

## Act 1

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### **Scene 1- On the Battlements**

On the battlements of Elsinore, guards Bernardo and Marcellus, with Horatio, see the Ghost of the dead King Hamlet. The Ghost looks troubled but does not speak.

**Key Quote:** “This bodes some strange eruption to our state.” – Horatio

Significance: Introduces the supernatural, foreshadowing unrest. Establishes Denmark’s unease and the theme of **uncertainty**.

### **Scene 2- Court at Elsinore**

Claudius holds court, celebrating his marriage to Gertrude and addressing Fortinbras’s threat. Hamlet mourns his father and condemns his mother’s quick remarriage. Alone, he delivers his first soliloquy.

**Key Quote:** “Frailty, thy name is woman!” – Hamlet

Significance: Reveals Hamlet’s grief and disappointment. Sets up his view of women and family betrayal.

### **Scene 3- Laertes and Ophelia / Polonius’s Advice**

Laertes warns Ophelia not to trust Hamlet’s love. Polonius advises Laertes before he departs for France and orders Ophelia to reject Hamlet.

**Key Quote:** “To thine own self be true.” – Polonius

Significance: Introduces family dynamics and foreshadows conflict in Ophelia’s relationship. Shows Polonius’s controlling nature.

## Scene 4- Hamlet Meets the Ghost

Hamlet joins Horatio and Marcellus on the battlements. The Ghost appears and beckons Hamlet. Despite warnings, Hamlet follows it.

**Key Quote:** “Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.” – Marcellus

Significance: Builds suspense and highlights corruption in Denmark. The Ghost leads Hamlet toward his destiny.

## Scene 5- Revelation of Murder

The Ghost reveals to Hamlet that Claudius murdered him by pouring poison in his ear. He demands Hamlet avenge the crime but spare Gertrude. Hamlet swears secrecy.

**Key Quote:** “The serpent that did sting thy father’s life / Now wears his crown.” – Ghost

Significance: Incites Hamlet’s quest for revenge. Confirms Claudius’s corruption. Establishes themes of justice and betrayal.

## Important Speeches – Speaker and Addressee

1- “O, that this too too solid flesh would melt”

- **Speaker:** Hamlet
- **Addressee:** Himself (soliloquy)
- Act I, Scene 2
- **Analysis:** Hamlet mourns his father and is disgusted by his mother’s quick marriage. It shows his sadness, anger, and first thoughts of death. This speech introduces his deep struggle with grief and despair.

2- “Frailty, thy name is woman!”

- **Speaker:** Hamlet
- **Addressee:** Himself (soliloquy)
- Act I, Scene 2
- **Analysis:** Hamlet criticizes his mother for weakness and betrayal. It shows his disappointment with women and sets up his bitter feelings toward Gertrude and later Ophelia. It connects to the theme of trust and betrayal.

3. “This above all: to thine own self be true”

- **Speaker:** Polonius
- **Addressee:** Laertes
- Act I, Scene 3
- **Analysis:** Polonius advises his son before he leaves for France. The line is famous because it stresses honesty and self-awareness. It also shows Polonius’s tendency to give long, moral advice.

4. “Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.”

- **Speaker:** Marcellus
- **Addressee:** Horatio and those present
- Act I, Scene 4
- **Analysis:** Marcellus comments after seeing the ghost. It means corruption and evil are hidden in Denmark. This line foreshadows the discovery of murder and moral decay in Claudius’s rule.

5. “The serpent that did sting thy father’s life / Now wears his crown.”

- **Speaker:** Ghost
- **Addressee:** Hamlet
- Act I, Scene 5
- **Analysis:** The Ghost reveals that Claudius killed him. This moment begins Hamlet’s revenge mission. It sets the main conflict and shows betrayal within the royal family.

## **Major Themes in Act 1**



### **1. Appearance vs. Reality**

- **Analysis:** Claudius appears as a rightful king, yet beneath the mask lies guilt and corruption. Hamlet alone sees through the deception, setting up a world where truth is hidden under false appearances. Further, Polonius is another deceptive character in addition to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who will appear in later acts.
- **Importance:** This theme establishes mistrust and suspicion early in the play, making the audience question every character’s motives. It drives Hamlet’s doubt and indicates the play’s obsession with uncovering hidden truths.



### **2. The Supernatural**

- **Analysis:** The Ghost introduces the idea of the unknown and supernatural forces influencing human action. Its appearance sparks Hamlet’s mission of revenge, while raising doubt about whether it is a true spirit or demon.

- Importance: The Ghost's role is crucial because it creates uncertainty and tension. It drives the central conflict of revenge.



### **3.Family Loyalty and Betrayal**

- Analysis: Hamlet feels betrayed by Gertrude's swift marriage to Claudius, seeing it as dishonourable to his father's memory. This betrayal shapes Hamlet's bitterness toward women and distrust toward his own family.
- Importance: The theme highlights the instability of family bonds, showing how loyalty can be replaced by ambition or survival. It sets up Hamlet's inner conflict between duty to father and disgust with mother.

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