



Glenda Jackson
& Ian McKellan
as King Lear



Paapa Essiedu
& Maxine Peake
as Hamlet



Shabnam Saraf
& Sian Brooke
as Ophelia



Mark Rylance
& Helena Bonham Carter
as Olivia



King Lear

The aging king of Britain and the protagonist of the play. Lear is used to enjoying absolute power and to being flattered, and he does not respond well to being contradicted or challenged. At the beginning of the play, his values are notably hollow—he prioritizes the appearance of love over actual devotion and wishes to maintain the power of a king while unburdening himself of the responsibility.

Hamlet

The Prince of Denmark, the title character, and the protagonist. Hamlet is the nephew of the present king, Claudius. Hamlet is melancholy, bitter, and cynical, full of hatred for his uncle's scheming and disgust for his mother's sexuality. A reflective and thoughtful young man who has studied at the University of Wittenberg, Hamlet is often indecisive and hesitant, but at other times prone to rash and impulsive acts.

Ophelia

The daughter of the Danish King's chief advisor and Hamlet's ex-girlfriend. Ophelia is a virtuous, polite and innocent young woman, who is used very badly by the men in her life as they plot against one another. Ophelia has no real control over her own life, and as the action of the play continues she loses her mind, which is demonstrated by her acting in an 'un-ladylike' fashion.

Olivia

A beautiful countess who is in charge of her own household, but who is seen as an object of desire by many men throughout the play Twelfth Night. For the majority of the story, she is in mourning for the death of her brother and so wears black and refuses the company of men. However, she falls head over heels in love and at the end of the play marries a man that she has barely even met.