

To Be or Not To Be -- Mini FF Branch

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Cover Blurb

Part story, part game, this is a tiny Hamlet-themed dungeon where YOU are the hero. Down in a torchlit keep under Elsinore, you will face traps, ghosts, and poisoned foils. Two dice, a pencil, and an eraser are all you need; luck and nerve will do the rest.

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How to Fight in Elsinore

Roll 1 die + 6 for SKILL, 2 dice + 12 for STAMINA, 1 die + 6 for LUCK. Record them.

Combat Round:

- 1) Roll 2d6 + SKILL for each side; higher total wounds the other for 2 STAMINA.
- 2) Ties mean no damage.
- 3) You may Test your Luck after wounding to add +2 damage if Lucky, or -1 damage if Unlucky. After being wounded you may Test your Luck to reduce damage to 1 if Lucky, or increase to 3 if Unlucky.

Each Luck test reduces LUCK by 1. You cannot flee unless the text allows it.

Equipment and Potions

You start with: sword, leather jerkin, backpack with 6 Provisions (restore 4 STAMINA each, not in combat), and one potion of your choice: Skill, Strength, or Fortune (+1 Initial LUCK and restores current LUCK). Each potion can be used once.

Hints on Play

There is only one clean path to survive. Map as you go; numbers are sections, not pages. Read only the sections you are sent to. Keep initial scores as maxima unless told otherwise. This mini-book is intentionally short for smoke testing--expect quick deaths.

Background

Baron Claudius now rules Elsinore. A ghost claims murder; a duel is rigged; poison waits on every table. You enter the underkeep with a violet scarf and a blade, sworn to uncover the truth and live through the night. Five other contenders stalk the corridors, but only one will see dawn. Will it be you?

Section 1

You wake in Elsinore before dawn. A salty fog coils along the ramparts; something is wrong and you know it.

If you **draw your cloak tight and head for the battlements**, turn to ****2****.

If you **sneak to your mother's chambers to demand answers**, turn to ****3****.

Section 2

Up on the wall, a ghostly figure wearing your father's crown beckons. Horatio trembles beside you.

If you **follow the ghost to the tower stair**, turn to ****4****.

If you **tell Horatio to fetch guards instead**, turn to ****5****.

Section 3

Your mother, Queen Gertrude, startles as you enter. Claudius slips out a side door, smelling of wine.

If you **challenge Claudius now**, turn to ****6****.

If you **pretend nothing is wrong and pour wine**, turn to ****7****.

Section 4

The ghost whispers: "Murdered by my brother; avenge me." The words freeze in your bones.

If you **swear revenge immediately**, turn to ****8****.

If you **ask for proof instead of oaths**, turn to ****5****.

Section 5

By the time the guards arrive, the ghost has faded. They only see your shaking hands. You gain witnesses, but lose certainty.

If you **investigate Claudius quietly**, turn to ****7****.

If you **rush to the chapel to catch him alone**, turn to ****6****.

Section 6

Steel flashes. Claudius staggers, shocked. You feel a brief, guilty triumph -- then horns blare outside. Norway's army was here for treaties, not war; now you have made one.

Your story ends in blood and politics. ****THE END****.

Section 7

You trade polite nothing-talk and wine. Claudius smiles too wide. He invites you to fence Laertes tomorrow. You sense a trap but play along to buy time.

If you **swap the practice foils for blunted ones tonight**, turn to **8**.

If you **accept the match as-is**, turn to **6**.

Section 8

You act with cold preparation: blunted foils, hidden antidote, trusted Horatio briefed. When the poisoned tip appears, you switch blades; Claudius is pricked by his own scheme. Gertrude overturns the poisoned cup.

Denmark stumbles toward a quieter dawn. **YOU SURVIVE**.