

Hamlet vs. laertes



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Do you think Hamlet and Laertes are alike, or different? In the play Hamlet written by William Shakespeare Hamlet and Laertes show some signs that they are alike and some show they are different, taking revenge, having feelings for people and the thoughts and actions of people. These two characters are very alike with only a few differences which in their lifestyle and attitude.

Hamlet is the kind of person who likes to think things through thoroughly before he acts and does stuff. Hamlet does that after the play The Murder of Gonzago when Claudius leaves in an uproar, Claudius goes to pray for forgiveness and Hamlet has the chance to kill him but he thinks about it and decides it would not be a good idea. He does not kill Claudius because he is asking for forgiveness for his sins and if Hamlet was to kill him, Claudius would go to heaven and Hamlet wants him to rot in hell.

" Hamlet: No might I do it now, he is praying;

And now 'tis done: and so he goes to heaven:

And so am I revenged. That would be scanned:

A villain kills my father; and, for that,

I, his sole son, do this same villain send

To heaven.

O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.

He took my father grossly, full of bread,

With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;

And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?"

(Shakespeare, Hamlet, III, iii, 74-83)

Laertes on the other hand is the exact opposite of Hamlet, he does not think before he does things. Laertes acts out of anger and jumps to conclusions.

" Gentleman: Save yourself, my lord:

The ocean, overpeering of his list,

Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste

Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,

Oerbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;

And, as the world were now but to begin,

Antiquity forgot, custom not known,

The ratifiers and props of every word,

They cry, " Choose we! Laertes shall be king!"

(Shakespeare, Hamlet, IV, v, 96-104)

The way both Hamlet and Laertes deal with their problems will eventually lead to their deaths which could have been easily averted if they had went about their ways differently.

Hamlet and Laertes had to think things through or act out of anger because both of their fathers were murdered. Hamlet's uncle Claudius murdered Hamlet's father, King Hamlet, and Laertes' father, Polonius, got murdered by Hamlet. Hamlet had a chance to kill Claudius earlier on in the play when he was praying but he decided not to capitalize on that opportunity and waited for the end of the play after his mother died after drinking a poisoned drink that was intended for Hamlet from Claudius.

" Hamlet: The point envenom'd too!

Then, venom, to thy work. Stabs the King

All: Treason! treason!

King: O, yet defend me, friends: I am but hurt.

Hamlet: Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned

Dane, Drink off this poison. Is thy union here?

Follow my mother. King dies"

(Shakespeare, Hamlet, V, ii, 314-319)

Laertes avenges his fathers death at the end of the play too; Laertes has a fencing match against Hamlet. He sharpens the end of the fencing sword and puts a very lethal poison on the end of it so all he has to do is scratch Hamlet and he will die. Laertes accomplishes his little mission on killing Hamlet and says,

" Laertes: It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain:

No medicine in the world can do thee good,

In thee there is not half an hour of life;

The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,

Unbated and envenom'd:"

(Shakespeare, Hamlet, V, ii, 306-310)

They both succeeded in restoring honour back to their family, it might not of been the right thing to do murdering to restore the honour, but you got to do what you got to do.

Hamlet and Laertes both have strong feelings towards Ophelia. Even though

Hamlet says that he does not love her in one scene,

" Hamlet: I did love you once.

Ophelia: Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Hamlet: You should not have believed me: for virtue cannot

So inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I

loved you not."

(Shakespeare, Hamlet, III, i, 115-119)

he really does have strong feelings for her. He really shows his feelings about her when he finds out she has died and he jumps into her grave with Laertes.

" Hamlet: I loved Ophelia; forty thousand brothers

Could not, with all their quantity of love,

Make up my sum."

(Shakespeare, Hamlet, V, i, 263-265)

The two of them get into a little fight to settle their differences between who loved Ophelia more and it eventually gets broken up. Laertes was a good brother and he looked out for his sister, it really hits him hard when he sees his sister go mad after their fathers death. Agreeably they both loved Ophelia and you cannot judge who loved her the most, but you can admire how they both expressed themselves towards her.

Sadly, the two things both these characters had in common were they eventually died at the end and that they both killed each other. It seems Hamlet and Laertes had more in common than they did not, they both loved

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Ophelia and wanted to seek revenge for their fathers murders. They just went about seeking revenge differently, Hamlet a man of thought and Laertes a man of action. Now that you have these thoughts in your head, do you think they are alike?