

## THE PLOT OF HAMLET

- Marcellus and Horatio see the ghost of Hamlet's father on the battlements and decide to tell Hamlet about it
- Claudius, the new king, introduces Hamlet's mother, Gertrude, as his new wife. Hamlet is very depressed and seems unhappy with Claudius and his mother. Laertes asks to return to France now that the funeral is over and Claudius lets him leave. Claudius does not, however, let Hamlet return to his college studies in Wittenberg.
- Horatio and Marcellus inform Hamlet of the ghost's presence, and he decides to see it that night
- Laertes leaves for France after teasing Ophelia, his sister, about her relationship with Hamlet. Polonius becomes upset when he learns about the relationship and instructs Ophelia to break it off.
- The ghost of Hamlet's father informs Hamlet that he was murdered by Claudius. Hamlet swears Horatio to secrecy.
- Ophelia recounts how upset she was by a late night visit by Hamlet
- Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two of Hamlet's friends from college, arrive and we learn they are there to spy on Hamlet. Polonius suggests to Gertrude that Hamlet has been acting strangely because of his love for Ophelia, and they decide to listen in to his conversation with Ophelia to see if that is the case.
- Hamlet arrives and pretends to be mad around Polonius. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern visit Hamlet, but he figures out they are not to be trusted. The Players arrive and Hamlet and Polonius hear a speech. Hamlet recruits Horatio to watch Claudius during the play that evening that will mimic the circumstances of Claudius' murder of King Hamlet.
- Hamlet becomes very angry with Ophelia when she attempts to give him back some love letters he had given her. Claudius decides to send Hamlet to England.
- "The Mousetrap" is sprung and Hamlet is convinced the ghost was telling the truth.
- Polonius requests that Hamlet visit his mother in her "closet."
- On the way to his mother's chambers, Hamlet discovers Claudius praying and decides not to stab him
- Polonius hides in Gertrude's room. Hamlet arrives and stabs Polonius thinking that he is Claudius. Hamlet becomes incensed at Gertrude and the ghost arrives to warn Hamlet. Hamlet reconciles with Gertrude.
- Claudius learns that Hamlet has killed Polonius and decides to have Hamlet killed in England.
- Horatio receives a letter that Hamlet's ship was captured by pirates and he is on his way home.
- Ophelia becomes crazy when she learns Hamlet killed Polonius. Laertes arrives back ready to kill Claudius before he sees the mad Ophelia. Claudius convinces Laertes to cheat in a duel with Hamlet. Gertrude arrives to describe Ophelia's death in a river.
- Hamlet returns and sees Ophelia's burial.
- Laertes challenges Hamlet to a duel.