

Hamlet: Cast of Characters/Dramatis Personae

1. **Claudius** – King of Denmark, brother of Hamlet Sr, uncle of Hamlet, husband of Gertrude, killed the previous king.
2. **Hamlet** – 30, Prince of Denmark, son of Hamlet Sr. and Gertrude, was in love with Ophelia.
3. **Polonius** – Lord Chamberlain, father of Laertes and Ophelia, helped Claudius take the throne.
4. **Horatio** – scholar, friend of Hamlet, studied in Wittenberg with Hamlet.
5. **Laertes** – son of Polonius, brother of Ophelia, lives in France.
6. **Voltimand** – courtier, sent to Norway to persuade Fortinbras not to attack.
7. **Cornelius** – courtier, sent to Norway to persuade Fortinbras not to attack.
8. **Rosencrantz** – friend of Hamlet, studied at Wittenberg, summoned by Claudius and Gertrude to learn why Hamlet is acting strangely.
9. **Guildenstern** – friend of Hamlet, studied at Wittenberg, summoned by Claudius and Gertrude to learn why Hamlet is acting strangely.
10. **Osric** – courtier, summons Hamlet to duel Laertes.
11. **A gentleman** – noble in
12. **A priest** – presides over Ophelia's funeral
13. **Marcellus** – Danish officer on guard at Elsinore.
14. **Bernardo** – Danish officer on guard at Elsinore.
15. **Francisco** – soldier, guardsman at Elsinore.
16. **Reynaldo** – Polonius's servant, sent to France to spy on Laertes.
17. **Players** – actors who come to visit Elsinore, Hamlet requests a play of them.
18. **Two clowns** – gravediggers, they dig Ophelia's grave.
19. **A captain** – Norwegian captain, works with Fortinbras
20. **English Ambassadors**
21. **Fortinbras** – Prince of Norway, son of Fortinbras Sr., wants to avenge his father's honour.
22. **Gertrude** – Queen of Denmark, widow of Hamlet Sr., wife of Claudius.
23. **Ophelia** – daughter of Polonius, sister of Laertes, love interest of Hamlet.
24. **Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Players, Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants** – the background characters within the play that flesh out the cast.
25. **Ghost of Hamlet's father** – father of Hamlet, deceased husband of Gertrude, brother of Claudius, murdered.

Setting

The play, *Hamlet*, is set in Elsinore, a city, in Denmark. It is set mostly in and around the palace there. The story takes place well before Shakespeare's time.



Hamlet

- prince of Denmark
- wears black
- moody & indecisive



Ghost

- ex-king of Denmark
- Hamlet's dad
- kind of dead



Gertrude

- queen of Denmark
- Hamlet's mum
- wife of Ghost & Claudius



Claudius

- king of Denmark
- Hamlet's uncle/step-dad
- killed Ghost



Polonius

- king's counsellor
- long-winded
- interfering



Laertes

- Polonius' son
- protective brother
- slightly hot-headed



Ophelia

- Polonius' daughter
- Hamlet's girlfriend
- horticulturalist



Horatio

- Hamlet's best friend
- mostly hangs around and listens to people



Reynaldo

- Polonius' servant
- sent to spy on Laertes while he's at school



Rosencrantz & Guildenstern

- Hamlet's friends, sent to spy on him
- nobody can tell them apart
- famous for being dead



Osric

- chatty courtier
- keeps putting hat on and taking it off again



Francisco, Barnardo & Marcellus

- sentries of Elsinore Castle
- spend all their time patrolling haunted battlements
- tell Hamlet about the Ghost that looks just like his dad



Voltmend & Cornelius

- Danish ambassadors to the King of Norway
- totally forgettable



Gravediggers

- real names unknown
- provide morbid comic relief (some of it funny)



Sailor

- gives Horatio a letter from Hamlet



Priest

- buries Ophelia, but refuses to do anything fancy for her



Fortinbras

- prince of Norway
- becomes king of Denmark at the end



Captain

- Fortinbras' captain
- Tells Hamlet Norway is invading Poland



Ambassador

- English ambassador
- Says "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead."



Yorick

- ex-jester
- fellow of infinite jest
- now a skull



The Players

- group of travelling actors who stop by Elsinore for a gig
- perform "The Murder of Gonzago" aka "The Mousetrap"
- totally freak Claudius out by re-enacting Ghost's murder

plus assorted others!