

Demand essay: king lear

Literature, William Shakespeare



Demand Essay: King Lear Warning of King Lear King Lear written by William Shakespeare presents cautions in the play. Throughout the play, Shakespeare shows his audience the main message, which is by him warning us to understand the mistakes created by the characters. In King Lear written by William Shakespeare caution is used to show the downfall of King Lear and other characters in the play, created by their blindness, their madness, and King Lear's loss of power, which he had a right to. Blindness throughout the play is shown by King Lear who is blind toward Cordelia when he asks her to tell him how much she loves him in return for his land. He is blinded by the royalty due to the fact that he is used to having people praise him therefore this causes him not to be able to see the truth. " Here I disclaim my paternal care. " (I i 112). Lear is blinded to see Cordelia's truth compared to her sisters; he shows his blindness by banishing his daughter from the kingdom and by eliminating her as a daughter. " So young, and so untender! " (I i 105). This also shows King Lear's blindness. Gloucester's blindness also warns the audience of what will become at the end of the play. " I stumbled when I saw..." (IV i 19). Although Gloucester could physically see, he was mentally blind, thus making him unable to see the truth between his two sons, Edgar and Edmund. Instead after having his eyes plucked out by the Duke of Cornwall, he was able to realize the nature of his own sons. This creates the theme of Good vs. Evil. The blindness of the characters also leads to their madness in the play. King Lear's madness is also a warning Shakespeare gives us. Shakespeare shows his audience how, because of his madness, his own downfall is created therefore warning the audience of what will become of Lear throughout the play. " Blow, winds, and

crack your cheeks! Rage! Blow! " (III ii 1). Lear rages at the storm showing and exposing his anger after he has been kicked out of his daughter, Regans, castle. " You think ill weep, no ill not weep. " (II iv 279-280). Pathetic fallacy is created because the storm in the background is reflecting Lear's emotions, although in reality Lear is only mad at himself for what he has done by giving his daughters the land prematurely, thus placing them at a higher status than what they should be. King Lear struggles with this because he has lost his authority and sense of control within himself. Shakespeare creates the warning of losing power throughout the play of King Lear. He is explaining to the audience that with great power comes great responsibility, and that if the job is not done properly there will also be great consequence. In this case King Lear has asked for too much expecting to get as he pleased, instead the complete opposite occurred. " Nothing comes from nothing, speak again! " (I i 89). This causes King Lear's downfall because he made mistakes such as banishing his youngest and most truthful daughter and by entrusting his land to his " wicked" daughters, Goneril and Regan. This also causes him to regret the decisions he has made and cost him his daughter, Cordelias, life and also his own. " I might have sav'd her; now she's gone forever! " (V iii 269). When Lear says this he is referring to the fact that because of his greed in getting as he desired by placing himself above all, even the Gods, he feels as it is his fault that his youngest daughter has passed. " And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life! Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life, and thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more, never. Never, never, never, never! Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir. Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips, look there, look there! " (V iii

304-310). Lear dies due to his grief after Cordelias death. He holds himself responsible for what has become of his youngest daughter. When Lear says, "undo this button," he feels a type of suffocation in which causes his natural death. Blindness, madness and loss of power all represent the caution or warning Shakespeare meant to give his audience throughout the play of King Lear. Blindness, madness and loss of power prove that King Lear and the other characters in the play caused their own downfall and the downfall of their kingdom. Also because the characters needed to be more willing to accept the truth and be more able to see the truth clearly. Thus Shakespeare cautions his audience by showing them the tragic flaws of the characters, allowing them to realize what will become of the characters at the end of the astonishing play. Work Cited Shakespeare, William. "Warning of King Lear." Oxford School Shakespeare: King Lear. New York: Oxford University, 1997. Print.