

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

# HAMLET

Savor your first reading of this play. Let it be an experience that you never forget.

There are many useful and interesting websites on Hamlet. Here are a few:

Hamlet Online

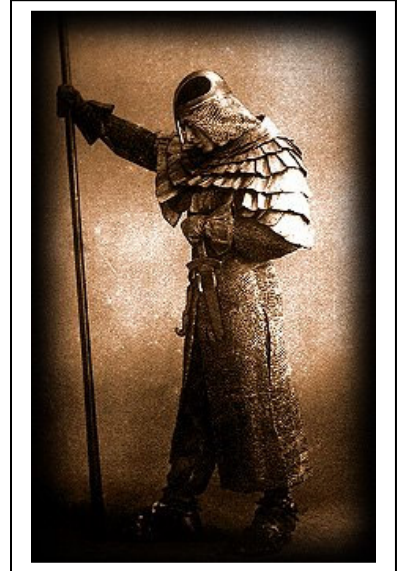
<http://www.tk421.net/hamlet/hamlet.html>

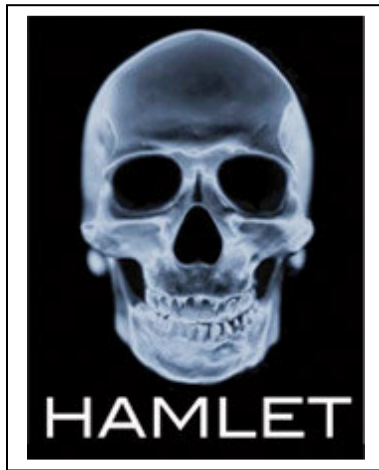
Enjoying *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare

<http://www.pathguy.com/hamlet.htm>

The Folger Shakespeare Library

<http://www.folger.edu/index.cfm>





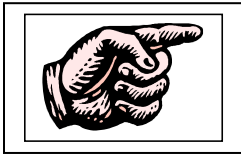
### Reading Logs, Stage One:

Your major assignment for this text is to keep a log of passages that strike you as particularly interesting or provocative, because of content -- maybe they are very revealing of the character who speaks them -- and/or because of style -- the diction is effective, or the imagery, or the irony is particularly sharp. **Your Task:** Choose ONE passage (1-10 lines) per scene.

#### Guidelines:

- At the top of each page, write the Act and Scene numbers.
- For each scene, give the quote **in its entirety as it appears in the text of the play, punctuated correctly.** (You can save some time by cutting and pasting the quote from a full-text version of Hamlet on the Internet.) Give the Act, Scene and Line number(s), using correct citation form for this.
- **Leave the rest of the page blank (back of page included).** This way, as we discuss the text and as you think about your reading, you can take notes on the bottoms and backs of your logs.
- You know you have to do this, so LOOK for a quote that strikes you while you re-read each scene.
- Keep up with this! Do it each time you finish reading a scene. If you fall behind, this will be more work for you and less valuable and interesting for both of us.

## Reading Log, Stage Two: Favorite Scene Quotes from Hamlet



**analyze:** to examine; consider in detail in order to discover essential features or meaning

This is NOT a **response**; you will not explain how you feel about or relate to the quote.

### Guidelines:

- Choose TWO of your favorite quotes from EACH ACT. Type up your logs.
  - You must use academic language, but you can have a more relaxed voice, and you do not have to adhere to the parameters of an essay.
  - Be sure to use specific details from the quote in your analysis.
  - Length: write enough. Double space!
  - See the sample that follows.
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Your Name

Shakespeare's Hamlet

Reading Log

### Act 1 – Scene 1

**BERNARDO:** Who's there?

**FRANCISCO:** Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

(1.1.1-2)

These are the opening lines of the play. Literally, one sentry on the battlements of the castle at Elsinore, Bernardo, officially challenges the sentry, Francisco, who has come to relieve him on the watch. Bernardo asks Francisco to identify himself – it's a dark night and foggy, and he is nervous up there all alone – and an equally edgy Francisco snaps back, you show me who you are first (probably Bernardo has his cloak around his face against the cold).

But it is striking that the play begins with a question, and a profound one. This is a tragedy, which always involves a journey toward self-awareness for the hero, so the question is appropriate, and so is the reply. Francisco doesn't say simply "who are you?" He says, "stand, and unfold yourself." The verb "unfold" is very evocative – as if there is a mystery or a secret to reveal, and of course by the end of the scene we know what the mystery is. These men have seen a ghost, and they are justifiably frightened and disturbed; Bernardo says a few lines later that he is "sick at heart" (1.1.9), especially because they recognize the ghost as their dead king, and they are afraid that his appearance is a bad omen, so they have asked the honest, trustworthy and rational Horatio to be a witness.

"Unfold yourself" – it sounds like unwinding a tangle, peeling back layers, to reveal the hidden truth. And that is just what this whole play, like most tragedies, is about. In the deepest sense, we spend our lives wondering "who's there" and unfolding ourselves.