
The Causes Of Hamlet's Downfall

Summary of the Play

Often in a Tragedy the main character is brought to their downfall or misfortune as a consequence of a tragic flaw, moral weakness, or inability to survive unfavorable situations. William Shakespeare is known for writing many Greek Tragedies that are still read and popular till this day. One of his famous works is the play, Hamlet which was written in about 1599-1601.

Prince Hamlet returns home for the funeral of his father King Hamlet, when he noticed his Uncle Claudius has married his mother. Hamlet and his Uncle Claudius did not get along well and they felt threatened by each other. Hamlet's father returned as a ghost and told him that his Uncle was the cause of his death. After seeing his father's ghost, Hamlet begins to show signs of depression, bipolar disorder and withdrawal. He was had so much animosity and hurt built that that all he could think about is revenge.

Mental Illness

Hamlet allowed mental illness, inner conflict, and revenge to lead to his ultimate downfall. Throughout the text there has been many times where Hamlet has shown signs of mental illness. When Hamlet returns from school he seems to be in a complete sane state; however, after he find out his uncle killed his father he began a to show signs of different mental illnesses. Williamson goes on about Hamlet talks about himself "Then, principle in his soliloquies, he reveals himself to us as different, nervous, procrastinating, 'a rogue and peasant slave,' according to his own account, playing with the thoughts of suicide and death, and pessimistic as to the existence of truth and love and honour" (Williamson 88). Hamlet was doing good in school; however, when he returned home, he realized that there was so much going and began to give up on himself. Playing with suicide and death only showed that he was dealing with things like depression and grief.

Hamlet was mentally affected by his mother being married to the man who killed his father and it took a huge toll on him. Depression negatively affects how one thinks, feels, and acts and causes feelings of sadness. His father came back as a ghost which caused more trauma because he was not expecting to see him again. Let alone the news that his father told him, Hamlet took a lot in but did not take the right steps to make his situation better. Thoughts of suicides only show that the issues that he was facing were really important to him and to it was difficult to handle. He lost relationships with those he loved and who were close because he did not know how to deal with reality and how things were hitting him. He shut himself down and gave up because he felt as if things were his fault and he was confused by his life. Hamlet was bipolar he would be extremely happy and loving one minute, another minute he would be sad and then angry. He was unpredictable and did not know how to work under uncomfortable situations which help lead to his downfall.

Lack of Self-Confidence

In addition to dealing with mental issues he also had issue with himself. Hamlet had many insecurities and doubts about himself and his ways. Being a King's son comes with high standards and certain responsibilities which he did hold himself up. Hamlet constantly questions his abilities and his worth. Sampley is talking about Hamlet and his days when he states, "I believe, too, that sufficient evidence has been presented to show that Hamlet is the victim of inner conflict. His mind throughout the play is torn by disillusion, pessimism, and melancholy" (Sampley 142). Hamlet never had confidence in himself and always struggled with who he was. He felt as if he was nothing compared to his dad and he thought less of himself.

That constant fight with knowing his worth only caused him to question things. Not only did he deal with his insecurities he also fought himself when it came to his love Ophelia as well as his revenge on Claudius. Hamlet loved Ophelia but struggles with showing her the affection and pertaining to her needs. He struggled with showing what he felt for her which caused internal conflict. He constantly fought himself when making decisions. Hamlet wanted to kill his uncle to retaliate for his father, but he wanted evidence that the ghost was his dad and telling the truth before he decided to take action. He had the constant battle on whether he should just kill him or find out the truth. Hamlet's defeat was destined to happen due to his constant struggle with accepting himself and second guessing his choices.

Destructive Determination for Revenge

Hamlet's determination for revenge of his father's murder never ends. As soon as he returned home he was eager to find out what happened to his father. When the ghost showed up and told him that his uncle killed his father his first reaction was to kill him. Kirsch states "This is a crucial and dreadful vow for many reasons, but the most important, as I think Freud places us in a position to understand, is that the ghost's injunction to remember him, an injunction which Shakespeare's commitment to the whole force of the revenge genre never really permits either us or Hamlet to question, brutally intensifies Hamlet's mourning and makes him incorporate in its work what we would normally regard as the pathology of depression" (Kirsch 26). Hamlet was already hurting from the loss of his father and it only caused more anger within to know what man behind his father was a family member. He felt betrayed and let down because the man was his father's brother. Throughout the constantly thought about ways to take his uncle out; he even fought those close to him due to wanting revenge.

Hamlet let his anger and grief distract him from life, he was not aware of the bigger issues because he could think of was his father's death. He had opportunities to kill his uncle but did not because he did not want him to go to heaven. Hamlet wanted revenge so bad that he wanted to wait till Claudius was sinning so that he would go to hell. He was so focused on retaliating that he began to lose himself. Revenge became his ultimate goal but little did he know it was going to cause to his misfortune. Downfall is the sudden decline of status or life in general, it is the destruction of a person's power.

Conclusion

Mental illness, inner conflict, and determination for revenge are leading factors that results to Hamlet's downfall. His inner conflict and obsession with revenge played a roll in his mental state. He was so tied up and focused on planning a perfect revenge that he did not noticed he was also in danger. Claudius felt like Hamlet was a threat and insisted he fight, but Hamlet was

not aware that his opponent had a poisoned blade. Hamlet was so focused on his issues and his revenge plan that he did not see what he was facing. He did not pay attention to the purpose of the ghost. Instead he chose to second guess himself in which he never got the chance to get revenge for his father. His father told him who it was and action should've been taken. Hamlet is the cause of his own downfall. If Hamlet would have killed Claudius immediately after he seen the ghost he would have saved his mother and himself from being murder. Hamlet did not realize what was going in his life and always hesitated because of issues that he had within. Hamlet's downfall was a tragedy doomed to occur.

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