

Hamlet Act 1

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Overview

- ❖ William Shakespeare is widely considered to be one of the greatest playwrights in the English language and one of the most influential figures in world literature.
- ❖ Born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564, he wrote more than 30 plays and a number of sonnets and poems during his career.
- ❖ In Shakespeare's plays, characters are complex, the language is rich, and themes such as love, power, and human nature are explored. Today, his works are performed and studied around the world in every major language.
- ❖ Hamlet is one of Shakespeare's most famous plays, first performed in 1609.



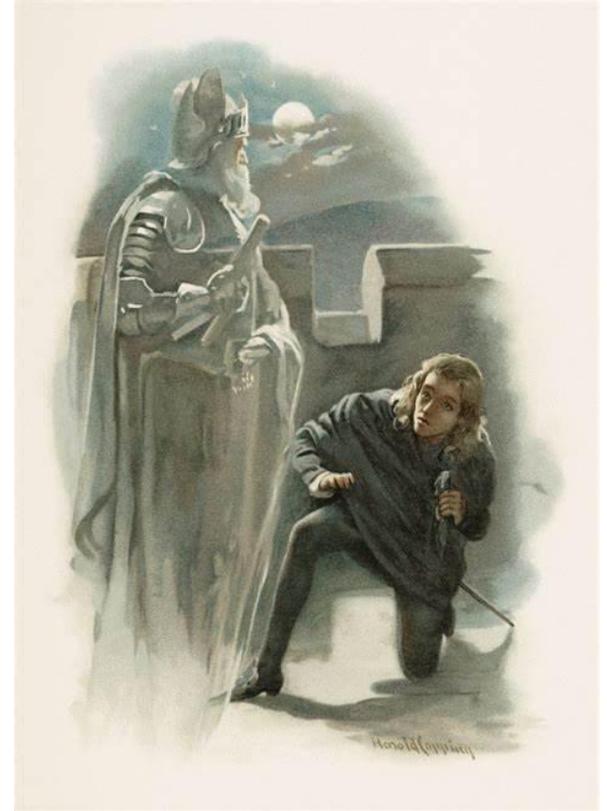
Hamlet

- ❖ Hamlet is a tragedy that tells the story of a Danish prince trying to avenge the murder of his father by his uncle Claudius
- ❖ In a world of chaos, the play explores themes such as revenge, power corruption, and the search for meaning.
- ❖ Hamlet has influenced many aspects of modern culture and had countless on screen adaptations



Hamlet Act 1

- ❖ In this act we learn about the situation that Prince Hamlet is in.
 - His father, King Hamlet, has passed away
 - His Uncle/ Dad's brother Claudius married his mother Queen Gertrude shortly after the death of his father (strange)
- ❖ We also learn that there is a ghost who resembles the late King Hamlet wandering around.
 - The ghost is initially found by the guards Francisco and Marcellus and the scholar Horatio.



Hamlet Act 1 continued

- ❖ Ultimately, the audience learns two important details
 - Hamlet is clinically depressed.
 - The ghost of King Hamlet informs his son that Claudius killed him. He needs his son to take revenge on Claudius.
- ❖ Instead of calling Hamlet's condition depression, Elizabethans would have referred to it as melancholy.
 - Melancholy was thought of as the result of too much "black bile" in the body, which led to procrastination, irritability, distorted imaginations, and various other unpleasant symptoms.
- ❖ At the end of the first act, Prince Hamlet promises to avenge his father's untimely demise.

Mental Health in Hamlet Act 1

- ❖ In Act I scene II, Hamlet (prince) shows his depressive state in its entirety.
 - Hamlet reveals to the audience that he is contemplating suicide.
 - His Uncle/step-father Claudius and his mother are quite dismissive of his feeling of anguish

“O, that this too too sullied flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God, God,
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!” (1.2.133-138)



Hamlet Act I Scene II Soliloquy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4kc88Z7EIQ>



Discussion Questions

What sources of media (besides Lion King) have you seen inspired by Hamlet?

Is there a fictional character or real person that you can connect Hamlet's mental struggle to?