# Hamlet – 15-Minute One-Act Adaptation

Adapted by Ross Alton Wilmeth

## Simple Production Guide

- Scenic Elements:  
 - A throne or chair (used for court and ghost scenes)  
 - A cloth or sign that flips between “Castle Elsinore” and “Graveyard”  
 - A skull prop (for the Yorick scene)

- Props:  
 - A toy sword or dagger  
 - A scroll or letter  
 - A goblet or cup (for the poisoning)  
 - A white sheet or cloak (for the ghost)

- Costumes:  
 - Dark cloak or tunic for Hamlet  
 - Royal sash or crown for Claudius  
 - Shawl or gown for Gertrude and Ophelia  
 - Optional: soldier’s sash or gravedigger hat

## Cast (5 Actors, No More Than 3 Roles Each)

Actor A: Hamlet / Narrator  
Actor B: Claudius / Ghost of King Hamlet  
Actor C: Gertrude / Gravedigger  
Actor D: Ophelia / Horatio  
Actor E: Laertes / Polonius / Messenger

## Scene 1 – Ghost and Grief

HAMLET / NARRATOR:  
My father, the king, is dead. My uncle Claudius now wears his crown—and married my mother.

GERTRUDE:  
Hamlet, be glad. All must die. Move on.

HAMLET:  
Too soon, Mother.

(The GHOST appears, cloaked.)

GHOST:  
I am your father’s spirit. Murdered—by your uncle.

HAMLET:  
Revenge?

GHOST:  
Yes. But remember—do not harm your mother.

## Scene 2 – Madness and Spying

POLONIUS:  
Hamlet acts strangely. Perhaps he’s mad with love for Ophelia?

CLAUDIUS:  
Watch him closely.

HAMLET:  
Get thee to a nunnery!

OPHELIA:  
Why do you speak so cruelly?

HAMLET (aside):  
They’re all watching me… spying.

## Scene 3 – Play Within the Play

HAMLET:  
We’ll catch the conscience of the king with a play.

(A brief mime: one actor poisons another in sleep.)

CLAUDIUS (rising angrily):  
Enough! Lights! Stop this nonsense!

HAMLET (to audience):  
Guilty conscience… confirmed.

## Scene 4 – Deaths and Decisions

HAMLET:  
You’ve betrayed my father.

GERTRUDE:  
Stop! You frighten me!

(POLONIUS hides. HAMLET stabs behind the curtain.)

HAMLET:  
A rat!—Oh… it was Polonius.

## Scene 5 – Ophelia’s Madness and Duel

OPHELIA:  
He loved me once… then killed my father… Water is peace…

LAERTES:  
You’ve ruined my sister, Hamlet. Duel me!

(They duel. CLAUDIUS poisons the cup.)

GERTRUDE:  
The drink! Too late…

LAERTES:  
The blade is poisoned—we’re both doomed.

HAMLET:  
Then justice! (He stabs CLAUDIUS.)

## Final Scene – Curtain Call

HAMLET / NARRATOR:  
My story ends in blood and truth—Yet tell it all with honor and youth.

ALL TOGETHER:  
Though vengeance burns and ghosts may call—In telling truth, we rise from fall.