

# HAMLET DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Please note that three different early versions of the play survive: known as the First Quarto ("Q1"), Second Quarto ("Q2"), and First Folio ("F1"), each has lines—and even scenes—missing in the others, and some character names vary.

**THE GHOST**, appears in the image of Hamlet's father, the late King Hamlet (Old Hamlet).

**HAMLET** Prince of Denmark, son of the late King Hamlet and Queen Gertrude.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE** widow of King Hamlet, now married to Claudius.

**KING CLAUDIUS** brother to the late King Hamlet.

**POLONIUS** father of Ophelia and Laertes and chief counselor to King Claudius.

**OPHELIA** is the daughter of Polonius, and Laertes's sister, who lives with her father at Elsinore. She is in love with Hamlet.

**LAERTES** is the son of Polonius, and has returned to Elsinore from Paris.

**REYNALDO** servant to Polonius, who is sent to Paris to check up on what Laertes is doing.

**HORATIA** is a good friend and confidant of Hamlet, from the university at Wittenberg, who comes to Elsinore Castle to attend King Hamlet's funeral. (*Originally Horatio - but will be played as a female by a female in this production.*)

**VOLTEMAND & CORNELIUS** are ambassadors sent by the King of Denmark, Claudius, to old King Norway.

**ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN** are childhood friends and schoolmates of Hamlet, who are summoned to Elsinore by Claudius and Gertrude.

**OSRIC** He is the courtier sent by Claudius to invite Hamlet to participate in the duel with Laertes. Osric, as well as Polonius, engages with Hamlet in the elaborate, witty discourse.

**A GENTLEMEN** He informs Gertrude of Ophelia's strange change in behaviour, before Ophelia's first "mad" appearance

**FORTINBRAS** Norwegian crown prince, who assumes the throne of Denmark after Hamlet's death.

**A CAPTAIN** in Fortinbras's army who is assigned by Fortinbras to get the license from Claudius for Fortinbras's army to be in Denmark.

**ENGLISH AMBASSADORS** to Denmark. They appear in the final scene to report that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.

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**PLAYERS** who take the roles of Prologue, The Players are a company of actors who arrive at Elsinore Castle. Friends of Hamlet, they had earlier performed in "the city" (presumably Copenhagen,) but faced stiff competition from boy performers, so they have traveled to Elsinore to offer Hamlet their services. At Elsinore, they perform a version—which Hamlet has modified and called The Mousetrap—of the play The Murder of Gonzago in the "play within a play".

**SAILORS** who are two pirates who deliver a letter from Hamlet to Horatio, informing Horatio that Hamlet has returned to Denmark.

**More about the Characters in Hamlet can be found here:**

<http://www.shmoop.com/hamlet/characters.html>

<https://hamletnotes.wordpress.com/hamlet-about/>