

Summarizer - Adamina Campbell

The first act and scene of Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*, introduces the audience to a few motifs: uncertainty and filial piety. First, there is a changing of the guards at midnight, the ghost of King Hamlet appears, and the guards discuss its importance. Then, a guard is joined by his replacement at midnight, followed by 2 more guards. They chat briefly about an apparition that appeared the night before. Next, as they discuss this, the apparition appears before them, and they agree it is the late King Hamlet, dressed in armour. The fact that he is dressed in armour foreshadows that there is a battle ahead, but it's unclear if it is a moral battle or physical one. They attempt to speak to the King, but he disappears just before the crack of dawn, making them determine that the ghost may be an unholy spirit: "It faded on the crowing of the cock. / Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes / Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated, / The bird of dawning singeth all night long: / The nights are wholesome: then no planets strike, / No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm, / So hallow'd and so gracious is the time" (1.1.157-164). Its reason for appearing is unknown, and they agree to inform the young Hamlet. This sets the audience up to feel uncertain about Denmark's fate and to recognize Hamlet's duty as the king's divine son and heir to the throne.

Characterization – Emila Suska

At the end of the scene, Horatio and Marcellus discuss bringing the information they learned from the ghost that night to Hamlet, rather than informing the king. This shows how they value and trust Hamlet more, "Let us impart what we have seen to-night/Unto young Hamlet... / This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him"(1.1.169-171). The fact that the spirit is "dumb to" them may suggest that they are not worthy to hear his words, since they are mortal beings. Hamlet, as heir to the throne, is divine and worthy to hear the late king speak. This introduces the audience to Hamlet's noble nature.

The ghost, King Hamlet, is known as a great warrior, putting pressure for Prince Hamlet to live up to the same expectations.

Style. James Tilgner

Foreshadowing: " So nightly toils the subject of the land, and why such daily cast the brazen cannon, and foreing mart for implements of war: Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task does not divide the Sunday from the week." (1.1.72-76) This is foreshadowing, the quote foreshadows the **coming of great conflict** by describing how the people of Denmark work day in and day out to prepare for war. This creates a very foreboding theme, hinting at very important things to come. This could also be a representation of the Danish identity, and the **loyalty** that the people have, including the guards such as Horatio and Marcellus, to the late King Hamlet and the Danish conflict against Norway. (foreshadows how loyalty leads to conflict)

Allusion: "A little ere the mightiest Julius fell, the graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets: As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood," (1.1.114-117). This is alluding to events in the play *Julius Caesar* where nature foreshadows Caesar's death because his murder goes against the natural chain of being. It is

also a warning of how the world will become unnatural if the natural order of the world is disrupted. The natural chain of being is an important part of identity as it represents much of who the characters are and without it the story would be very different. For instance, The new King Claudius is a usurper, breaking the chain of being, and part of the young prince's identity is his struggle in restoring the natural chain of being.

Connector(Alex Newell):

In Shakespeare's time when Hamlet was written people assumed ghosts to be non fictional characters unlike today where they are believed to be fictional. According to Alessandra Mirable "In the Middle Ages a popular belief was that the ghosts of criminals, suicides, or murdered persons, walked the earth after death, that they sometimes entered into" contact "with the living, that they appeared at midnight and faded" when the sun rose. In act 1 scene 1 of Hamlet Bernardo says, " Looks it not like the king? Mark it, Horatio" as a ghost appears in front of him. In this quote it is evident that since King Hamlet was murdered it would have been believed in the middle ages that King Hamlet would still be roaming the Earth. The fact that King Hamlet waits to speak with Hamlet and then directs him to seek revenge, reminds the audience that it is Hamlet's divine destiny and duty to avenge his father so that he can be at rest. This duty plays a major part in forming Hamlet's identity throughout the play.