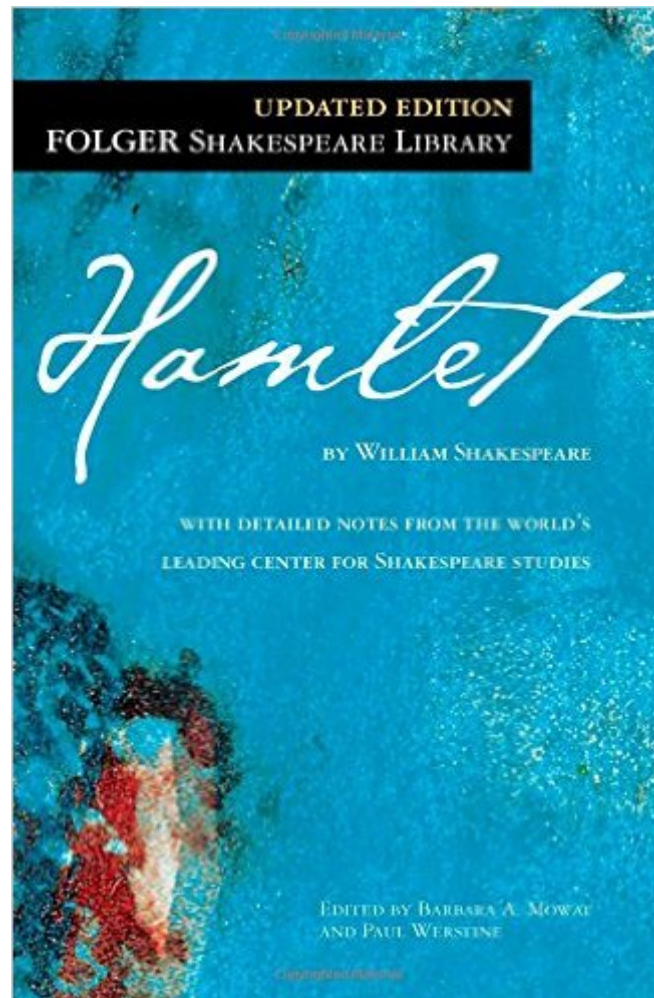


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# Hamlet



## Synopsis

Hamlet is Shakespeare's most popular, and most puzzling, play. It follows the form of a revenge tragedy, in which the hero, Hamlet, seeks vengeance against his father's murderer, his uncle Claudius, now the king of Denmark. Much of its fascination, however, lies in its uncertainties. Among them: What is the Ghost? Hamlet's father demanding justice, a tempting demon, an angelic messenger? Does Hamlet go mad, or merely pretend to? Once he is sure that Claudius is a murderer, why does he not act? Was his mother, Gertrude, unfaithful to her husband or complicit in his murder? The authoritative edition of Hamlet from The Folger Shakespeare Library, the trusted and widely used Shakespeare series for students and general readers, includes:

- Freshly edited text based on the best early printed version of the play
- Newly revised explanatory notes conveniently placed on pages facing the text of the play
- Scene-by-scene plot summaries
- A key to the play's famous lines and phrases
- An introduction to reading Shakespeare's language
- An essay by a leading Shakespeare scholar providing a modern perspective on the play
- Fresh images from the Folger Shakespeare Library's vast holdings of rare books
- An up-to-date annotated guide to further reading

Essay by Michael Neill

The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC, is home to the world's largest collection of Shakespeare's printed works, and a magnet for Shakespeare scholars from around the globe. In addition to exhibitions open to the public throughout the year, the Folger offers a full calendar of performances and programs. For more information, visit [Folger.edu](http://Folger.edu).

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## Customer Reviews

The book has an interesting layout, with definitions of words on the left, with the text of the story on the right. The book layout is the best layout I've seen of any Shakespeare book, and the size is right (you can take it with you!). The story is legend - even speaking literally - apparently the story of Hamlet harkens back to even older legends that predate Shakespeare's Hamlet. Shakespeare is so quotable, and Hamlet is no different - you often find yourself saying "Oh, that's where that comes from!" and it's like finding an old friend in a new story. "To be or not to be, that is the question" is one; so is "Neither a borrower nor a lender be" and so is "To thine own self be true". The book even comes with an appendix listing commonly quoted portions of the story and their source. However, my favorite quote (but not well-known) from the play comes from Hamlet himself, and sums the character up well: "O, from this time forth, My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!" Get this book, and have a good read! Then get more Shakespeare from the same series: you won't be sorry.

Despite its antiquated setting, Hamlet speaks to the average individual in ways that Julius Caesar or Macbeth do not, although they are obviously very worthy in different ways. Further, if you are a teacher of students disenfranchised in some way, this can be a very liberating text--not because of the literal plot, but due to the rich discussions that it provokes around how *\*not\** to end up like either a modern Ophelia or Hamlet. Frankly, I am mystified why Macbeth is the traditional choice in Senior-level textbooks, since Hamlet has proven to be so much more interesting to young adults in my six years of HS teaching. Free or extremely inexpensive texts are available on-line; however, I have found the Folger edition particularly useful in helping my students (and me) appreciate the finer points. For example, it's fun to see the meanings behind the flowers that crazy Ophelia hands out, which Folger explains while others don't. Too, do *\*you\** know what a petard is, even though you've likely been hoisted on your own? Folgers does!

The Folger Library edition is very useful for students who are unfamiliar with Elizabethan language, customs, and other oddities. The opposite page of the script acts as prompter, dictionary, and general explainer. My students found the edition easy to use and helpful.

If anybody out there is willing to give Shakespeare's Hamlet a try, please select not just any text but this one from the Folger Shakespeare Library! Not only do they give you in-depth information on Shakespeare's life, his language, his theater, and a summary of Hamlet but the text also integrates assistance for the average every day reader to understand the story's vocabulary. Anybody who

needs help by understanding Hamlet need look no further than the left page, which displays any confusing words or phrases and translates them into modern day terms. This way, anybody of ANY AGE can read Shakespeare! The key to this text is to not let Shakespeare's style frustrate you and give his books a chance-and the Folger Shakespeare Library is here for a simple study on not just the text itself but the era in which Shakespeare produces such memorable works. The Folger Shakespeare Library is an excellent resource one should utilize in researching Shakespeare for a school assignment or to simply enjoy one of his many excellent plays. I wish I could rate this text as six stars since Hamlet is, by far, my favorite Shakespeare story!

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, is one of the worlds greatest plays. There are many "quotes" from this play; one of my all-time favorites is written as Laertes gives advice to his son who is departing for France: Laertes continues his advice: "And this above all else, to thine own self be true. Then it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." But, for me, the idea that you can read this play with the original words by Shakespeare in Elizabethan English on the right page and the definitions and explanations of words and phrases conveniently on the left page is VERY needful and useful. This saves the reader much time in looking up words---or, as most people do, just skipping over passages that can't be understood due to words that are currently out of common usage. I think teachers who teach this stuff should be thrilled by this edition---finally most of their students can understand "Hamlet"! What a "boon" to teacher and student alike! See, I'm already starting to write like Shakespeare---well, not quite...yet! :o) If you have any comments: boland7214@aol.

If you ever thought about reading Shakespeare but was turned off or intimidated by the old english, not so with the new folger editions. You're basically reading the play on all the right sided pages, with the left pages reserved for all the definitions and explanations of the sayings and words that might be difficult to understand. This makes it very easy and enjoyable to read.

It's a good edition in terms of footnotes that help to describe what is happening throughout the course of the play. Hamlet is Shakespeare's longest play and in my opinion his best. The speeches are beautiful and everything comes together so nicely. Hamlet is such a great character because he is so completely loveable and yet ridiculously frustrating. I definitely recommend this if you are starting out with Shakespeare because it is likely to leave you wanting to read more of his works!

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