Genealogy / Character Mapping

**Hamlet, Prince of Denmark**

- Old Hamlet
  - Gertrude
  - Claudius
  - Polonius
  - Ophelia
  - Laertes

**Hamlet**
- The title character, Prince of Denmark, protagonist, son of old Hamlet and Queen Gertrude, nephew of present King Claudius. Hamlet is bitter and cynical at the outset of the play, contrary to his Renaissance Christian Humanist beliefs, disgusted with his uncle's schemings and his mother's hasty marriage. Trained to be both a scholar and king at the University of Wittenburg, Hamlet uses the disguise of madness and the purpose of a "scoffing and minister" to avenge his father's most foul and unnatural murder.

**Gertrude**
- Queen of Denmark, Hamlet's mother, recently married to Claudius at the outset of the play. Characterized as a shallow, weak woman seeking affection and status more than the happiness of her son.

**Claudius**
- King of Denmark, Hamlet's uncle, and the play's antagonist. Claudius is a scheming politician (an apparent better ruler than his brother) driven by lust, power, and ambition (a true Machiavellian) he turns to murder.

**Polonius**
- Lord Chamberlain of Claudius' court, father of Laertes and Ophelia. Companion in the King's schemes of disposing of Hamlet, often using his daughter as bait.

**Ophelia**
- Polonius' daughter, sister to Laertes. Ophelia is a sweet innocent girl, contrary to Hamlet's get thee to a nunnery speech. She is the chaste object of Hamlet's affections, but is torn between obeying her father and brother and following her love. She is eventually driven to madness by the machinations of Hamlet and her father, resulting in her drowning.

**Laetres**
- Polonius' son and Ophelia's brother, a student in France who advises his sister to beware of the advances of Hamlet. Passionate and quick to action, Laertes avenges his father's death by baiting him with an envenomed sword, but also falls prey to the poison.