HAMLET Plot Element Grid

for Stage Script Development and Analysis

150 Plot Elements with Selected Characters, Sub-Themes, and Issues Indicated for Stage Script Development and Analysis

Compiled by Charles Adams Kelly and Dayna Leigh Plehn
for use with *The HAMLET Text Research Toolset - 3rd Edition*
and other Color-Coded Parallel Texts (Paper and Digital)
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Principal Characters with Lines in Plot Element: 1. HAMLET; 2. CLAUDIUS (KING); 3. POLONIUS; 4. HORATIO; 5. LAERTES; 6. GHOST; 7. GERTRUDE (QUEEN); 8. OPHELIA; 9. ROSEN. and/or GUILD.; 10. MARCELLUS; 11. OTHER's ins.: F and Clo*

Themes and Relationships in Plot Element: 12. Competing Values and Theories of Tragedy; 13. Hamlet's Mental State; Madness; 14. Action: Suicide (Ophelia as Model); 15. Action: Unrestrained (Laertes Mod.); 16. Action: Caution - Providence; 17. Relationship: Hamlet vs. Gertrude; 18. Relationship: Hamlet vs. Ophelia; 19. Subtheme: Hamlet's Isolation; 20. Claudius Guilt; Honesty of Ghost; 21. Claudius vs. Hamlet ins.: Mistrust; 22. Sub-theme: Control of young gen.; 23. Sub-theme: Spying; 24. User Specified Sub-Theme(s); 25. Primarily Background or Advancing Story; 26. Comedic passages

	Plot Element	Beginning Line Number	Concluding Line Number (editions may vary)	Approximate Number of Lines**	Page # in *Hamlet Text Research Toolset*	Beginning with:
1	Sentinels report seeing Ghost to Horatio	1.1.1	1.1.39	39	1-2	*Bar.* Whose there?
2	Ghost apppears - looks like old King Hamlet - refuses to speak	1.1.40	1.1.52	13	2-3	*Mar.* Peace, breake thee…
3	Horatio recounts combat with Fortinbras and threat of young Fortinbras	1.1.53	1.1.125	73	3-4	*Mar.* Tis gone…
4	Ghost reappears and again refuses to speak	1.1.126	1.1.146	21	5	*Hor.* But soft, behold…
5	Horatio discusses ghostly superstitions - determines to tell Prince Hamlet	1.1.147	1.1.176	29	5	*Bar.* It was about…
6	King (Claudius) recalls old Hamlet and recounts Claudius's marriage to Queen	1.2.1	1.2.16	16	6	*King.* Though yet…
7	King assesses threat of young Fortinbras and instructs ambassadors	1.2.17	1.2.41	25	6-7	*King.* Now follows…
8	King allows Laertes to return to France, coronation having occurred	1.2.42	1.2.63	22	7-8	*King.* And now Laertes…
9	Queen encourages Hamlet to cast off his grief which he finds impossible to do	1.2.64	1.2.86	23	8	*King.* But now my cousin…
10	King criticizes "unmanly grief" - notes Hamlet is "most immediate to throne"	1.2.87	1.2.109	23	8	*King.* Tis sweete and…
11	King & Queen insist Hamlet not return to Wittenberg, then depart to celebrate	1.2.110	1.2.128	19	9	*King.* And with no less…
12	Hamlet (soliloquy): Depression, mention of suicide, mother's hasty re-marriage	1.2.129	1.2.159	31	9-10	*Ham.* O that this too too…
13	Hamlet and Horatio discuss King's funeral and haste of Queen's marriage	1.2.160	1.2.188	29	10-11	*Hor.* Hail to your Lordship.
14	Horatio reports seeing ghost, and Hamlet decides to seek encounter with it	1.2.189	1.2.257	68	11-13	*Hor.* My Lord I thinke…
15	Laertes warns Ophelia to guard her virtue in her relationship with Hamlet	1.3.1	1.3.51	51	13-14	*Laer.* My necessaries are…
16	Polonius gives detailed fatherly advice to departing Laertes	1.3.52	1.3.87	36	14	*Laer.* O feare me not,
17	Polonius warns Ophelia not to believe in Hamlet's love though it seems true	1.3.88	1.3.136	49	15-17	*Polon.* What is't Ophelia…
18	Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus meet on ramparts / note King's celebrations	1.4.1	1.4.16	16	17	*Ham.* The ayre bites…
19	Hamlet comments on "vicious mole of nature" (tragic flaw) - Unique to Q2 text	1.4.17	1.4.38	22	17-18	*Ham.* This heavy headed…
20	Ghost appears - Hamlet asks if it brings "ayers from heaven or blasts from hell"	1.4.39	1.4.57	19	18	*Hor.* Looke my Lord…
21	Hamlet follows Ghost overruling Horatio and Marcellus objections/concerns	1.4.58	1.4.92	35	18-19	*Hor.* It beckins you…
22	Ghost tells Hamlet that his death was murder, and demands revenge	1.5.1	1.5.28	28	19-20	*Ham.* Whither wilt thou…
23	Hamlet agrees to "sweepe to my revenge" - Ghost names King Claudius	1.5.29	1.5.41	13	20	*Ham.* Hast me to know't,
24	Ghost describes Queen's seduction, King's murder, let heaven deal with Queen	1.5.42	1.5.91	50	21	*Ghost* Ay that incestuous…
25	Hamlet recognizes sin of revenge ("shall I couple hell") and Queen's weakness	1.5.92	1.5.112	21	22	*Ham.* O all you host…
26	Hamlet assumes it is an "honest Ghost," swears Horatio & Marcellus to secrecy	1.5.113	1.5.164	52	22	*Hor.* My Lord, my Lord.
27	Hamlet advises Hor. and Mar. that he may adopt an "anticke disposition"	1.5.165	1.5.181	17	24	*Ham.* And therefore…
28	Hamlet laments responsibility: "time is out of joint…I was born to set it right."	1.5.182	1.5.190	9	24-25	*Ham.* Rest, rest…
29	Polonius instructs Renaldo to spy on Laertes in France	2.1.1	2.1.71	71	25-27	*Polon.* Give him…
30	Ophelia tells Polonius that Hamlet is deeply distracted	2.1.72	2.1.97	26	27	*Polon.* Farewell. How now…
31	Polonius concludes that denied access to Ophelia "hath made him mad."	2.1.98	2.1.116	19	28	*Polon.* Come, goe with me…
32	Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are recruited by King to spy on Hamlet	2.2.1	2.2.39	39	28-29	*King.* Welcome dear…
33	Polonius reports return of Ambassadors / and, theory of "Hamlet's lunicie"	2.2.40	2.2.55	16	29-30	*Polon.* Th' Ambassadors…
34	Queen advises that cause might be father's death and their hasty marriage	2.2.56	2.2.57	2	30	*Qu.* I doubt it is no…
35	Ambassador advises that Fortinbras is diverted to Poland, threat is past	2.2.58	2.2.85	28	30	*King.* Well, we shall…
36	Gertrude reprimands Polonius for pompous rhetoric	2.2.86	2.2.100	15	31	*Polon.* My Liege…
37	Polonius shares Hamlet's letter, states that love has caused Hamlet's madness	2.2.101	2.2.155	55	31-32	*Polon.* Mad let us grant…
38	Polonius suggests plan to spy on Ophelia and Hamlet (see note on Q1 text)	2.2.156	2.2.167	12	32-33	*Polon.* Take this…
39	Polonius encounters Hamlet's wit and concludes "there is method in't."	2.2.168	2.2.217	50	33-37	*Qu.* But looke where…
40	Hamlet deftly finds that Rosincrantz & Guildenstern were sent for by King	2.2.218	2.2.312	95	37-39	*Polon.* Fare you well…
41	Rosincrantz & Guildenstern advise they have seen players approaching castle	2.2.313	2.2.368	56	39-40	*Ham.* Why did yee laugh…
42	Hamlet tells R&G he is only sometimes mad, he knows a hawk from a hand saw	2.2.369	2.2.379	11	40	*Guyl.* There are the players.
43	Players arrive - Hamlet banters and requests play (Fortune mentioned)	2.2.380	2.2.548	69	40-43	*Polon.* Well be with you…
44	Hamlet (soliloquy) Is he pidgion livered or is Ghost the devil? The play will tell.	2.2.549	2.2.605	57	44-45	*Ham.* …now I am alone…
45	Rosencrantz reports Hamlet's "crafty madness" to the King	3.1.1	3.1.14	14	45-46	*King* And can you…
46	Rosin. advises of players / Polon. advises of performance / King is content	3.1.15	3.1.28	14	46	*Qu.* Did you assay him…
47	King and Polonius to spy on Ophelia and Hamlet / King reveals conscience	3.1.29	3.1.54	26	46-47	*King* Sweet Gertrude…
48	Hamlet *To be* soliloquy - suffer or take arms - suicide - resolution vs. thought	3.1.55	3.1.87	33	47-48	*Ham.* To be or not to be…
49	Ophelia returns Hamlet's gifts / Hamlet turns on her "Get thee to a nunnery."	3.1.88	3.1.127	42	48-49	*Ham.* Soft you now…
50	Ophelia: (her father) "At home" / Hamlet completes tirade, "...to a nunnery go"	3.1.128	3.1.149	20	49	*Ham.* Where's your father?
51	Ophelia laments that all of Hamlet's great qualities are "quite quite downe"	3.1.150	3.1.161	12	49	*Ophe.* Oh what a noble…
52	King notes that Hamlet's melancholy is a danger, Hamlet will go to England	3.1.162	3.1.176	15	50	*King* Love, his affections…
53	Polonius suggests that Queen meet with Hamlet and that Polonius spy	3.1.177	3.1.189	13	50	*Polon.* But yet do I…
54	Hamlet lectures players, perhaps mocking certain contemporary players	3.2.1	3.2.45	45	50-51	*Ham.* Speak the speech…
55	Hamlet tells Horatio that play will reflect murder scene, and to observe King	3.2.46	3.2.89	44	51-52	*Polon.* How now my Lord…
56	Polonius notes that he had acted *Julius Caesar* and was killed by Brutus	3.2.90	3.2.109	20	52-53	*Ham.* They are coming…
57	Hamlet makes lewd comments to Ophelia, mocks Queen's hasty remarriage	3.2.110	3.2.135	26	53	*Ham.* No, good mother…
58	Hamlet deflects Ophelia's questions with banter during Prologue of play	3.2.136	3.2.154	19	54	*Ophe.* What means this…
59	Player Queen swears that she would never re-marry	3.2.155	3.2.228	74	54-56	*P. King* Full thirtie times…
60	Hamlet describes play, identifies murderer as Nephew to the player *King*	3.2.229	3.2.244	16	56	*Ham.* Madam, how like…
61	Hamlet explains player's action of poisoning King and getting the Queen's love	3.2.245	3.2.264	20	56-57	*Ophe.* You are as good…
62	King storms out of the play in anger.	3.2.265	3.2.270	6	57	*Ophe.* The King rises.
63	Hamlet tells Horatio that King' reaction to poisoning confirms his guilt	3.2.271	3.2.295	25	57-58	*Ham.* Why let the…
64	Guildenstern (after some banter) advises that Queen desires to see Hamlet	3.2.296	3.2.333	38	58	*Guild.* Good my Lord…
65	Hamlet notes lack of advancement when questioned by Rosencrantz	3.2.334	3.2.342	9	58-59	*Ham.* Have you any…
66	Hamlet notes that R&G are trying to play him like a pipe	3.2.343	3.2.373	31	59	*Ham.* Sir, but while…
67	Hamlet (after banter with Polonius) plans to "speak daggers...but use none"	3.2.374	3.2.399	26	59-60	*Polon.* My Lord, the Queen..
68	King notes Hamlet's madness is a hazard, Hamlet will be sent to England	3.3.1	3.3.26	26	60-61	*King* I like him not…
69	Polonius recounts plan to spy on Hamlet's meeting with Queen and to report	3.3.27	3.3.35	9	61	*Polon.* My Lord, he's going…
70	King, at prayer, acknowledges guilt, but still has "Crown and...Queen"	3.3.36	3.3.72	37	61-62	*King* Oh my offense is rank
71	Hamlet does not kill King at prayer, King struggles with conscience	3.3.73	3.3.98	26	62-63	*Ham.* Now I might do it…
72	Polonius tells Queen that Hamlet is coming (Polonius will hide)	3.4.1	3.4.7	7	63	*Polon.* He will come…
73	Hamlet is harsh / Queen cries out / Hamlet kills Polonius thinking it is King	3.4.8	3.4.26	19	63	*Ham.* Now mother what's…
74	Hamlet lectures Queen on choice of King, comparing him with old King	3.4.27	3.4.88	62	64-65	*Qu.* Oh what a rash…
75	Gertrude begs Hamlet to speak no more, Hamlet continues to pour it on	3.4.89	3.4.102	14	65-66	*Qu.* Oh Hamlet…
76	Ghost intervenes, reminds Hamlet of purpose, tells him to soothe Queen	3.4.103	3.4.114	12	66	*Ham.* A King of shreds…
77	Queen cannot see Ghost, belives it is "the flame of thy distemper"	3.4.115	3.4.137	23	66-67	*Ham.* How is it…
78	Hamlet chides Gerdtude but in a less antagonizing manner	3.4.138	3.4.198	61	67-68	*Qu.* This is the very…
79	Hamlet to England soon / distrust of R&G (Q2 only), removes Polonius	3.4.199	3.4.217	19	68-69	*Ham.* I must to…
80	King is suspicious, Queen reports madness and slaying of Polonius	4.1.1	4.1.12	12	69	*King* There's matter…
81	King notes danger of Hamlet's liberty and madness	4.1.13	4.1.31	19	69-70	*King* Oh heavy deed…
82	King tells R&G to retrieve Polonius body, admits "discord and dismay"	4.1.32	4.1.45	14	70	*King* Ho Guildenstern…
83	Hamlet refuses to divulge location of body, insults R&G, proceeds to King	4.2.1	4.2.30	30	70-71	*Ham.* Safely stowed…
84	King notes that Hamlet is dangerous yet popular, and he must be dealt with	4.3.1	4.3.11	11	71	*King* I have sent…
85	King seeks body of Polonius. Hamlet banters and refuses to disclose	4.3.12	4.3.39	28	71-72	*King* How now…
86	King announces Hamlet's departure for England, banter including "purposes"	4.3.40	4.3.52	13	72	*King* *Hamlet*, this…
87	King (in soliloquy) will not be happy until the"present death of Hamlet"	4.3.53	4.3.68	16	72-73	*King* Follow him…
88	Fortinbras announces permitted march across territory of Denmark	4.4.1	4.4.8	8	73	*For.* Go, Captain…
89	Hamlet laments sacrifice of thousands of soldiers for a straw (Q2 text only)	4.4.9	4.4.31	22	73	*Ham.* Good sir…
90	Hamlet (in soliloquy) laments "thinking too precisely" about revenge	4.4.32	4.4.41	10	73-74	*Ham.* How all occasions…
91	Hamlet (continuing) cites example of great sacrifice for nothing but "honor"	4.4.42	4.4.66	25	74	*Ham.* A thought which…
92	Queen discovers that Ophelia has gone mad	4.5.1	4.5.36	36	74-75	*Qu.* I will not…
93	King sees Ophelia's madness, including Ophelia's "my brother shall know"	4.5.37	4.5.73	37	75-76	*Qu.* Alas, look…
94	King notes that Laertes has returned in secret from France	4.5.74	4.5.96	23	76-77	*King* Follow her…
95	Messenger reports rebellion with clamor for Laertes to be King	4.5.97	4.5.111	15	77	*King* Where are my…
96	Laertes bursts in, but King is fearless and siezes control of conversation	4.5.112	4.5.125	14	77-78	*King* The doors are…
97	King assures Laertes that he is guiltless in death of Polonius	4.5.126	4.5.153	28	78	*King* ...Tell me Laertes…
98	Laertes comprehends Ophelia's mad scene	4.5.154	4.5.202	49	78-79	*Laer.* Let her come in…
99	King and Laertes plan Polonius funeral, hints that Laertes will have "due content"	4.5.203	4.5.220	18	79-80	*King* *Laertes*, I must…
100	Horatio receives letter from Hamlet, Hamlet is well, and has letters for King	4.6.1	4.6.34	34	80-81	*Hora.* What are they…
101	King tells Laertes that they both have both been wronged by Hamlet	4.7.1	4.7.35	35	81-82	*King* Now must…
102	King and Laertes learn of Hamlet's safe return	4.7.36	4.7.53	18	82	*Mes.* Letters my Lord…
103	Laertes welcomes chance to have revenge on Hamlet	4.7.54	4.7.61	8	82	*Laer.* I'm lost in it…
104	King tells Laertes that plan will seem to be an accident even to Hamlet's mother	4.7.62	4.7.67	6	82-83	*King* To thine own …
105	Laertes requests to be "the organ" of Hamlet's death (Q2 text only)	4.7.68	4.7.70	3	83	*Laer.* My Lord…
106	King tells Laertes of Hamlet's envy of his swordsmanship	4.7.71	4.7.107	37	83-84	*King* You have been…
107	King confirms determination of Laertes	4.7.108	4.7.133	26	84	*King* Laertes, was ...
108	Laertes adds the idea of poisoning the sword	4.7.134	4.7.147	24	84-85	*King* And wager…
109	King further adds idea of poisoning the drink	4.7.148	4.7.162	15	85	*King* Let's further…
110	Queen announces that Ophelia has drowned	4.7.163	4.7.184	22	85-86	*Queen* One woe…
111	Laertes departs, his anger compounded by Ophelia's death	4.7.185	4.7.195	11	86	*Laer.* Too much…
112	Clowns debate the circumstances of Ophelia's death (suicide or not)	5.1.1	5.1.28	28	86-87	*Clown* Is she to…
113	Clowns tell riddles to one another and sing while digging grave	5.1.29	5.1.64	36	87	*Clown* …come my…
114	Hamlet banters with Clowns and speculates about skulls	5.1.65	5.1.117	53	88-89	*Ham.* Has this…
115	Hamlet asks who grave is for, Clowns do not answer except by banter	5.1.118	5.1.141	24	89	*Ham.* …whose grave…
116	Clown reveals awareness of Hamlet's madness and his age (younger in Q1)	5.1.142	5.1.162	21	89	*Ham.* …How long…
117	Hamlet and Clown discuss how long it takes a body to rot	5.1.163	5.1.178	16	90	*Ham.* How long…
118	Clown identifies skull of Yorick, and Hamlet comments upon it	5.1.179	5.1.194	15	90	*Clown* A pestilance…
119	Hamlet speculates on death's lack of descrimination	5.1.195	5.1.218	24	90-91	*Ham.* …Prethee…
120	Hamlet comments on limited rites of approaching funeral procession (suicide?)	5.1.217	5.1.222	6	91	*Ham.* But soft…
121	Laertes challenges burial rites, Priest mentions questionable circumstance of death	5.1.223	5.1.237	15	91	*Laer.* What ceremony…
122	Laertes identifies Ophelia, Queen states Ophelia should have been Hamlet's wife	5.1.238	5.1.245	8	91	*Laer.* Lay her…
123	Laertes curses Hamlet, Hamlet reveals himself, and they struggle	5.1.246	5.1.265	20	91-92	*Laer.* Oh, treble…
124	Hamlet declares the extent of his love for Ophelia	5.1.266	5.1.284	19	92-93	*Ham.* Why, I…
125	Hamlet and Laertes are separated, Hamlet and Horatio exit, King gives orders	5.1.285	5.1.299	15	93	*Queen* This is…
126	Hamlet recognizes "Divinity that shapes our ends"	5.2.1	5.2.12	12	93	*Ham.* So much…
127	Hamlet describes discovery of death commission and his substitute letter	5.2.13	5.2.47	35	93-94	*Ham.* Up from…
128	Hamlet recognizes that heaven was ordinant even in seal of substitute letter	5.2.48	5.2.55	8	94-95	*Hor.* How was…
129	Hamlet does not lament R&G, Hamlet then turns attention to King	5.2.56	5.2.67	12	95	*Hor.* So…
130	Hamlet states he will be "damn'd" if he lets King live, regrets anger at Laertes (F)	5.2.68	5.2.80	13	95	*Ham.* …To quit…
131	Osrick says that King has wagered on Hamlet in a fencing match with Laertes	5.2.81	5.2.152	72	95-96	*Osr.* Your Lordship…
132	Hamlet accepts challenge, and Hamlet and Horatio mock Osrick	5.2.153	5.2.194	42	96-97	*Ham.* What call…
133	Lord conveys Queen's request to make peace with Laertes (Q2 text only)	5.2.195	5.2.208	14	97-98	*Lord* My Lord…
134	Hamlet's final strategy comes into focus, "The readiness is all"	5.2.209	5.2.224	16	98	*Hor.* You will…
135	Hamlet seeks peace with Laertes, Laertes offers qualified acceptance	5.2.225	5.2.266	42	98-99	*King* Come Hamlet…
136	King is festive, bout begins, Hamlet scores first "Palpable hit"	5.2.267	5.2.282	16	99-100	*King* Set me…
137	King offers (unsuccessfully) Hamlet the poisoned cup (Please see note on Q1 text)	5.2.283	5.2.287	5	100	*King* Stay…
138	Queen drinks from poisoned cup	5.2.288	5.2.292	5	100	*Queen* The Queen…
139	Laertes expresses that "It is almost against my conscience"	5.2.293	5.2.296	4	100	Laer. My Lord…
140	They continue, then scuffle exchanging rapiers	5.2.297	5.2.303	7	100	*Ham.* Come for…
141	Laertes and Hamlet are wounded, Laertes confesses "trechery"	5.2.304	5.2.307	4	100-101	*Hora.* They bleed…
142	Queen cries she is poisoned, Hamlet commands doors locked to seek treachery	5.2.308	5.2.312	5	101	*Ham.* How does…
143	Laertes confesses his part in King's plot	5.2.313	5.2.320	8	101	*Laer.* It is here…
144	Hamlet stabs King with poisoned sword, forces King to drink from poisoned cup	5.2.321	5.2.326	6	101	*Ham.* The point…
145	Hamlet and Laertes exchange forgiveness, Hamlet tells Horatio to report events	5.2.327	5.2.339	13	101	*Laer.* He is…
146	Horatio intends to die with Hamlet. Hamlet orders him to "Tell my story"	5.2.340	5.2.349	10	101-102	*Hor.* Never believe…
147	Hamlet offers dying voice in favor of Fortinbras, Horatio pays tribute to Hamlet	5.2.350	5.2.367	18	102	*Osr.* Young…
148	Ambassador tells of R&G deaths. Horatio says that command was not Hamlet's	5.2.368	5.2.374	7	102	*Amb.* The sight…
149	Horatio offers to explain how trechery has "falne on th'inventors heads"	5.2.375	5.2.386	12	102-103	Hor. But since…
150	Fortinbras claims "rights" in Denmark, orders memorial to Hamlet	5.2.387	5.2.403	17	103	Fortin. Let us…

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*F = Fortinbrasse, Clo = Clown,
(F) = Ref. to Fortinbrasse

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