

Hamlet Characters

Writer: William Shakespeare | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Major Characters

Hamlet: The Prince of Denmark, deeply affected by his father's death and his mother's quick remarriage to Claudius. He is thoughtful and melancholic. He is driven by a desire to avenge his father's murder.

The Ghost: The spirit of King Hamlet, who appears to tell Hamlet that he was murdered by Claudius. The ghost urges Hamlet to take revenge.

King Claudius: Hamlet's uncle, who becomes King of Denmark after killing his brother, King Hamlet. He is cunning and ambitious and tries to secure his power while hiding his guilt.

Queen Gertrude: Hamlet's mother and the widow of King Hamlet. She quickly marries Claudius after her husband's death. She loves Hamlet but seems unaware of Claudius's crimes.

Polonius: A councilor, or advisor, to Claudius and the father of Ophelia and Laertes.

Ophelia: Polonius's daughter, who is in love with Hamlet. Her relationship with Hamlet and her father's death led to her mental breakdown and eventual tragic death.

Laertes: Son of Polonius and brother of Ophelia. He is hot-headed and seeks revenge against Hamlet for the death of his father.

Horatio: Hamlet's loyal friend. He remains by Hamlet's side throughout the play. He survives to tell Hamlet's story after his death.

Minor Characters

Rosencrantz: A Former friend of Hamlet, summoned by Claudius to spy on Hamlet.

Guildenstern: A Former friend of Hamlet, summoned by Claudius to spy on Hamlet.

Fortinbras: Prince of Norway, who seeks to reclaim land his father lost to King Hamlet. He represents action in contrast to Hamlet's indecision.

Osric: A courtier who invites Hamlet to the duel with Laertes.

Marcellus and Barnardo: The sentinels who first see the ghost of King Hamlet. They summon Horatio and Hamlet to witness the ghost.

LxNotes