
Revenge in Hamlet By Shakespeare

Introduction

A man who desires revenge should dig two graves, one for himself and for the person the he is seeking vengeance from. William Shakespear introduced revenge throughout the play and well defined it as someone pursuing revenge is looking to fight back for a wrong that has been done. In Hamlet, the act of revenge causes many great conflicts and leads to the downfall of the important characters such as Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, Laertes, son of Polonius, and the rise of Fortinbras, Prince of Norway. William Shakespeare uses revenge most often and it runs throughout the play which makes it one of the main themes in Hamlet.

The Hamlet's Revenge

There are three revenge plots which are related in the most mesmerizing manners, all the three characters seek revenge for their slain fathers. Hamlet is very overwhelmed by the ghost and seeks to take the revenge of the King Hamlet from his uncle, Claudius. The prince of Norway is very frustrated after the murder of his father by Hamlet, the king of Denmark, and ready to take the revenge of his father. Also, the final act involves the brave Laertes, to kill Hamlet and take the revenge of Polonius.

Therefore, in the play, revenge has played a vital role as it motivated the characters to seek for more power, kill their close friends and family members, and also led to tragedy. Although, after the death of King Hamlet, Prince Hamlet did not consider any payback, until the appearance of the ghost. At the same time, he is overwhelmed and debates on if he should believe in the ghost because it might be a devil. Thus, he decides to find out and evaluate the truth of the ghost. "Revenge his foul and most unnatural Murder" (1.5.25). Following the quote stated, the ghost informs Hamlet about his father's death and the crime, but Hamlet still doesn't know who killed his father.

As Hamlet realizes that King Claudius murdered his father, he is uncertain to kill him. He says that, "Now might I do it pat, now he is praying; and now I'll do't. and so he goes to heaven; and so am I revenged. That would be scann'd: a villain kills my father; and for that, I, his sole son, do this same villain send to heaven" (3.3.74). In this part of the play, the prince is contemplating if it is the right time and moment to kill King Claudius, since he is praying and could go to heaven. This fact also proves that revenge is complicated and not easily achievable, and also leads Hamlet to some emotional and psychological states where he goes through a depression. The remarriage of his mother and that Claudius became the new king of Denmark makes Hamlet's more depressed and forces him to avenge as soon as he can. King Claudius also abuses the power and wants to remove Hamlet from the picture entirely, which leads to the downfall of the kingdom.

Hamlet gets to a point where he decides to take action after convincing his mother that King Claudius is guilty. This is the turning point of the play where Hamlet is the cause of Ophelia's and Polonius's death, stabs Claudius with a poisoned sword, and forces him to drink poisoned wine in Ophelia's funeral. King Claudius asks for help; "O, yet defend me, friends: I am but hurt"

(5.2.317), but it is too late. As a result, all of these horrible factors led to tragic events such as; Hamlet avenging his father's death, killing Polonius, Ophelia, and the death of Queen Gertrude. Before Hamlet dies, he tells Horatio to stay alive and tell his story to others and Fortinbras, and wishes Fortinbras to become the king of Denmark.

The Revenge of Fortinbras

Hamlet's revenge story is one of the most important plots and makes revenge one of the major themes in the play. Unlike Hamlet, Fortinbras is very determined and motivated to look for revenge because of the loss of his father and the lands lost to Denmark. He believes that revenge can be completed by taking the lands back from Denmark or killing Claudius and Hamlet. He is known as a strong and wise character in the play, but remains as a minor by William Shakespeare.

The act of revenge and how all the three important characters decide to seek it, is very interesting, and most importantly leads to the death of Hamlet and Laertes, whilst Fortinbras benefits and takes over the power. Horatio states, "But to recover of us, by strong hand and terms compulsory, those 'foresaid lands so by his father lost:" (1.1.103-104). Following Horatio's speech, Fortinbras thinks about the loss of his father and the lands to Denmark. It becomes very clear that he has to avenge the death of his father and reclaim the lands lost to Denmark. This is also where Fortinbras's act of revenge is introduced to the play by Shakespeare. He is a soldier, a young, clever, and a strong man. Therefore, he decides to move quickly and wisely as he seeks revenge. The tragic act of vengeance and how the characters were affected is very well structured by Shakespeare throughout the play.

Ironically, Laertes, Hamlet, and Claudius die by the same sword. As Laertes and Hamlet die because of their ignorance and rushing to avenge, Fortinbras easily takes over. Following after the death of Hamlet, he said that Fortinbras should be the next king, which makes his revenge complete and different than the other two characters. Fortinbras's act of revenge makes the play more interesting and shows that it should be identified as one of the main themes.

The Revenge of Laertes

As the major theme of the play circles around Hamlet and Fortinbras, Laertes also takes a part in it and his act of revenge is different than the two other characters, since it occurs because of the love he had for Polonius and Ophelia and it also remains quite unspeakable. This also makes his part unique because he is not a prince, but still retaliates and tries to avenge the death of his beloved father and sister by killing Hamlet. He is one of the major characters and a brave man, the son of Polonius. He also is very frustrated, depressed, and wants to feel like a good son. As he returns from Paris, after the death of Polonius, he cannot wait to take the vengeance of his father and if he doesn't, he will bring shame to his family. King Claudius once again shows that he is not a good king by planning Hamlet's death and discussing with Laertes about killing him. The king motivated Laertes to avenge because he wanted his own revenge. Claudius says; "A sword unbated, and, in a pass of practice requite him for your father (Shakespeare 4.7.138). Claudius also adds up, "I'll prepare him a chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping, if he by chance escape your venom'd stuck (4.7.160-162). These two quotes from the play, emphasizes that King Claudius plans Hamlet's death in a way where everyone, including the queen, thinks as if it is an accident. The king wants Laertes to use his

sharp poisoned sword and he will also add poison to the wine if the first plan did not work out. Laertes loves this plan and is ready to avenge the death of Polonius. When Ophelia dies after all the sadness and the death of his father, Laertes only identifies Hamlet as the cause of his sister's death. This makes the situation tougher and the revenge clearer. At Ophelia's funeral, everything happens for the sake of revenge and the poisoned sword of Laertes kills Claudius, Laertes himself, and Hamlet. This also ends the play by introducing Fortinbras as the new king of Denmark. Laertes showed a lot of bravery and it made his part very different, which places revenge as one of the main themes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, William Shakespeare uses revenge throughout the play and it is practiced by most of the main characters, which makes it one of the main themes. This act of evil runs all over the play and situates Hamlet, Fortinbras, and Laertes to seek for it. Looking at different events such as the downfall of the two young Denmark heroes and the fact that Shakespeare uses Fortinbras as a minor wise character and brings him to power is unique. Shakespeare also uses revenge as a major theme and clearly highlights the belief around it, to teach the readers to comprehend how different characters react and approach to avenge and what consequences they face following their actions. Although, the act of revenge led to tragedy and the failure of everyone else, it led to Fortinbras's succession and victory.

eduzaurus.com