

HAMLET



BY

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The
Primary
Shakespeare
Company

PROLOGUE

PREPARE, READER, FOR A STORY THAT WILL TEASE AND TERRIFY! IT IS A TALE OF **GHOSTS**, AND **REVENGE** AND DREADFUL DEALINGS. IT WON'T BE EASY TO TELL, NOR WILL IT BE EASY TO READ, BUT STICK WITH ME AND TOGETHER WE MIGHT JUST GET THROUGH IT! TO BEGIN....

ONCE UPON A TIME, LONG AGO IN THE NORTHLANDS, WHERE THE WINTER NIGHTS NEVER END.....



WHERE SNOW AND ICE ARE YOUR CONSTANT COMPANIONS.... THERE LIVED TWO KINGS!



THESE TWO KINGS WERE SWORN BITTER ENEMIES AND THEY WAGED WAR WITH EACH OTHER FOR YEARS OVER THE LAND THAT LAY BETWEEN THEIR COUNTRIES!

THE TWO ARMIES WOULD WREAK TERRIBLE AND BLOODY DESTRUCTION UPON EACH OTHER...



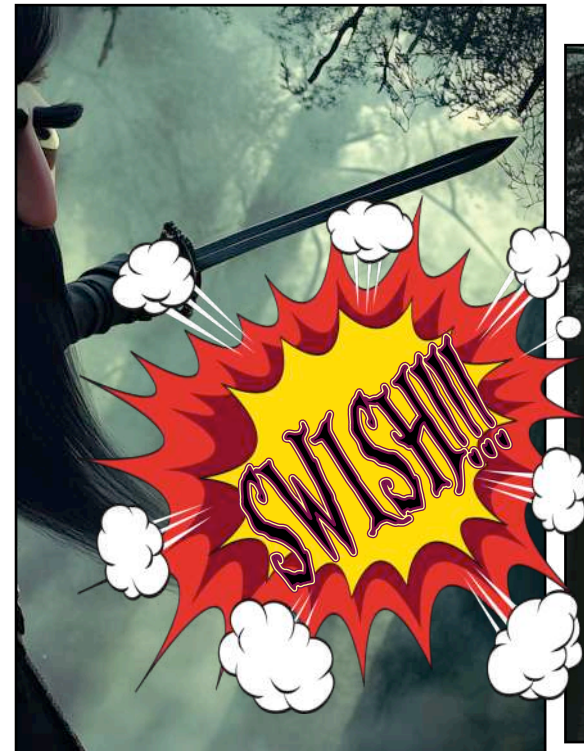
UNTIL ONE DAY IN THE MIDST OF BATTLE, THE TWO KINGS FOUND EACH OTHER!



SWORDS CLASHED!!!



EACH STRUCK BLOWS THAT WOULD HAVE FELLED MOST MEN



AT LAST, FORTINBRAS STARTED TO GET WEARY AND HAMLET, SEIZING HIS MOMENT, SUMMONED UP THE LAST OF HIS STRENGTH AND STRUCK A FATAL BLOW STRAIGHT AT THE HEART OF THE NORWEGIAN KING.

FORTINBRAS LAY DEAD AND FINALLY THE WAR BETWEEN DENMARK AND NORWAY WAS OVER. THE LANDS THAT THEY HAD BEEN FIGHTING OVER WERE GIVEN TO HAMLET AND THERE WAS MUCH CELEBRATING ACROSS THE COUNTRY. BUT THAT WASN'T THE ONLY GOOD NEWS FOR DENMARK...



THEY CALLED HIM
HAMLET TOO, AND THE
KING WAS VERY HAPPY
TO BE KNOWN AS **OLD
HAMLET**



IN A STRANGE QUIRK OF FATE, ON
THE VERY DAY THAT HE HAD SLAIN
FORTINBRAS, HAMLET'S WIFE
GERTRUDE HAD GIVEN BIRTH TO
THEIR SON.



BUT THAT WAS THEN...AND THIS IS NOW!!!



... AND THE SITUATION NOW IN DENMARK
IS VERY DIFFERENT. FORTINBRAS'S
BROTHER, NOW WEAK AND BEDRIDDEN, IS
THE **NEW KING** OF NORWAY, BUT IN
NAME ONLY...

...THE REAL
FORCE IN THE
COUNTRY IS THE
DEAD KING'S
SON, **YOUNG
FORTINBRAS**,
BOLD, STRONG
AND
DETERMINED TO
GET BACK THE
LANDS LOST BY
HIS FATHER.



...AN ARMY IS BEING RAISED...



SUDDENLY DENMARK IS
ON ALERT, GUARDS AT
BORDERS ARE
DOUBLED!! EVERYONE
COMING IN OR GOING
OUT IS SEARCHED FROM
HEAD TO TOE, THE
COUNTRY IS NERVOUS,
THE PEOPLE ARE
SCARED...

PERHAPS THEY'D BE LESS SCARED IF OLD KING HAMLET WERE STILL IN CHARGE. THEY TRUSTED THE OLD WARRIOR...

I BET I COULD COUNT UP TO A MILLION...IN FRENCH !!!

CHECK OUT MY GUNS...

RESPECTED HIS **STRENGTH...**

YOU'D BETTER RUN!!!

HIS **COURAGE IN BATTLE...**

HIS **FIERCE INTELLIGENCE**

THEY FELT **SAFE** WITH HIM IN POWER

BUT HE'S NOT ON THE THRONE ANYMORE !!!

IT'S HIS **BROTHER, CLAUDIUS**, INSTEAD!!! A VERY DIFFERENT KETTLE OF FISH...



CLAUDIUS LOVES A PARTY...



LOVES EXPENSIVE CLOTHES...



LOVES HIS FOOD AND DRINK...



CLAUDIUS LOVES **POWER !!!**

HOW DID HE GET HERE???

IT'S A SAD STORY. OLD HAMLET DIED. NOBODY IS QUITE SURE HOW, THE CIRCUMSTANCES WERE MYSTERIOUS, BUT CLAUDIUS SHED A FEW TEARS WHEN THE BODY WAS DISCOVERED IN OLD HAMLET'S ORCHARD.



ONLY A FEW TEARS THOUGH, NOT NEARLY AS MANY AS HIS NEPHEW...



...YOUNG HAMLET, WHO HAS GROWN QUITE A BIT SINCE WE LAST SAW HIM.



NO, CLAUDIUS DRIED HIS EYES QUICKLY, GOT THE FUNERAL OUT OF THE WAY, HOPPED ON THE THRONE AND - WITH A SPEED THAT SURPRISED A LOT OF PEOPLE...

MARRIED HIS BROTHER'S WIFE, GERTRUDE!!!



THE PARTIES FOR THIS WEDDING ARE STILL GOING ON IN THE CASTLE, LATE INTO THE NIGHT, AND NOTHING'S FELT QUITE RIGHT TO THE PEOPLE OF DENMARK SINCE.



EVERYTHING JUST FEELS SORT OF... WRONG, KIND OF WEIRD. AND THERE ARE RUMOURS OF STRANGE SIGHTS IN THE NIGHT. AS ONE DANE PUTS IT 'THE TIME IS OUT OF JOINT'. WELL DONE READER, TOGETHER WE'VE GOT THROUGH THE FIRST PART, BUT OUR STORY IS REALLY YET TO BEGIN - ALREADY WE'VE WITNESSED WARS, ARMIES, MYSTERIOUS DEATHS, EVEN MORE MYSTERIOUS WEDDINGS AND NOW THERE ARE ODD GOINGS ON IN THE NIGHT. DARE YOU READ ON?

ACT I

SOMETHING IS ROTTEN IN THE STATE OF DENMARK...

AND SO OUR STORY BEGINS.... IT'S MIDNIGHT. DARK. COLD. A FOG HAS ROLLED IN OFF THE SEA, SWIRLING, WHIRLING. FOR THE PAST FEW NIGHTS, JUST OUTSIDE **ELSINORE CASTLE**, SOMETHING SPOOKY HAS BEEN HAPPENING AND IT'S GOT EVERYBODY VERY NERVOUS... TONIGHT A GUARD CALLED FRANCISCO STANDS WATCH ALONE AT THE GATES, STAMPING HIS FEET TO KEEP WARM. HE HOLDS UP HIS LANTERN AND STARES INTO THE FOG, SEEMING TO SEE STRANGE FACES, LEERING AND PEERING OUT OF THE DARK, ONLY FOR THEM TO DISAPPEAR AS HE STEPS TOWARDS THEM.

WITHOUT WARNING, A VOICE COMES OUT OF THE DARKNESS...

A VOICE WHISPERS...

WHO'S THERE???

NAY, ANSWER ME, STAND AND UNFOLD YOURSELF!

LONG LIVE THE KING

FRANCISCO'S HEART STOPS, HIS LEGS TURN TO JELLY

A FIGURE EMERGES FROM THE DARKNESS...

BARNARDO?

HE!!!

BARNARDO CAN HARDLY SPEAK FOR LAUGHING

TIS NOW STRUCK TWELVE, GET THEE TO BED FRANCISCO

FOR THIS RELIEF, MUCH THANKS: TIS BITTER COLD

SUDDENLY THEY BOTH HEAR FOOTSTEPS...

STAND HO!

WHO'S THERE?

FRIENDS TO THIS GROUND!!!

WELCOME HORATIO!

PHEW, IT'S ONLY HORATIO, HAMLET'S BEST FRIEND APPEARING THROUGH THE FOG!

FRANCISCO GOES OFF TO BED, AND HORATIO AND BERNARDO DISCUSS THE EVENTS OF THE LAST FEW NIGHTS...



WHAT, HAS THIS THING APPEAR'D AGAIN TONIGHT?

I HAVE SEEN NOTHING

TUSH, TUSH, 'T WILL NOT APPEAR

HORATIO THINKS THAT THE GUARDS ARE MAKING STUFF UP, THAT NOTHING UNUSUAL IS HAPPENING, THAT THEY ARE ALL COLD AND TIRED AND MAYBE SEEING THINGS THAT AREN'T THERE, UNTIL...

THE SECOND BEFORE, THERE HAD BEEN NOTHING, NOW, SOMETHING STIRRED IN THE DARKNESS...



PEACE, BREAK THEE OFF. LOOK WHERE IT COMES AGAIN. IN THE SAME FIGURE OF THE KING THAT'S DEAD!!!

SUDDENLY IT APPEARED!!!



LOOKS IT NOT LIKE THE KING? QUESTION IT HORATIO...

THOUGH MOONLIGHT SHONE BEHIND IT, THE FIGURE SEEMED TO SUCK THE LIGHT FROM THE VERY AIR, THE CLOTHES THAT IT WORE RADIATING DARKNESS. INDEED, THE GHOST DID LOOK VERY MUCH LIKE THE DEAD OLD KING HAMLET!!!

HORATIO AND BERNARDO WERE TERRIFIED...



WHAT ART THOU THAT USURP'ST THIS TIME OF NIGHT? BY HEAVEN I CHARGE THEE SPEAK!!!



THERE IS SILENCE, IT SEEMS TO BE STUDYING HORATIO, LOOKING FOR SOMETHING. THINKING, IF GHOSTS CAN THINK...

AT LAST IT TURNS AND WALKS AWAY...



STAY! I CHARGE THEE SPEAK!!!

HORATIO SHOUTS AFTER IT

IN THE DISTANCE, WHERE THE SEA MEETS THE SKY ARE THE FIRST GLIMMERS OF DAWN. IF THIS SPIRIT IS TRULY THE DEAD KING, THEN ONE PERSON SHOULD BE TOLD...



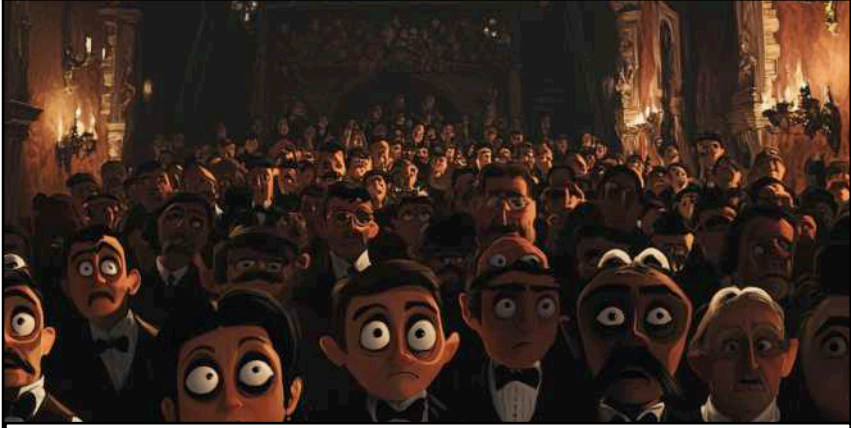
LET US IMPART WHAT WE HAVE SEEN TONIGHT UNTO YOUNG HAMLET

THIS SPIRIT, DUMB TO US, WILL SPEAK TO HIM!

! STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW...

IN HAMLET'S TIME, WHEN A KING DIED, EVERYBODY IN HIS COURT HAD TO WEAR BLACK AND ACT SAD FOR AT LEAST SIX MONTHS. THIS WAS CALLED THE PERIOD OF MOURNING. IF THE PEOPLE REALLY LIKED THE KING, THE PERIOD OF MOURNING COULD ACTUALLY GO ON FOR A WHOLE YEAR (AND YOU KNOW HOW MUCH THEY LIKED OLD HAMLET!) IF YOU ONLY HAD ONE PAIR OF BLACK SOCKS, THIS COULD BE TRICKY/SMELLY.

NEXT MORNING, AND ALMOST EVERYONE, FROM THE LOWEST SERVANT TO THE HIGHEST LORD, IS GATHERED IN THE CASTLE THRONE ROOM WAITING FOR CLAUDIUS TO MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT.



IT'S ONLY BEEN **TWO MONTHS** SINCE OLD HAMLET DIED AND THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THE NEW KING HAS CALLED THEM ALL TOGETHER. EVERYONE IS CURIOUS. WHAT COULD HE POSSIBLY WANT TO TELL THEM?



NOBODY LOOKING AT CLAUDIUS'S NEW OUTFIT WOULD BE IN ANY DOUBT THAT IT HAD COST A LOT OF MONEY. THERE'S REAL GOLD WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC AROUND HIS COLLAR! HIS MOUSTACHE IS FRESHLY TRIMMED AND GERTRUDE HAS AN EXPENSIVE NEW HAIRDO, IT SEEMS THEY ARE BOTH DRESSED TO IMPRESS!!!



THOUGH YET OF HAMLET OUR DEAR BROTHER'S DEATH THE MEMORY BE GREEN, AND THAT IT US BEFITTED TO BEAR OUR HEARTS IN GRIEF. YET SO FAR HATH DISCRETION FOUGHT WITH NATURE THAT WE WITH WISEST SORROW THINK ON HIM TOGETHER WITH REMEMBRANCE OF OURSELVES.

THIS SPEECH IS A **BIG DEAL**, HE'S SAYING LIFE DOESN'T STOP AND ALTHOUGH WE GRIEVE FOR OLD HAMLET, WE MUST REMEMBER TO BE HAPPY FOR OURSELVES!!!

NOBODY GASPS OUT LOUD, BUT IN THEIR HEADS THEY'RE GASPING. NONE OF THEM EXPECTED THIS. MOURNING FOR OLD HAMLET IS **OVER ???**

AND JUST LIKE THAT, CLAUDIUS IS ON TO OTHER BUSINESS, HE SENDS TWO AMBASSADORS TO THE NORWEGIAN KING TO STOP YOUNG FORTINBRAS'S ARMY.



AFTER **TWO MONTHS!** IF THEY WEREN'T AFRAID TO LOSE THEIR JOBS (OR THEIR HEADS) THEY MIGHT PROTEST. BUT THEY ARE, SO THEY DON'T.

! MORE STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW...

HAMLET AND HORATIO ARE BOTH STUDENTS AT WITTENBERG, A COLLEGE IN NORTHERN GERMANY. LAERTES, THE SON OF POLONIUS - CLAUDIUS'S CHIEF ADVISOR (AND A MAN WHO LIKES TO POKE HIS NOSE INTO EVERYONE'S BUSINESS) - IS STUDYING IN FRANCE. AND HE WANTS TO GO BACK...



HATH YOU YOUR FATHER'S LEAVE LAERTES?

HE HATH MY LORD

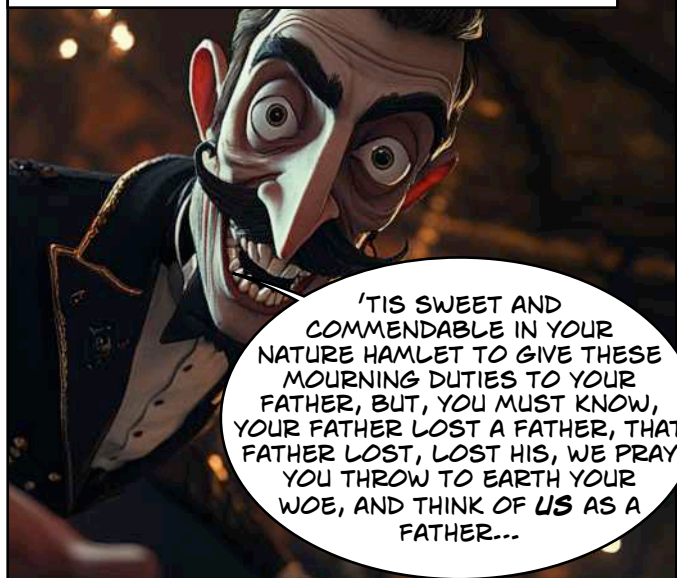


THE COURT IS DISMISSED, BUT THERE'S ONE LAST BIT OF BUSINESS, AND IT'S REALLY BOTHERING CLAUDIUS.



HAMLET DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE GOT THE MESSAGE THAT MOURNING'S OVER AND IT'S TIME TO FORGET HIS FATHER.

CLAUDIUS SEEMS TO BE TELLING HAMLET TO FORGET HIS FATHER!



'TIS SWEET AND COMMENDABLE IN YOUR NATURE HAMLET TO GIVE THESE MOURNING DUTIES TO YOUR FATHER, BUT, YOU MUST KNOW, YOUR FATHER LOST A FATHER, THAT FATHER LOST, LOST HIS, WE PRAY YOU THROW TO EARTH YOUR WOE, AND THINK OF US AS A FATHER...

A FATHER? A FATHER??? HAMLET CAN BARELY STOP HIMSELF FROM PUNCHING CLAUDIUS, A HATRED AS GREAT AS THE LOVE HE HAD FOR HIS REAL FATHER SURGING THROUGH HIS BODY.



BUT YOU WOULDN'T KNOW IT - HIS FACE SHOWS NOTHING. EVEN WHEN HIS TRAITOROUS MOTHER SPEAKS.



LET NOT THY MOTHER LOSE HER PRAYERS, HAMLET, I PRAY THEE, STAY WITH US; GO NOT TO WITTENBERG.

IT'S NOT TILL THEY HAVE GONE THAT HE DARES LET HIS REAL FEELINGS SHOW...



O, THAT THIS TOO TOO SOLID FLESH WOULD MELT, THAW AND RESOLVE ITSELF INTO A DEW!

BUT TWO MONTHS DEAD: NAY, NOT SO MUCH, NOT TWO-LET ME NOT THINK ON'T:

WHY SHE MARRIED WITH MINE UNCLE, MY FATHER'S BROTHER WITHIN A MONTH? BUT BREAK MY HEART, FOR I MUST HOLD MY TONGUE

HORATIO ENTERS WITH NEWS OF HAMLET'S FATHER'S GHOST...



BUT WHERE WAS THIS?

MY LORD, UPON THE PLATFORM WHERE WE WATCHED...

SUDDENLY, WITH TEARS DRIED, HAMLET IS FASCINATED...



DID YOU NOT SPEAK TO IT?

I DID, BUT ANSWER MADE IT NONE

'TIS VERY STRANGE, I'LL WATCH TONIGHT

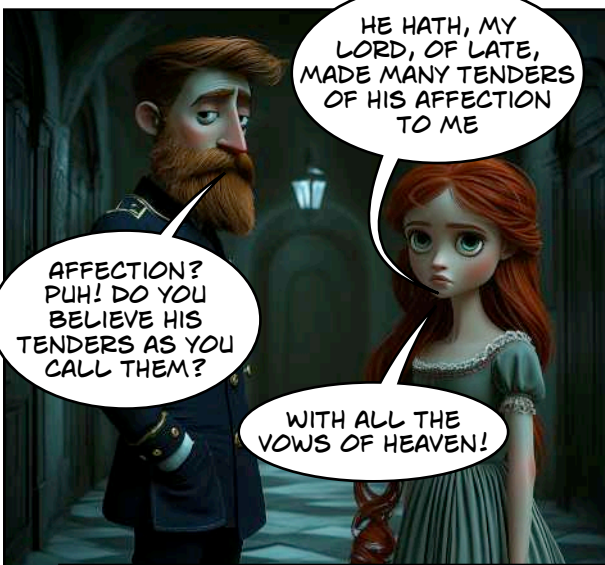
AND SO HE PREPARES TO GO GHOST HUNTING...

NOW, HAMLET AND **OPHELIA** HAVE BEEN FRIENDS EVER SINCE THEY WERE TINY CHILDREN - SWEET!



NOW, THOUGH, THEY'RE A BIT MORE THAN FRIENDS...

IN FACT, **OPHELIA** HAS **BIG LOVE** FOR HAMLET, AND SHE'S PRETTY SURE THAT HE FEELS THE SAME! AFTER ALL, HE'S BEEN TELLING HER SO. **OPHELIA** MEETS WITH HER FATHER **POLONIUS** (WHO, JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME, ALWAYS THINKS HE KNOWS BEST).



HE HATH, MY LORD, OF LATE, MADE MANY TENDERS OF HIS AFFECTION TO ME

AFFECTION? PUH! DO YOU BELIEVE HIS TENDERS AS YOU CALL THEM?

WITH ALL THE VOWS OF HEAVEN!

POLONIUS IS NOT IMPRESSED!



DO NOT BELIEVE HIS VOWS. I WOULD NOT, FROM THIS TIME FORTH, GIVE WORDS OR TALK WITH THE LORD HAMLET

SEE WHAT I MEAN? **OPHELIA** AND **HAMLET** ARE IN LOVE, BUT **POLONIUS** WON'T BELIEVE IT - HE HAS TO KNOW BETTER. AND NOW HE WON'T EVEN LET **OPHELIA** TALK TO **HAMLET** ANYMORE! POOR **OPHELIA** - SHE'S SO SAD! AT LEAST SHE DOESN'T HAVE TO GO TO A MASSIVE PARTY WITH LOTS OF LORDS AND LADIES, A KING AND A QUEEN DRINKING LOADS AND BEING REALLY LOUD. OH, WAIT A MINUTE, SHE DOES...

NOW THAT **CLAUDIUS** IS KING, **ELLSINORE CASTLE** WON'T STOP PARTYING ANYTIME SOON...



AND THERE'S ANOTHER ONE TONIGHT!

MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE ON THE BATTLEMENTS, **HAMLET** AND HIS FRIENDS WATCH AND WAIT...



LOOK MY LORD, IT COMES!

IT BECKONS YOU...

ANGELS AND MINISTERS OF GRACE DEFEND US!

HAMLET'S HEART ALMOST STOPS AT THE SIGHT OF THE GHOST...



AT THIS DISTANCE, IT CERTAINLY LOOKS A LOT LIKE HIS DAD. BUT HE MUST GET CLOSER TO MAKE SURE...



DO NOT GO WITH IT!

BE RULED: YOU SHALL NOT GO!

BUT IT WAS TOO LATE...

HAMLET RACES AFTER THE GHOST! YOU'D DO THE SAME, WOULDN'T YOU? I KNOW I WOULD. TERRIFIED, I'D BE, BUT MORE TERRIFIED THAT I'D MISS OUT ON THE CHANCE TO SPEAK TO MY DAD AGAIN...



GHOSTS ARE FAST IT SEEMS - WELL, THEY DON'T WEIGH MUCH, AND THEY CAN WALK THROUGH WALLS - AND IT TAKES A WHILE FOR HAMLET TO CATCH UP. WHEN HE DOES, HE SEES IT'S TRUE. IT'S HIS DAD. ONE HUNDRED PER CENT. AND DAD HAS A MESSAGE...

HAMLET, IF THOU DIDST EVER THY DEAR FATHER LOVE, REVENGE HIS FOUL AND UNNATURAL MURDER!!!

MURDER???

THE SERPENT THAT DID STING THY FATHER'S LIFE NOW WEARS HIS CROWN!!!

O MY PROPHETIC SOUL! MINE UNCLE!

HAMLET HAS HATED CLAUDIUS FOR NOT BEING HIS FATHER. HE'S BEEN DISGUSTED WITH HIS MOTHER FOR MARRYING HIM SO SOON, BUT NEVER, NOT FOR A MOMENT DID HE THINK THAT HIS UNCLE WOULD KILL HIS OWN BROTHER---IT'S HORRIFYING. AND SO THE GHOST TOLD YOUNG HAMLET HIS SAD AND TERRIBLE TALE...

SLEEPING WITHIN MINE ORCHARD, MY CUSTOM ALWAYS IN THE AFTERNOON. UPON MY SECURE HOUR THY UNCLE STOLE...

...WITH JUICE OF CURSED **HEBENON** IN A VIAL AND IN THE PORCHES OF MINE EARS DID POUR THE LEPEROUS DISTILMENT!

THUS WAS I, SLEEPING, BY A **BROTHER'S** HAND, OF LIFE, OF CROWN AND QUEEN, AT ONCE DISPATCHED: O HORRIBLE, O HORRIBLE, MOST HORRIBLE!

IF THOU HAST NATURE IN THEE, **BEAR IT NOT**. ADIEU ADIEU HAMLET: REMEMBER ME...

O VILLAIN, VILLAIN, SMILING, DAMNED VILLAIN!

NOW THAT HE KNOWS FOR SURE THAT HIS UNCLE CLAUDIUS KILLED HIS FATHER, HE IS FEELING A THOUSAND FEELINGS, BUT HE'S ONLY THINKING ONE THOUGHT, **WHAT IS HE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?**

IT'S ABOUT TIME WE CHECKED IN ON OUR CAST OF CHARACTERS, TO REMEMBER WHO'S WHO. HAMLET'S GALLERY ROOM IS A GOOD PLACE TO BEGIN...



1 CLAUDIUS

creepy and horrible, not my new dad



2 GERTRUDE

Mum, why is she so happy???



3 OPHELIA

Nice but sad a lot



4 HORATIO

My friend from school



5 LAERTES

Ophelia's brother, he's fine I suppose



6 POLONIUS

Ophelia's dad. Well boring and old



7 FORTINBRAS

ENEMY! why have I got a picture of him?



8 ME!

I hate having my portrait painted

9 DAD?

