

What Type of Man/King/Husband/Father King Hamlet was

<u>AS A KING</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dressed in military garb, the ghost of King Hamlet appears several times throughout the play. It first appears to the soldiers on night watch with a grave, silent face. It then appears to Hamlet and tells him of the foul murder while it suffers through purgatory. It appears for a final time in Gertrude’s chamber in order to warn Hamlet to leave God to punish her. As King, Hamlet was a just leader who fought back a military conquest by Fortinbras of Norway. ▪ The king was known as a noble warrior. In Act I, Scene i, Lines 79-107, Horatio reveals the warrior yet noble side of King Hamlet. He was clearly a brave king since he single-handedly defeated Fortinbras of Norway and conquered the lands of Norway. ▪ His son’s friend and fellow student, Horatio, presents King Hamlet as a loyal and victorious man. He was so well known for his triumphant nature that even his ghost appears as though it is still in armor, ready to fight. Horatio is one of the first to see the ghost and in-turn, tells Hamlet of his father’s appearance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Such was the very armor he had on / When he the ambitious Norway combated” (Act I, i, 60-61) ➤ “A figure like your father / Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe (head to toe)” (Act I, ii, 199-200) ▪ The king was widely accepted and revered for his bravery and nobility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “For so this side of our known world esteemed him” (Act I, i, 85) ▪ In addition, there are numerous times when Horatio acknowledges the King’s devotion and valor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “valiant Hamlet” (Act I, i, 84) ➤ “goodly king” (Act I, ii, 186) ▪ At the King’s death, Hamlet immediately begins to not only condemn King Claudius, but also praise the greatness of his past father. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “So excellent a king, that was to this / Hyperion to a satyr” (Act I, ii, 139-140) <p>While Hamlet’s father is a “Hyperion,” a sun-god, King Claudius is another kind of mythical creature, a “satyr,” an oversexed half-goat.</p> ▪ Even when accusing his mother of adultery, Hamlet continuously mentions the superiority of his father versus his uncle. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “See what a grace was seated on this brow: / Hyperion’s curls, the front of Jove himself, / An eye like Mars, to threaten and command, / A station like the herald Mercury / New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill” (Act III, iv, 56-60) <p>(This can also be considered as the type of husband King Hamlet was to Gertrude.)</p>
<u>AS A FATHER</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The fact that Hamlet is ready and willing to give up his own life and the life of others shows that King Hamlet had to be a good father for Hamlet to even consider suicide and homicide. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “O, that this too too solid flesh would melt / Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!” (Act I, ii, 129-130) <p>Here, Hamlet wishes that God did not have a rule against suicide.</p>

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<p><u>AS A BROTHER</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ For Claudius to have killed his brother, there had to be something that King Hamlet possessed that made Claudius jealous, and thus, murderous. King Hamlet has shown to be a brave, valiant man that many revered. He was able to complete tasks on his own. On the other hand, Claudius is shown to be a roundabout person – never completing his deeds on his own, but rather, using someone else to do it for him. This is evident when he asks Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to spy on Hamlet and when he uses Laertes to poison Hamlet. Consequently, Claudius envied his brother’s position and murdered him.
<p><u>AS A HUSBAND</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Ghost in Act I denounces Gertrude adulterous behavior, but still emphasizes that Hamlet should not do anything to his mother that would hurt her, even think bad thoughts about her. Her punishment is left in God’s hands. This shows that as much anger King Hamlet feels, there is no amount of anger that can surmount his love for his wife. Although she betrayed him, he still loves her and does not want anything to happen to her.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ “Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive / Against thy mother aught.” (Act I, v, 85-86)▪ As told by Hamlet, his father was a supportive and loving husband.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ “So loving to my mother / That he might not beteem the winds of heaven/ visit her face too roughly.” (Act I, ii, 140-142)

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HOW KING HAMLET AND HIS DEATH AFFECTS THE PLAY

- Without King Hamlet's death, there would be no need for revenge and death. In addition, without the appearance of the Ghost, Hamlet would never find out that Claudius is his father's killer. Instead, he would sit in fury over his mother's marriage to his uncle.
- The theme of revenge and death would be relatively weak and most likely, non-existent.
- The play's first act begins with the ghost's appearance, foreshadowing the destruction of Denmark.
 - "This bodes some strange eruption to our state." (Act I, i, 69)
 - "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark." (Act I, iv, 90)

King Hamlet's death reveals not only the development of his character, but also the development of other characters in the play.

<u>KING CLAUDIUS</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ King Claudius does not mention King Hamlet's name often throughout the play. This may be because he does not care for his brother or his death. On the other hand, he may want to forget about the incident and may want others to forget as well.▪ King Hamlet's death reveals and adds to the two character traits Claudius possesses: jealousy and deviousness.<ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) Jealousy – if he was not a jealous man, he would not murder his brother to attain the throne.(2) Deviousness – King Claudius wants Hamlet to quickly forget his father's death and wants to move on.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ "Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death / The memory be green" (Act I, ii, 1-2)▪ Though he is jealous and devious, there is still a side of him that feels guilt and remorse for his brother's murder. King Hamlet's death reveals a different side of Claudius.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ "My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent" (Act III, iii, 40)
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<p style="text-align: center;"><u>GERTRUDE</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Gertrude also does not mention the name of her past husband as much in the play. There may be several reasons why she does not speak of her husband's death.<ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) She may wish to forget about the past and wants to move on with her life.(2) By not speaking of her husband, she reveals that she is a weak character and does not possess the power to form an opinion. The audience may simply not care for her opinion because she is a woman.▪ The only time Gertrude feels remorse for her husband's death is when Hamlet and Gertrude have a confrontation and Hamlet demands his mother not to sleep with his uncle.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ "Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul / And there I see such black and grained spots" (Act III, iv, 90-91)This is the only time she feels guilt for her marriage to her husband's brother. However, her guilt is only expressed when Hamlet confronts her. She instantly sides with his opinion, just as she previously did with Claudius. Consequently, she is shown to be a weak character, unable to form opinions on her own.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>PRINCE HAMLET</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Clearly, King Hamlet's death shows and proves Hamlet's love and loyalty for his father. In addition, it also shows the lengths Hamlet is willing to go to avenge his father's death and murder by his hated uncle, even if that means changing his character. For example, while badgering Gertrude of committing adultery, he seems as though he is going insane since he sees images of his father. He is willing to take on a new position to complete his task.