

# The meeting of stanley and mompesson in act 1 essay sample



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When the audience first meet Mompesson, he is being shown around the village, to the rector's house. You learn about Mompesson from his conversation with George Savile, " the rector of God has no enemies, only sheep to be fed" is what Mompesson thinks. Savile tells him he is wrong, " now rinse that starch from your face my boy...come two steps down from heaven to speak to these people...you'll have to make concessions".

By Savile having to say this, and from what Mompesson previously said, we learn that he is quite high and mighty, or at least he thinks he is, and the people won't like him for that.

Stanley first comes onto the scene when the harvest celebrations have begun. He disapproves of them happening, as it is against his puritanical beliefs, and the first thing he says is " this is a sad sight Edward Thornley". As he begins talking to Thornley, it quickly becomes clear that Thornley still sees Stanley as his rector. They both share the opinion put forward by Thornley about Mompesson, that he's " a youngster, full of arrogance and spleen, who spits in the dust as we pass." Stanley has a dark, brooding presence, which contrasts darkly with the happy feel of the celebration and the audience would be able to tell this about him from his appearance and the things he says.

When Mompesson arrives, the two don't immediately notice each other, until Thornley points him out to Stanley, at which Mompesson sees him for the first time also. The music abruptly stops, which instantly creates drama as the villagers, as well as the audience wonder what is going to happen.

Mompesson wants to talk to Stanley-he walks towards him-but Stanley turns away, obviously not wanting a confrontation. Mompesson is not giving up so easily, even though it is obvious to everyone Stanley doesn't want to meet him. He is attempting to get off to a good start, by being polite and friendly to his predecessor as George Savile told him he still had a lot of support in the village. I think that perhaps Mompesson's thinking is, if he gets Stanley "on his side", so to speak, the villagers will follow.

Stanley immediately puts up a defensive front when he and Mompesson come face to face, refusing the handshake offered to him. There is a strong feeling of antagonism, and Stanley is the creator of most of this-spurning all Mompesson's efforts to be nice, even though it's in a formal manner.

When Stanley refuses Mompesson's offer of dinner at the rectory, he adds, "If I ever return to it, it won't be as a guest." Here, Stanley is almost cutting off his nose to spite his face, and he shows that even after five years he is still full of bitterness. I think you could even see it as a veiled threat towards Mompesson.

Stanley then changes his language and starts to speak metaphorically. He tells Mompesson "oil and vinegar don't mix without a beating." This is creating dramatic irony, as it poses questions to the audience about what could happen in the future, if the plague is the "beating" that Stanley and Mompesson require to mix.

Stanley leaves suddenly and dramatically and the exchange is over. It was formal, the language and the way they acted towards each other, because even though the play is modern the language had to reflect the time.  
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This meeting is also preparing the audience for any future conflicts that will occur, as in their second meeting later on in the play.

Mompesson is less restrained than before-he is not so formal and polite towards Stanley, even though at first Stanley is stiffly polite to him. Stanley starts trying to tell Mompesson that he shouldn't be giving the people false hopes by saying its " too cold for plague", and Mompesson just points out if Stanley had helped him, if his " heart had been anything but stone", he wouldn't have to be.

When Stanley tries to leave, Mompesson won't let him, as he wants Stanley to hear him out. Mompesson has changed a lot since the last meeting, he has seen forty-three people die and that there was no hope as Stanley refused to help him. He feels resentment towards him as well as anger, and now he is making no effort to be nice, since he was spurned last time. This gives a change in the creator of the antagonism, especially at the start of the meeting.

At the end Stanley says, " we will not meet again", but even though Mompesson does not wish to meet him he knows " in a small village that is unlikely"-that them meeting for a third time is inevitable.

Before their third meeting Stanley has a soliloquy where he is finally open and truthful about himself, and how he's changed. He says about his former self " in those days I spoke like a prophet, and how they listened", and it dawns on him that him together with Mompesson might be able to make a difference.

He goes to Mompesson, who is in the rectory and surprised to see his adversary after his earlier claims at entering the place, and he promptly asks for forgiveness for his bitterness. Already the void that has separated and divided them is starting to narrow-all because of Stanley realising he was wrong and making the first move.

He is now prepared to put others before himself, and help them. As he and Mompesson talk, the audience will be relieved to know that Stanley is finally offering his help.

It is also Stanley that puts forward the sentence that ultimately makes them allies, “ your word need not be alone, Mompesson. There is my word to stand with it.” After this they reach a kind of mutual understanding, and they show this by finishing each other’s sentences,

Mompesson-It is easy to speak of figures, but when they are dead in our hands...

Stanley-we will endure it as they do.

This also shows how much things have changed. There has been a “ beating” and now the oil and vinegar have mixed.

But, even though they are working together, neither of them has changed and they are just doing it for the people.

The first meeting is important as it highlights their relationship to the audience and allows them to focus on it and the way it changes.

Relationships are key to the play’s structure, and there are several sub-plot

relationships for the audience to see. One of these is between Unwin and Merril. They provide the comedy for the play-which gives the audience slight breaks and prevents the play from being too over the top perhaps. Even though they argue, and pretend to not like each other, they are obviously friends under the surface, as they have known each other for many years.

Unwin-I was hoping you'd be dead and buried by now.

Merril-I was sure you would be.

Unwin-Well I'm not, so there.

Merril-Neither am I, so there.

Roses of Eyam is a play based on a given period of time, during which there were lots of conflicts and tensions like the plague and political and religious differences, which are all highlighted by Stanley and Mompesson's first meeting. It makes the audience aware that their feelings go far deeper than just their personal beliefs and conflict.

There were many plays written at this period of time, which were written as reactions to what had happened like when there was the Commonwealth. That had been a Puritanical rule, and so theatres were banned. After Charles II returned to the throne it was almost as if they were trying to make up for losses during the previous years, with the amount of plays written. They were popular then as it gave people a chance to laugh at the way it was portrayed if it was a comedy, or just for them to reflect back on what had happened if it was a drama, it also gave them insights into what life at court (with the king) might be like, or other parts of Britain.

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Nowadays, people studying plays know what to expect from plays from different parts of history-the difference in plot, themes and characters (like if a king is in one)-and they can identify where in history plays are from. This makes them popular now as it gives people an insight into what life might have been like back in the 1600's for example, and an example of such a history play is *The Way of the World*, by William Congreve, which was written about 1700.