



Hamlet (Folger Library Shakespeare)

William Shakespeare

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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
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- -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

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