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Betty Gilson
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Hamlet
By William Shakespeare
Act I, Scene IV-V
Act II, Scene I and
II (partly)
Summary
Revision

William Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*, presents the reader with a very interesting plot—which unfolds in five acts.

In Scene IV of Act I, Hamlet meets his father's ghost. The ghost is reluctant to meet Hamlet in the presence of other people. Although Hamlet's companions, Horatio and Marcellus, advise him not to meet the ghost without them—because of the possibility that the ghost might try to push him off the cliff or cause him to lose his mind—he will not follow their advice. The ghost informs Hamlet that Cornelius poisoned the former king and wants Hamlet to avenge his father's death. Hamlet doesn't have to think twice before agreeing to the ghost's request. With the ghost's help, he persuades Horatio and Marcellus to swear to a total silence about his encounter with the ghost and to go along with his plans for revenge.

In Act II, Scene I, Polonius has a discussion with his servant, Reynaldo, regarding Polonius' son, Laertes. Polonius intends to send Reynaldo to France, so he can spy on Laertes. Polonius counsels his servant on how to discredit his son—that is, to hint to people that Laertes got into trouble at home—so that the people will be more inclined to tell Reynaldo of any trouble Laertes has gotten into while abroad.

In the same scene, Ophelia informs her father, Polonius, about Hamlet's strange behavior around her. Polonius draws the conclusion that Hamlet is madly in love with his daughter. Hamlet's behavior is inappropriate—according to the standards of the times; therefore, Polonius plans to talk to the king and to inform him about this undesirable situation.

In Scene II of Act II, we find out that the king and the queen are also worried about Hamlet's strange behavior. Two courtiers, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, are appointed to spy on Hamlet. In addition, we find out that Fortinbras' intention to attack Denmark has ceased to be an issue, because his uncle has succeeded in stopping the attack and has redirected it toward the Polack.

It will now be Polonius' turn to inform the King about Hamlet's behavior—but that's next week's assignment.