

The loneliness of hamlet hamlet essays



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The Loneliness of Hamlet

Hamlet was a lonely, isolated character, with few friends, and little faith in humanity. His loneliness played a great role in his downfall, by alienating him from his friends and family and eventually taking control of his actions. He did not share the knowledge of his father's murder or the appearance of the ghost with anyone. He couldn't even trust his friends and family, and he hid his true feelings from his only love, Ophelia, driving her to suicide. These events lead eventually to his downfall, and could have been avoided by sharing his dilemma.

Two of Hamlet's friends, Horatio and Marcellus, were standing watch at the castle one night when they witnessed the first apparition of the ghost of Hamlet's father. They decided to confide in their friend, and tell Hamlet of what had taken place. The following night, the three of them all stood watch to wait for the ghost. It appeared, and informed Hamlet that his uncle, Claudius, had murdered his father. Immediately following this, Hamlet declared that the event must be kept in secrecy " Never make known what you have seen tonight (I; v; 144)." In order to prove the validity of the ghost, Hamlet would have to find proof of his father's murder, without sharing his ideas with anyone. He decided to make believe he was mad, so that the members of the king's court could excuse his behavior as he plotted his revenge. However, as he kept to himself, he became overwhelmed by his "madness" and fell into a deeper state of loneliness, ignoring those close to him, as he contemplated the value of life. "...it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'er

hanging firmament, this majestic roof fretted with golden fire-why it appears nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors...(II; ii; 289)”

As Hamlet tried to prove the murder of his father and have his revenge, Claudius discovered that Hamlet knew the truth. Claudius hired two of Hamlet’s friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to spy on Hamlet in secret, “...be even and direct with me whether you were sent for or no (II; ii; 278-79).” Later on, Claudius and Polonius, the father of Ophelia, also spied on Hamlet when he was with Ophelia, trying to discover the cause of his madness “ Ophelia, walk you here.-Gracious, so please you, we will bestow ourselves.-(III; i; 42).” Through all of this misleading, eavesdropping, and spying Hamlet became even further withdrawn from everyone close to him, sharing none of his sorrows and his grip on reality slips further.

When Hamlet put on an antic disposition, playing the part of the fool to excuse his actions from the members of the court, whether intentional or not, Ophelia was misled as well. She had believed his affections were true and she fell in love, “...sucked the sweet honey of his music vows...(III; i; 153)”, only to be crushed by his madness. He had, at one point, loved her and even his mother had hopes for the two of them, “...I had hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet’s wife...(IV; i; 219)”. However, in his madness, Hamlet came to see Ophelia in a disheveled state, “...with his doublet, his stockings fouled, ungartered, and down gyved to his ankle, pale as a shirt, his knees knocking... (II; i; 77)” and frightened her. Her father bid her not to speak to him and poor Hamlet sank deeper into his madness, leaving Ophelia alone and dejected ready to take her own life.

Hamlet was a very lonely character, with few friends, and little love in his life. His tragic flaw came from the misleading act he put on in order to hide his ambitions, and the crafty schemes he came up with to reach his goals. Had he shared his problems with the few people he could trust, and not hidden the knowledge of his father's murder he might have avoided the great loss of his family, his friends, and his life.

Works Cited:

Shakespeare, William. Hamlet. Norton Critical Ed. New York: Norton. 1992.