

Seymon lewis

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Seymon Lewis 1/17/13 2a Hamlet's revenge Hamlet is a revenge tragedy based on a young prince whose father was murdered by the new king Claudius. After his father's funeral he is confronted by his father's ghost. Hamlet believes that he has to listen to the ghost, when who replied " So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear"(1. 5. 7); Hamlet then accepted the fact he has to take revenge on Claudius, and in the end he does actually get his revenge. Hamlet believes that he must first prove Claudius's guilt before acting on his revenge. At the end of Act 2 Scene 1 Hamlet reveals his plan to entrap Claudius, to show his guilt and incriminate him by using the theater. He believes that since the productions shown in the theater are fake, no one in the audience would be able to " connect the dots" between hamlet's production and Claudius. Hamlet's play started out as a lightened mood in which Claudius enjoyed immensely. After which Claudius starts to get an over view of the true nature of hamlets play when he saw the Player King pour the poison down his brother's ear. As the audience ravel in the mystery and suspense of the story Claudius sweats. As the play goes on Claudius's guilt becomes apparent to Hamlet when Claudius storms out during the performance. At that moment hamlet makes a conscious decision to kill Claudius. Even though Hamlet is now convinced that Claudius killed his father, his revenge is delayed due to outside circumstances. For example Hamlet has the opportunity to kill Claudius in Act 3, Scene 3. He draws his sword, but is concerned that Claudius will go to heaven if killed while praying. What he thinks is that he'll wait until he can catch Claudius in the middle of a sinful act, and take revenge then. And then Claudius will go to hell, not heaven, so the revenge will be perfect. But in Act 3 Scene 3

hamlet's emotions get best of him when he suspects Claudius is spying on him and his mother. He cries out " How now! a rat? " (3. 4. 22). He draws his sword and stabs it through the tapestry, but instead of killing Claudius he finds out that it was Polonius who he had stabbed. Claudius now aware of the increasing threat that hamlet presents, begins his own plan to kill hamlet. After killing Polonius, Hamlet is sent to England making it impossible for him to gain access to Claudius and carry out his revenge. " How all occasions do inform against me, And spur my dull revenge!" (4. 4. 33). This is the opening of Hamlet's last soliloquy. On his way to board the ship for England he speaks with a Norwegian Captain who serves under Fortinbras, who is on his way to fight for land held by the Poles. Hamlet compares himself unfavorably with Fortinbras, who is fighting for nothing because his honor is at the stake. " Fortinbras pushes on in the face of great danger because his sense of honor is keen", but Hamlet's desire to take revenge is " dull." And to be " dull' is to be unfeeling, less than human, as the Ghost warned Hamlet early in the play, when he told Hamlet that if he didn't take revenge, " duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed, That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf , Wouldst thou not stir in this" (1. 5. 32-34). After Hamlet is sent to England, Laertes (Polonius's son) returns from France to seek his own revenge for his father. Laertes thinks that Claudius is the object of his revenge, but the Claudius asks, " is't writ in your revenge, That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe Winner and loser?" (4. 5. 142-144). He then starts to tell Laertes that he is innocent and hamlet is guilty of killing Polonius. After King Claudius has persuaded Laertes that Hamlet is responsible for Polonius' death, Laertes promises that " my revenge will

come" (4. 7. 29). However, the King apparently thinks he needs to make sure that Laertes will go along with his plan to kill Hamlet. The King asks " Laertes, was your father dear to you? Or are you like the painting of a sorrow, A face without a heart? (4. 7. 107-109). The Ghost said something very similar to Hamlet: " If thou didst ever thy dear father love...Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder" (1. 5. 23-25). Thus the King, like the Ghost, says that taking revenge proves that a man loves his father. The King then asks Laertes what he would do to prove his love for his father. Laertes replies that he would cut Hamlet's throat in a church, and the King approves, saying " No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize; Revenge should have no bounds" (4. 7. 127-128). In the final scene of the play, Hamlet agreed to a fencing match with Laertes with Claudius in the audience. Just before the fencing match, Hamlet apologizes to Laertes, saying that it was his madness that made him kill Polonius. Laertes replies, " I am satisfied in nature, Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most To my revenge: but in my terms of honour I stand aloof" (5. 2. 244-247). By saying that he is " satisfied in nature," Laertes means that Hamlet's apology has soothed his natural anger at Hamlet for killing his father. However, Laertes adds, the damage to his honor still gives him good reason for taking revenge. In the fight, Laertes and Hamlet swap swords and Laertes is injured with his own sword. He dies from the poison. In his dying moments, Laertes informs Hamlet of Claudius' plan and forgives him for killing his father. A fatally wounded Hamlet kills Claudius before drinking the poison to " take the agony out of his death". Although he does ultimately kill Claudius, we cannot credit Hamlet with plotting the revenge, because it is Claudius' plan to kill Hamlet that backfires. Because

hamlet waited so long to take revenge, more lives were taken than necessary including his own mother. Perhaps if Hamlet had acted earlier, lives could have been saved. Works Cited Shakespeare, William. Hamlet (The New Folger Library Shakespeare). Simon & Schuster; New Folger Edition, 2003. <http://shakespeare-navigators.com/hamlet/Revenge.html>
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