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Lies in *Hamlet*

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Shakespeare's *Hamlet* begins with the scene that suggests a gloomy atmosphere filled with suspicion in the Danish court. This atmosphere is heightened when the ghost appears and tells Hamlet that he is his father murdered by Claudius, the present king. In the situation where Hamlet cannot be sure of what is true and what is not, he then decides to deceive others through means of feigned madness to find out the truth of his father's death. In this process, Claudius also compounds lies to conceal his "foul murder."

The two main characters, Hamlet and Claudius, in particular thus deceive each other by means of lies. A lie can be defined as "an intentionally deceptive message in the form of a statement" as Sissela Bok states. It is impossible to know one's true intention unless he/she reveals his/her mind. The deceivers' soliloquies and asides then make it possible for the audience to know their intentions to deceive others in the play. By making the most of the lies with the functional aid of their soliloquies and asides, Shakespeare gives each character wider range of personality, sets the truth against the lies, and diversifies the play.