

# Hamlet by william shakespeare: the impact of parents on their children

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James Baldwin once wrote; " Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them. " Parents play a very special role in a child's life. Good or bad, who the child becomes one day is affected by how their parents decide to raise them. This can be shown in multiple different ways throughout Shakespeare's Hamlet, one being Hamlet's desire to seek revenge after his father's death. Hamlet's close relationship with his mother is another example, which led to both of their own deaths.

A third example being Hamlet's relationship with Claudius and his hate towards him after he finds out he murdered his father. Laertes close relationship to his father, Polonius, affects who he becomes once he chooses revenge for his father's death over his friendship with Hamlet. Finally, Ophelia's one-sided relationship with Polonius leads to her own death. A parent's decision affects their child in ways that could surely complicate their rational decision. Hamlet holds deep love and respect for his father. His life and attitude drastically change after the death of the king and finding out it was a murder, rather than just an accident. " So excellent a king; that was, to this, Hyperion to a satyr: so loving to my mother. " (Act I, Scene ii, l. 139-140) This quote shows the effect the king had on Hamlet, as he calls him an " excellent king" and compares him to a Hyperion, the sun-god in Greek mythology. Thus being said, Hamlet and the king have a fair, two-sided relationship, which can be shown from what Hamlet had to say and the trust the king has in his son to get revenge for his death. This dynamic complicated the action of the play in a way that shifted Hamlet from a good,

innocent man to one that spends every second of his days seeking out revenge for his father's death.

If he and his father did not have a close relationship, Hamlet would not spend his time plotting his revenge just because his father's ghost told him to. "There has never been, nor will there ever be, anything quite so special as the love between mother and son." The author of this quote is unknown, but the fact remains true. Throughout the story, Hamlet progressively becomes angry with his mother and very upset when she marries Claudius, his father's brother, just after one month. No matter how upset he was, the love and care he held for his mother was irreplaceable. It was not just on him, Gertrude loved her son very much, to the point where she disobeyed her husband, the king's direct order and drank in honour of her son, poisoning herself and dying. If the bond between the two was not so strong, Gertrude would not have decided to drink the poison that Claudius had arranged to kill Hamlet. Claudius went from being an uncle to Hamlet, to murdering his own brother and marrying his brother's wife, becoming Hamlet's father. Hamlet becomes enraged when he hears that Claudius poisoned his father, shown in the quote "O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!" (Act I, Scene v, l. 106). Hamlet then attempts to stab Claudius when he hears a voice coming from behind the arras in his mother's room. He mistook Polonius' voice for Claudius and murdered Polonius on the spot. If Hamlet did not have a close relationship with his biological father, he would not have cared that he was murdered and in effect, would not have mistakenly stabbed Polonius.

After feeling threatened by Hamlet, Claudius took part in the plan to poison Hamlet, which led to the death of his wife, Gertrude, and ended with Hamlet's death. Similar to a chain reaction, if Hamlet would not have tried to kill Claudius, he would not have felt threatened and would not have thought to poison Hamlet and kill the woman in which he was in love. Claudius is not Hamlet's real father, which can cause a relationship that revolves around jealousy for Gertrude's attention. Polonius is known to be a loving and respectful father that just wants the best for his son. So much that when Laertes moves to Paris, Polonius sends Reynaldo to spy on him and make sure he is doing fine. After Hamlet's mistake and Polonius's accidental death, Laertes wants no other than to avenge his father's death. " I'll be revenged, most thoroughly for my father. " (Act IV, Scene v, l. 133-134). To get revenge, Laertes must battle Hamlet, his father's murderer, with a sword. Although Hamlet and Laertes are old friends, the idea of revenge is greater than the friendship they once had.

Due to his decision, Laertes ends up stabbing himself with a sword and ending his own life before the life of Hamlet. If he had not wanted to get revenge for his father's death, he himself would still be alive. Ophelia, just like any young girl, relied on her father very much. She loved and respected him more than he did for her. Polonius cared about Ophelia's relations with Hamlet and ordered her not to be with him, which she followed. Throughout Ophelia's entire life, her father made all her decisions, so when he died, she went mad. Her grieving is demonstrated by Horatio, " She speaks much of her father, says, she hears there's tricks i' the world, and hems and beats

her heart. ” (Act IV, Scene V, l. 4-5). Just like a newborn puppy who lost their mother, Ophelia no longer had a mind of her own or someone else and was lost.

After being taken care of for so long, she no longer knew how to take care of herself, shown by Gertrude, “ As one incapable of her own distress. ” (Act IV, Scene vii, l. 180). Her relationship with her father led to her madness and her drowning in the brook. In the end, no matter if it can be admitted, a parent is a child’s biggest role model. It is shown in Shakespeare’s Hamlet from the shift in Hamlet’s mind after his father’s death, Hamlet drinking the poison after his mother, resulting in both of their deaths and the hate Hamlet has towards Claudius because he murdered his father. It is also shown by Laertes, choosing revenge over friendship and Ophelia, dying from lack of love and attention. These parent/child dynamics complicate the action of the story, but all in all, help create the story into one of Shakespeare’s best.