

Hamlet
William Shakespeare
Fall 2023

Who?

Producer: Casey Tonnies
Directors: Sam Bezilla
Stage Manager: Maria Arozamena
Preferred Contact Email: casey.tonnies@yale.edu

What?

BRIEF(!) Synopsis of show: Shakespeare's iconic tragedy of revenge, lust, treachery, generational conflict, and family.

When?

Date of First Rehearsal: 9/12
Current Tech Week Dates: 10/29-11/2
Performance Dates: 11/2-11/4 OR 11/9-11/11
Overall Dates (First Rehearsal to Last Performance): 9/12-11/11

Time Commitment

For ensemble members: 2-5 hours per week pre tech!

Content Warnings

Stage combat, murder, and suicide (mentioned, not depicted)

Audition Expectations

Prepare two of the short passages attached below! One is a short scene you'll read with us, and the other an extract of a monologue

Audition Location(s)

TBD - check the YCA page!

Synopsis:

When Hamlet's father, the King of Denmark, dies, Hamlet's uncle, Claudius, marries his mother and takes the throne for himself. Hamlet's father appears to the young prince as a ghost, telling his son that he was murdered by Claudius, and he wants Hamlet to kill Claudius to avenge his death.

Hamlet feels he needs proof before taking any drastic action, and he pretends to be deranged while he investigates the claims made by his father's ghost. He stages a play recreating the murder to ascertain Claudius' guilt and ends up accidentally killing another man, Polonius, believing him to be Claudius. Polonius was the father of Hamlet's onetime love, Ophelia, and, on hearing the news, she kills herself by drowning.

The story culminates in a sword fight between Hamlet and Laertes, Ophelia's brother. Laertes has dipped his sword in poison, which he has also added to some wine. This results in the deaths of Hamlet, Laertes, his mother Gertrude, and Claudius at the end of the play.

Commitment: As a member of the ensemble, you'd be expected to commit about 2-5 hours a week, scheduled around your calendar. That commitment will ramp up in the 2-3 weeks before the show, with technical rehearsals every day for the week before the show.

We ask cast members not to take on any full productions (YAC or other concerts okay!) that tech in the two weeks before or after our performance dates.

Auditions: Sign up for an audition slot on our [YCA page](#). You'll prepare the two sides below: the scene (you'll be reading for **Rosencrantz**) and a selection of the **Ghost's monologue**. We'll use your reading of these two sections to see which combination of the 16 characters might work for you! If cast, you can expect to be in (and speak in!) 6-7 scenes of the play.

We're happy to gender-bend any of the roles (with the exception of the role of the Ghost of Hamlet's father, who will be male-presenting). We encourage folks of all gender identities, races, ethnicities, and levels of theater experience to apply.

You don't need to get fancy with Shakespeare's language, or treat it differently than modern speech (if you don't want to - for folks with experience with sanction, bring that to the table!) I'd recommend making sure you understand every word you and the other characters are saying (NoFearShakespeare is the actor's best friend), and meaning what you say when you say it. That's a great start.

We also won't require memorization — you're welcome to bring the text printed with you, but you'll want to have learned it enough to focus on looking up and emoting, rather than reading off a page.

HAMLET

Then is doomsday near. but your news is not true.
Let me question more in particular: what have you,
my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune,
that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN

Prison, my lord!

HAMLET

Denmark's a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ

Then is the world one.

HAMLET

A goodly one; in which there are many confines,
wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

ROSENCRANTZ

We think not so, my lord.

HAMLET

Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing
either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me
it is a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ

Why then, your ambition makes it one; 'tis too
narrow for your mind.

HAMLET

O God, I could be bounded in a nut shell and count
myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I
have bad dreams.

GUILDENSTERN

Which dreams indeed are ambition, for the very
substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

HAMLET

A dream itself is but a shadow.

ROSENCRANTZ

Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a
quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

GHOST

O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her.