have ignored the revenge because he and the other people should not have died. Also even if he took revenge his father would not come back again.

### REFERENCES

1. The gravedigger scene is in *Hamlet* 5.1.1–205.
2. In his 1936 book *The Problem of Hamlet: A Solution* Andrew Cairncross asserted that the *Hamlet* referred to in 1589 was written by Shakespeare;<sup>[17]</sup> Peter Alexander,<sup>[18]</sup> Eric Sams and, more recently, Harold Bloom<sup>[20][21]</sup> have agreed. However Harold Jenkins, the editor of the second series Arden edition of the play, considers that there are not grounds for thinking that the Ur-Hamlet is an early work by Shakespeare, which he then rewrote.
3. Polonius was close to the Latin name for Robert Pullen, founder of Oxford University, and Reynaldo too close for safety to John Rainolds, the President of Corpus Christi College.
4. MacCary suggests 1599 or 1600; James Shapiro offers late 1600 or early 1601; Wells and Taylor suggest that the play was written in 1600 and revised later; the New Cambridge editor settles on mid-1601; the New Swan Shakespeare Advanced Series editor agrees with 1601; Thompson and Taylor, tentatively ("according to whether one is the more persuaded by Jenkins or by Honigmann") suggest a *terminus ad quem* of either Spring 1601 or sometime in 1600.
5. The whole conversation between Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and Hamlet concerning the touring players' departure from the city is at *Hamlet F1* 2.2.324–360.
6. The Arden Shakespeare third series published Q2, with appendices, in their first volume, and the F1 and Q1 texts in their second volume. The RSC Shakespeare is the F1 text with additional Q2 passages in an appendix. The New Cambridge Shakespeare series has begun to publish separate volumes for the separate quarto versions that exist of Shakespeare's plays.