

William Shakespeare

The Tragedy Of Hamlet, Prince Of Denmark

Dual Edition: Original and
Clear Modern English

DUAL EDITIONS LIBRARY

William Shakespeare

The Tragedy Of Hamlet, Prince Of Denmark

Dual Edition: Original and
Clear Modern English

DUAL EDITIONS LIBRARY



William Shakespeare

The Tragedy Of Hamlet, Prince Of Denmark

In Clear and Accessible English



William Shakespeare - The Tragedy Of Hamlet, Prince Of Denmark In Clear and Accessible English

©2025 Dual Editions by LS-Media

ISBN [eBook]: 978-3-69055-036-9

Imprint

LS-Media | hypertexxt

Publisher: Dr. Thomas Ringmayr, PhD

Am Kienwerder 51a

14532 Stahnsdorf, Germany

Responsible for editorial content: T. Ringmayr

This work was editorially developed and is the sole responsibility of the publisher. Production was supported by AI-assisted tools (Claude Code). All content was reviewed, edited, and approved by the editor. No AI-generated images were used in this work. No third-party copyrights or usage rights have been infringed.

Copyright

The *original texts* contained in this work are based on public-domain sources or on texts whose use is legally permitted.

The *clear versions, editorial adaptations*, as well as the *selection and arrangement* of the texts are *protected by copyright*.

Without the prior written consent of the publisher, the protected parts of this work may not be reproduced, distributed, adapted, recorded, or otherwise used.

For inquiries regarding licensing, use, or further distribution, please contact licenses@ls-media.org.

DualEditions is an imprint of [LS-Media](http://LS-Media.com) / hypertexxt.com, Berlin, Germany.

www.dualeditions.com

Alongside the DualEditions series, we also produce and process accessible content for web, print, and eBooks, using our proprietary *hypertexxt* framework. We work with publishers, institutions, and companies to create clear, low-threshold language solutions for diverse audiences. Learn more at www.ls-media.org or contact us at projects@ls-media.org.

We welcome your suggestions, corrections, new title ideas, and feedback of any kind. You can reach us via www.ls-media.org/feedback.

William Shakespeare

The Tragedy Of Hamlet, Prince Of Denmark

In Clear and Accessible English

This book presents the original text alongside a direct rendering in controlled, clear English at the B1 level. The clear version follows the original sentence by sentence and keeps structure, content, and meaning fully intact. Only the language *level* is adjusted, and nothing is cut, removed, summarized, or simplified in substance. The original text remains visible at all times, so wording and argument can always be checked directly.

In the clear version, sentences are set line by line to support orientation and reading flow in longer or denser passages. This layout is intentional and designed to aid careful reading.

Reading complex texts with clarity and confidence

This Dual Edition offers the original text together with a clear modern English version, presented side by side. The format is designed for readers who need to work through demanding texts carefully, whether by choice or by requirement.

It is especially helpful in homeschooling and classroom settings, including high school and college study, history and humanities courses, and ESL learning. When time, experience, or reading practice is limited, the clear version supports steady progress without breaking contact with the original text.

Additionally, glossaries explain difficult terms where needed, and short summaries support overall comprehension. This allows readers to meet academic or curricular demands with greater confidence, less frustration, and full awareness of the text's structure and ideas.

Contents

Dual Edition: Original and Clear Modern English

What to expect from this Dual Edition

Imprint

Glossary

Copyright

More DualEditions

The Tragedy Of Hamlet, Prince Of Denmark

(untitled)

List of Characters

ACT I

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

SCENE IV.

SCENE V.

ACT II

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

ACT III

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

SCENE IV.

ACT IV

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

SCENE IV.

SCENE V.

SCENE VI.

SCENE VII.

ACT V

SCENE I.

SCENE II.



List of Characters

HAMLET, Prince of Denmark

Hamlet, prince of Denmark.

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark,
Hamlet's uncle

Claudius, king of Denmark,
Hamlet's uncle.

The GHOST of the late king, Hamlet's
father

The ghost of the late king,
Hamlet's father.

GERTRUDE, the Queen, Hamlet's
mother, now wife of Claudius

Gertrude, the queen,
Hamlet's mother, now wife of
Claudius.

POLONIUS, Lord Chamberlain

Polonius, lord chamberlain.

LAERTES, Son to Polonius

Laertes, son to Polonius.

OPHELIA, Daughter to Polonius

Ophelia, daughter to Polonius.

HORATIO, Friend to Hamlet

Horatio, friend to Hamlet.

FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway

Fortinbras, prince of Norway.

VOLTEMAND, Courtier

Voltemand, official at the
royal court.

CORNELIUS, Courtier

Cornelius, official at the royal
court.

ROSENCRANTZ, Courtier

Rosencrantz, official at the
royal court.

GUILDENSTERN, Courtier

MARCELLUS, Officer

BARNARDO, Officer

FRANCISCO, a Soldier

OSRIC, Courtier

REYNALDO, Servant to Polonius

Players

A Gentleman, Courtier

A Priest

Two Clowns, Grave-diggers

A Captain

English Ambassadors.

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers,
Sailors, Messengers, and Attendants

SCENE. Elsinore.

Guildenstern, official at the
royal court.

Marcellus, officer.

Barnardo, officer.

Francisco, a soldier.

Osric, official at the royal
court.

Reynaldo, servant to Polonius.

Actors.

A gentleman, official at the
royal court.

A priest.

Two gravediggers.

A captain.

English ambassadors.

Lords, ladies, officers,
soldiers, sailors, messengers,
and attendants.

Scene: Elsinore, the royal
castle in Denmark.

ACT I

SCENE I.

Elsinore. A platform before the Castle.

Enter Francisco and Barnardo, two sentinels.

BARNARDO.

Who's there?

FRANCISCO.

Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

BARNARDO.

Long live the King!

FRANCISCO.

Elsinore Castle. A platform in front of the castle.

Two guards, Francisco and Barnardo, enter.

Barnardo

Who is there?

Francisco

No, *you* answer *me*.

Stop and tell me who you are!

Barnardo

Long live the king!

Francisco

Barnardo?

Barnardo?

BARNARDO.

Barnardo

He.

Yes, it's me.

FRANCISCO.

Francisco

You come most carefully upon your hour.

You are right on time for your shift.

BARNARDO.

Barnardo

'Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco.

It just turned midnight.
Go to bed now, Francisco.

FRANCISCO.

Francisco

For this relief much thanks. 'Tis bitter cold,

Thank you for the
changeover.

And I am sick at heart.

It's bitterly cold.
And I don't feel well.

BARNARDO.

Barnardo

Have you had quiet guard?

Has your shift been quiet?

FRANCISCO.

Not a mouse stirring.

Francisco

Not even a mouse has moved.

BARNARDO.

Barnardo

Well, good night.

All right. Good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,

If you see Horatio and Marcellus, who share my shift, tell them to hurry.

The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

Horatio and Marcellus enter.

FRANCISCO.

Francisco

I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who is there?

I think I hear them.
Stop! Who is there?

HORATIO.

Horatio

Friends to this ground.

We are friends of this land.

MARCELLUS.

Marcellus

And liegemen to the Dane.

We serve the king of Denmark.

FRANCISCO.

Give you good night.

Francisco

Good night!

MARCELLUS.

O, farewell, honest soldier, who hath
reliev'd you?

Marcellus

Good night, honest soldier;
who has taken over your
shift?

FRANCISCO.

Barnardo has my place. Give you
good-night.

Francisco

Barnardo has taken my place;
good night.

Exit.

Francisco exits.

MARCELLUS.

Holla, Barnardo!

Marcellus

Hey, Barnardo!

BARNARDO.

Say, what, is Horatio there?

Barnardo

Tell me, is Horatio here?

HORATIO.

A piece of him.

Horatio

Part of me is.

BARNARDO.

Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.

Barnardo

Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus.

MARCELLUS.

What, has this thing appear'd again tonight?

Marcellus

Has that thing appeared again tonight?

BARNARDO.

I have seen nothing.

Barnardo

I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS.

Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him

Touching this dreaded sight, twice
seen of us.

Therefore I have entreated him along

With us to watch the minutes of this
night,

That if again this apparition come

He may approve our eyes and speak
to it.

Marcellus

Horatio says it is only our
imagination and refuses to
believe what we saw:

The terrifying figure that
appeared to us twice already.
So I persuaded him to join us
tonight in case it comes
again, so that he can confirm
what we saw and speak to it.

HORATIO.

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

BARNARDO.

Sit down awhile,

And let us once again assail your
ears,

That are so fortified against our
story,

What we two nights have seen.

HORATIO.

Well, sit we down,

And let us hear Barnardo speak of
this.

BARNARDO.

Last night of all,

When yond same star that's
westward from the pole,

Horatio

That's nonsense; it will not
appear.

Barnardo

Sit down for a while and let us
tell you once more what we
have seen these past two
nights/
Even though you do not
believe us.

Horatio

All right, let's sit down and
listen to Barnardo's story.

Barnardo

Last night, when that same
star west of the North Star
had reached the part of the
sky where it now shines,

Had made his course t'illuminate that
part of heaven

Where now it burns, Marcellus and
myself,

The bell then beating one—

MARCELLUS.

Peace, break thee off. Look where it
comes again.

Enter Ghost.

BARNARDO.

In the same figure, like the King
that's dead.

MARCELLUS.

Thou art a scholar; speak to it,
Horatio.

BARNARDO.

Looks it not like the King? Mark it,
Horatio.

Marcellus and I were on
guard.

The bell had just struck one.

Marcellus

Quiet! Stop talking.

Look, it is coming again.

The ghost enters.

Barnardo

It looks just like the dead
king.

Marcellus

You are the scholar—speak to
it, Horatio!

Barnardo

Doesn't it look like the king?
Watch it closely, Horatio.

HORATIO.

Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder.

BARNARDO

It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS.

Question it, Horatio.

HORATIO.

What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,

Together with that fair and warlike form

In which the majesty of buried Denmark

Did sometimes march? By heaven I charge thee speak.

MARCELLUS.

Horatio

It looks very much like him.

It fills me with fear and amazement.

Barnardo

It wants someone to speak to it.

Marcellus

Ask it a question, Horatio.

Horatio

Who are you, appearing at this hour of night?

And wearing that noble, warlike look that once

belonged to the late King of Denmark?

In the name of Heaven, I order you to speak!

Marcellus

It is offended.

BARNARDO.

See, it stalks away.

HORATIO.

Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee
speak!

Exit Ghost.

MARCELLUS.

'Tis gone, and will not answer.

BARNARDO.

How now, Horatio! You tremble and
look pale.

Is not this something more than
fantasy?

What think you on't?

HORATIO.

It is offended.

Barnardo

Look, it is walking away.

Horatio

Wait! Speak, speak!
I command you: speak!

The ghost leaves.

Marcellus

It is gone and will not speak.

Barnardo

What is it, Horatio?
You are shaking and look pale.

This is more than just
imagination, isn't it?
What do you think?

Horatio

Before my God, I might not this
believe

Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

MARCELLUS.

Is it not like the King?

HORATIO.

As thou art to thyself:

Such was the very armour he had on

When he th'ambitious Norway
combated;

So frown'd he once, when in an angry
parle

He smote the sledded Polacks on the
ice.

'Tis strange.

MARCELLUS.

Thus twice before, and jump at this
dead hour,

By God, I would not have
believed this without clear
and real proof from my own
eyes.

Marcellus

Doesn't it look like the king?

Horatio

Exactly like himself!

He wore that same armor
when he fought against the
ambitious king of Norway.

He looked just like that when
he frowned during a heated
meeting and struck down the
Polish soldiers from their
sleds on the ice.

It is strange!

Marcellus

This is the second time he has
walked past our watch at

With martial stalk hath he gone by
our watch.

HORATIO.

In what particular thought to work I
know not;

But in the gross and scope of my
opinion,

This bodes some strange eruption to
our state.

MARCELLUS.

Good now, sit down, and tell me, he
that knows,

Why this same strict and most
observant watch

So nightly toils the subject of the
land,

And why such daily cast of brazen
cannon

And foreign mart for implements of
war;

Why such impress of shipwrights,
whose sore task

exactly this dead hour of the
night, with a soldier's stride.

Horatio

I do not know exactly what it
means.

But overall, I believe this is a
warning that something
strange is about to happen in
our country.

Marcellus

Please, someone who knows:
Explain to me why the king
has ordered such strict guard
duty every night.

Why are people in the country
being made to work so hard?

Why are we constantly
preparing cannons and
buying weapons from abroad?
Why are shipbuilders working
so hard they do not even rest
on Sundays?

Does not divide the Sunday from the week.

What might be toward, that this sweaty haste

Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:

Who is't that can inform me?

HORATIO.

That can I;

At least, the whisper goes so. Our last King,

Whose image even but now appear'd to us,

Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,

Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,

Dar'd to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet,

For so this side of our known world esteem'd him,

Did slay this Fortinbras; who by a seal'd compact,

What is going on that makes people work day and night without stopping?

Who can explain this to me?

Horatio

I can explain it—at least, that is what people are saying: Our last king, whose ghost we just saw, was once challenged by Fortinbras of Norway.

Fortinbras was full of pride and wanted to prove himself in combat.

Our brave Hamlet—and that is how the world knew him—killed Fortinbras in that fight.

By a legal agreement, confirmed by law and proper ceremony, Fortinbras gave up all his lands when he died.

Well ratified by law and heraldry,
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his
lands
Which he stood seiz'd of, to the
conqueror;
Against the which, a moiety
competent
Was gaged by our King; which had
return'd
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
Had he been vanquisher; as by the
same cov'nant
And carriage of the article design'd,
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young
Fortinbras,
Of unimproved mettle, hot and full,
Hath in the skirts of Norway, here
and there,
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute,
For food and diet, to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in't; which is no
other,
As it doth well appear unto our state,

Those lands were given to
King Hamlet, the victor.
If Fortinbras had won, the
same deal would have
returned Hamlet's land to
him.
Because of that agreement,
the land legally passed to our
Hamlet.
Now, young Fortinbras, his
son, who is eager and
untested, is gathering a group
of reckless fighters in remote
parts of Norway.
He offers them food and pay
to join some dangerous
mission.
It clearly seems that this
mission is to take back the
lands his father lost, by force.
That, I believe, is the main
reason for all our military
preparations.

But to recover of us by strong hand
And terms compulsatory, those
foresaid lands
So by his father lost. And this, I take
it,
Is the main motive of our
preparations,
The source of this our watch, and the
chief head
Of this post-haste and rummage in
the land.

BARNARDO.

I think it be no other but e'en so:
Well may it sort that this portentous
figure
Comes armed through our watch so
like the King
That was and is the question of these
wars.

HORATIO.

A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.

It is the reason for our strict
night watches and the rush to
arm the country.

Barnardo

I think that must be it.
It would make sense that this
ghost—which looks so much
like the king—appears during
our watch, dressed in armor.
The dead king is at the center
of this conflict.

Horatio

It is a tiny thing, but it
troubles the mind deeply.

In the most high and palmy state of
Rome,

A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,

The graves stood tenantless and the
sheeted dead

Did squeak and gibber in the Roman
streets;

As stars with trains of fire and dews
of blood,

Disasters in the sun; and the moist
star,

Upon whose influence Neptune's
empire stands,

Was sick almost to doomsday with
eclipse.

And even the like precursor of fierce
events,

As harbingers preceding still the
fates

And prologue to the omen coming on,

Have heaven and earth together
demonstrated

Unto our climatures and countrymen.

Re-enter Ghost.

In ancient Rome, just before
the great Julius Caesar was
killed, strange things
happened.

The graves opened, and dead
bodies wrapped in shrouds
wandered the streets, crying
out.

Stars shot fire, blood fell like
dew, and the sun turned dark.

The moon, which controls the
sea, was eclipsed and looked
sick, as if judgment day had
come.

Signs like these often come
before violent events.

Heaven and earth have
shown such warnings now to
us and to the people of our
land.

The ghost enters again.

Wait—look, it's coming again!

I'll go stand in its path, even if
it harms me.

uneasy, Hamlet agrees. During the duel, Laertes wounds Hamlet with a poisoned blade, but they switch swords, and Laertes is also struck. The Queen drinks poisoned wine meant for Hamlet and dies. Laertes reveals the plot as he dies, and Hamlet kills the King. As Hamlet is dying, he names Fortinbras as successor and asks Horatio to tell the true story. Fortinbras arrives, takes command, and orders Hamlet buried with honors.

Glossary

Sometimes a difficult or unusual word just can't be avoided. This glossary gives short, clear explanations for such terms, always based on how they're used in the text. It helps you follow the meaning more easily and read with greater confidence. Especially useful if you want to be sure you've understood everything correctly.

Frailty → frailty: Weakness or vulnerability, especially in moral or emotional strength.

Hecate: In Greek mythology, the goddess of witchcraft, magic, and ghosts; often portrayed as a powerful supernatural figure.

bedridden: Confined to bed due to illness or infirmity.

blind man's bluff: A children's game in which a blindfolded player tries to catch others; metaphorically, it suggests acting or searching in ignorance.

foils → foil: Light fencing swords with blunted tips, used in sport or staged combat.

fox and hounds: A traditional chasing game, metaphorically used for pursuit or hunt.

glow-worm: An insect that emits light from its body, usually visible at night.

grace herb: A symbolic or medicinal herb, possibly rue, historically associated with repentance or mourning.

hebenon: A fictional or uncertain poison mentioned in Shakespeare, possibly referring to henbane or another deadly herb.

liege: A term of feudal loyalty, used to refer to a sovereign or lord to whom allegiance is owed.

lord chamberlain: An officer of the royal household in charge of ceremonies and the monarch's personal service.

man and boy: An idiom meaning from childhood through adulthood; for one's entire life.

Niobe → niobe: In Greek mythology, a queen who wept endlessly for her children, slain by the gods as punishment for her pride; a symbol of inconsolable grief.

recorders → recorder: Woodwind musical instruments similar to flutes, used in Renaissance and Baroque music.

se offendendo: A mock-Latin legalism used in jest, meant to parody legal jargon for self-inflicted death (i.e., suicide).

serpent: A snake; often symbolic of deceit, danger, or evil.

sexton: A church officer responsible for maintenance of the building and sometimes for grave-digging or ringing bells.

tanner: A person who processes animal hides into leather using tanning methods.

truncheon: A short club or staff, often used as a symbol of military command or authority.

Copyright

William Shakespeare - The Tragedy Of Hamlet, Prince Of Denmark In Clear and Accessible English

©2026 Dual Editions by LS-Media

ISBN [eBook]: 978-3-69055-035-2

The *original texts* contained in this work are based on public-domain sources or on texts whose use is legally permitted.

The *clear versions, editorial adaptations*, as well as the *selection and arrangement* of the texts are *protected by copyright*.

Without the prior written consent of the publisher, the protected parts of this work may not be reproduced, distributed, adapted, recorded, or otherwise used.

For inquiries regarding licensing, use, or further distribution, please contact licenses@ls-media.org.