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القسم او الفرع : اللغة الانكليزية

المرحلة: الثالثة

أستاذ المادة : م. الآء موفق مصطفى عبد الرزاق

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اسم المحاضرة الأولى باللغة العربية: "هاملت: الشخصيات وتحليلها"

اسم المحاضرة الأولى باللغة الإنكليزية: 'Hamlet' Characters: Descriptions and Analysis

## 'Hamlet' Characters: Descriptions and Analysis

Most of the characters in *Hamlet* are citizens of Denmark and members of the royal court, reeling after the death of their king. The characters are deeply suspicious of one another, as it becomes clear that the king may have been murdered—and by his brother Claudius no less. As *Hamlet* is a tragedy, each character carries within themselves a tragic characteristic that contributes to their own downfall. But it is in particular the unstable atmosphere of the new court of Claudius that brings about much of the action of the play.

### Hamlet

The protagonist of the tragedy, Hamlet is a beloved prince and a thoughtful, melancholy young man. Distraught by his father's death, Hamlet is only made more depressed by his uncle Claudius' succession to the throne and his subsequent marriage to his mother. When the ghost of the king, Hamlet's father, tells him that he was murdered by his brother Claudius and that Hamlet must avenge him, Hamlet becomes almost suicidal and obsessed with revenge. He is slowly driven mad by his inability to act on this instruction.

Very intelligent, Hamlet decides to fake madness in order to fool his uncle and those loyal to him while he uncovers whether Claudius is guilty for his father's death—although often his mental health is genuinely in question. Worried about his own guilt, Hamlet also becomes hateful, despising his uncle, voicing anger at his mother, frustrated with his traitorous friends, and alienating Ophelia (whom he once courted). His anger borders on ruthlessness, and he is responsible for numerous deaths throughout the play, but he never loses his reflective and melancholy traits.

### Claudius

Claudius, the play's antagonist, is the king of Denmark and Hamlet's uncle. According to the ghost of Hamlet's father, Claudius is his killer. When we are first introduced to Claudius, he scolds Hamlet for still being so glum about his father's death and forbids him to return to his university studies in Wittenberg.

Claudius is a conniving strategist who poisoned his own brother in cold blood. He remains calculating and unloving throughout the play, driven by his ambition and lust. When he realizes that Hamlet is not mad as he originally believed, and in fact poses a threat to his crown, Claudius quickly begins to plot Hamlet's death. This plan ultimately leads to Claudius's death at Hamlet's hands at the end of the play.

However, Claudius also has an honorable side. When Hamlet has a traveling troupe put on a play for the court that emulates the murder of a king, Claudius reveals his sense of guilt. He also decides to have Ophelia buried with ceremony, rather than as a suicide. His love for Gertrude also seems sincere.

## Polonius

Polonius is the main advisor to the king, also known as the Lord Chamberlain. Pompous and arrogant, Polonius is also the overbearing father of Ophelia and Laertes. As Laertes sets off for France to continue his studies, Polonius gives him paradoxical advice, including the famous quotation, "to thine own self be true"—an ironic line from a man who cannot keep his advice consistent. When Hamlet goes to his mother's bedchamber, attempting to confront her about his father's murder, he kills Polonius, who is hiding behind a tapestry and whom Hamlet mistakes for the king.

## Ophelia

Ophelia is Polonius's daughter and Hamlet's lover. She is obedient, agreeing not to see Hamlet anymore at her father's suggestion and spying on Hamlet when asked by Claudius. She believes that Hamlet loves her, despite his inconsistent courtship, and is devastated during a conversation in which he seems not to love her at all. When Hamlet kills her father, Ophelia goes mad and drowns in the river. Whether this is a suicide is left ambiguous. Ophelia is feminine and almost maidenly throughout the play, though she is able to counter Hamlet's wit.

## Gertrude

Gertrude is the queen of Denmark and Hamlet's mother. She was originally married to Hamlet's father, the dead king, but has now married the new king Claudius, her former brother-in-law. Gertrude's son Hamlet regards her with suspicion, wondering whether she had a hand in his father's murder. Gertrude is rather weak and unable to match wits in an argument, but her love for her son remains strong. She also enjoys the physical aspects of her marriage to Claudius—a point that disturbs Hamlet. After the sword fight between Hamlet and Laertes, Gertrude drinks the poisoned goblet meant for Hamlet and dies.

## Horatio

Horatio is Hamlet's best friend and confidant. He is cautious, scholarly, and a good man, known for giving sound advice. As Hamlet lies dying at the end of the play, Horatio considers suicide, but Hamlet convinces him to live on to tell the story.

## Laertes

Laertes is Polonius's son and Ophelia's brother, as well as a clear foil to Hamlet. Where Hamlet is contemplative and frozen by emotions, Laertes is reactive and quick to action. When he hears of his father's death, Laertes is ready to raise a rebellion against Claudius, but his sister's madness allows Claudius to convince him Hamlet is at fault. Unlike Hamlet, Laertes will stop at nothing for revenge. At the end of the play, Hamlet kills Laertes; as he lays dying, Laertes admits to Claudius's plot to kill Hamlet.

## Fortinbras

Fortinbras is the prince of neighboring Norway. His father was killed by Hamlet's father, and Fortinbras is looking for revenge. Fortinbras arrives in Denmark just as the climax is reached. At Hamlet's recommendation and due to a distant connection, Fortinbras becomes the next king of Denmark.

## The Ghost

The ghost claims to be Hamlet's dead father, the former king of Denmark (also named Hamlet). He appears as a ghost in the first scenes of the play, informing Hamlet and others that he was murdered by his brother Claudius, who poured poison into his ear while he slept. The Ghost is responsible for the action of the play, but its origins are unclear. Hamlet worries that this specter might be sent by the devil to incite him to murder, but the mystery is never solved.

## Rosencrantz & Guildenstern

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are two acquaintances of Hamlet who are asked to spy on the young prince in order to figure out the cause of his madness. Both are rather spineless and obedient—Rosencrantz moreso than Guildenstern—and neither is intelligent enough to really fool Hamlet. After Hamlet kills Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern accompany him to England. They have secret orders from the king of England to behead Hamlet on arrival, but the ship is attacked by pirates, and when Rosencrantz and Guildenstern arrive in England, *their* heads are chopped off instead.

