

# HAMLET

by William Shakespeare

Narration by George F. Sabato



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An adaptation of Shakespeare's famous tragedy:

CHARACTERS

Horatio	Ophelia
Bernardo	Polonius
King Claudius	Ghost of Hamlet's Father
Prince Hamlet	A Player
Queen Gertrude	A Servant
Laertes	Narrator

NARRATOR:

Good ladies and gentlesires, a pleasant and most entertaining evening I bid you have, for this very day to you we present our play.

If amused you are - with ghosts, intrigue, murder of the foulest kind, family affairs most unnatural, tales of love with endings tearfully sad, then I would say your fancies our drama will touch.

Excuse me, if you will, for introducing myself, I have not done, Mario(a) be my name, your host and guide most personal I am, with your permission granted I shall keep you in comfortable understanding of the course our story ventures.

To understand every word of the players, do not expect, my friends. Use your feelings and senses to interpret. Of course, your mind's hand I will take and guide along this evenings way.

Our play's author, Master William Shakespeare, with his pen and now through our actors' performances, takes us a good six-hundred years into days long past to the bleak and forbidding stone walls of Castle Elsinor in the land known today as Denmark.

The life of the young Prince Hamlet we shall follow upon his return from school in Wittenburg. Comes he because of the death, most sudden, of his father, the king, and, the marriage of his uncle Claudius to his Mother!

Circumstances such as these would anyone put into a strange mood would you not agree? Hamlet we will join in his sadness and in his madness.

Ah, but first - strange and ghostly things hath been occurring upon the castle ramparts. Let us find ourselves there in the company of Hamlet's companions, Horatio and Bernardo, as watch they stand this dreary night.

HORATIO: Who's there?

BERNARDO: Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself. What, is Horatio there?

HORATIO: A piece of him.

BERNARDO: Welcome, Horatio.

HORATIO: What! Has this thing appear'd again tonight?

BERNARDO: I have seen nothing, yet I still believe it.

HORATIO: Nay, Bernardo, 'tis your fantasy. I will not let belief take hold of me, touching this dreaded sight.

BERNARDO: Peace! Break thee off! Look where it comes again!

HORATIO: In the same figure, like the king that's dead!

BERNARDO: Speak to't, Horatio. It would be spoke to.

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HORATIO: What art thou that usurp'st this time of night, together with the fair and warlike form in which the majesty of buried Denmark did sometimes march? By heaven, I charge thee, speak.

BERNARDO: It is offended; see, it stalks away. How now, Horatio! You tremble, and look pale. Is it not like the king?

HORATIO: As thou art to thyself!

BERNARDO: It was about to speak when the cock crew. And then it started, like a guilty thing, and faded on the crowing of the cock.

HORATIO: But look! The morn in russet mantle clad walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill. Break we our watch up. Let us impart what we have seen tonight unto young Hamlet. This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

NARRATOR: If you Hamlet's friend were, would you not tell him of such a ghostly appearance of his father, the good dead king? As would you do, so decided Horatio.

To the morning next we pass to find our mourning Hamlet meeting with his mother - and new father and king. To comfort Hamlet, the new lord and dear wife are to try.

KING: Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death the memory be green in all our hearts, yet so far hath discretion fought with nature that we with wisest sorrow think on him, together with remembrance of ourselves. Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen, have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy, taken to wife. Nor have we herein barr'd your better wisdoms, which have freely gone, with this affair along. For all, our thanks. But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son...

HAMLET (Aside): A little more than kin, and less than kind.

KING: How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET: Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.

QUEEN: Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off, and let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark. Do not forever with thy veiled lids seek for thy noble father in the dust. Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die.

HAMLET: Ay, mother, it is - "common."

QUEEN: It if be, why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET: "Seems," madam! Nay, it is! I know not "seems." 'Tis not alone my solemn cloak, good mother, no, nor the fruitful river in the eye, together with all forms, modes, shows of grief, that can denote me truly; these indeed "seem," for they are actions that a man might play; but I have that within which passeth show; these but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING: 'Tis sweet to mourn your buried father, Hamlet. But to persevere in obstinate condolment, 'tis unmanly grief. We pray you, think of us as of a father. And for your intent in going back to school in Wittenberg, it is most retrograde to our desire.

QUEEN: Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet; I pray thee, stay with us. Go not to Wittenburg.

HAMLET: I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

KING: Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply. This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet sits smiling to my heart. Come, all, away.

NARRATOR: Alone, Hamlet gives way to private, brooding thoughts.

HAMLET: O, that this too too solid flesh would melt, thaw, and resolve itself into a dew! Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God! How

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