Hamlet: first act

The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, often shortened to *Hamlet*  is a tragedy written by [William Shakespeare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare) at an uncertain date between 1599 and 1602. Set in the [Kingdom of Denmark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Denmark), the play dramatises the revenge [Prince Hamlet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_Hamlet) is called to wreak upon his uncle, [Claudius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Claudius) by the ghost of Hamlet's father, [King Hamlet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Hamlet). Claudius had murdered his own brother and seized the throne, also marrying his deceased brother's widow.

You can understand that it’s a play because the structure consists of acts that are organized into scene, in the case of Hamlet there are acts arranged into different number of scene, for example the first act has 5’s.

The play opens on a cold night on the ramparts of [Elsinore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kronborg_Slot), the Danish royal castle. The [sentries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Characters_in_Hamlet#Elsinore_sentries) Bernardo and Marcellus and Hamlet's friend [Horatio](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horatio_(Hamlet)) encounter a [ghost](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_(Hamlet)) that looks like the late King Hamlet. They vow to tell Prince Hamlet what they have witnessed.

As the Court gathers the next day, while King Claudius and Queen Gertrude discuss affairs of state with their elderly adviser [Polonius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polonius), Hamlet looks on glumly. After the Court exits, Hamlet despairs of his father's death and his mother's hasty remarriage. Learning of the Ghost from Horatio, Hamlet resolves to see it himself.

As Polonius's son Laertes prepares to depart for a visit to France, Polonius gives him contradictory advice that culminates in the ironic maxim "to thine own self be true." Polonius's daughter, [Ophelia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ophelia_(character)), admits her interest in Hamlet, but both Polonius and Laertes warn her against seeking the prince's attention. That night on the rampart, the Ghost appears to Hamlet, telling the prince that he was murdered by Claudius and demanding that Hamlet avenge him. Hamlet agrees and the Ghost vanishes. The prince confides to Horatio and the sentries that from now on he plans to "put on an antic disposition" and forces them to swear to keep his plans for revenge secret. Privately, however, he remains uncertain of the Ghost's reliability. Here finishes the first act.

The first act so, is set in the late middle ages (14th and 15th centuries) in (a room of state in the castle and a room in Polonius' house) and around (a platform before the castle) the royal palace in Elsinore, a city in Denmark.