

# [The significance of the manner in which ophelia dies](https://assignbuster.com/the-significance-of-the-manner-in-which-ophelia-dies/)

[Literature](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/literature/), [British Literature](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/literature/british-literature/)

There on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds/ Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke,] When down her weedy trophies and herself/ Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,] And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up... (line 197-201 , Act 4, Scene 7). Shakespeare, by " letting" Aphelia drowns herself, to some extents alleviates the pain of death and pictures a beautiful Aphelia drowned In water with her beauty minded and preserved.

By comparing Aphelia to a mermaid-like figure, Shakespeare gives unreal characteristics to her death and makes it smoother for Aphelia, whose life has been tragic enough. The fact that Aphelia was suffocated under her own dress and that her feminine clothes made her impossible to swim is a metaphor of women's helplessness at the time being - Aphelia dies without any self- defense or mobility. Shakespeare implies the role of women in society and how being a woman gives Aphelia no chance to react even in death.

At the same time, Aphelia peps singing: Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds/ As one incapable of her own distress/ Or Like a creature native and endued/ Unto that element. (line 202-205, Act 4, Scene 7). Her chanting reminds audience of her madness In Scene 5 and 6, In which she sings songs about men and death. Audience may Identify Aphelion's chanting as a trace of madness, but also her singing on the verge of death portrays a passive let-go of Life - Aphelia clearly has no Intention of fighting back or even crying out for help. Compared to Aphelion's conversations with Polonium and

Hamletthroughout the play, it is clear that Aphelia never has any voice or reaction to the events of her life - her madness, her destiny and even her death are caused and retold by others. For several times throughout the play Aphelia is pictured with flowers. At the end of Act 4, Scene 7, her death is again associated with symbolic floral images: Therewith fantastic garlands did she make/ Of cornflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples/ That liberal shepherds give a grosser name/ But our cold maids do " dead men's fingers" call them. Nine 193-196, Act 4, Scene 7). Flowers are symbols of Aphelion's tragic life, being a victim of disruptive events mostly caused by men. Cornflower symbolizes a dream of lover, portraying a dying Aphelia still thinking about Hamlet and his love[l]. Nettles signify her bad luck and tragic destiny; while daisies represent innocent love[2]. The long purples represent Aphelion's loss in love Wendell at ten same time audience can assume Tanat " a grosser name" raters to sexuality[3].

By calling long purples " dead men's fingers", Shakespeare implies the causes of Aphelion's death as her life is destined by men (Hamlet, Polonium and Alerts); reminding audience of the song which she sings earlier: Larded all with sweet flowers/ Which between to the ground did not go/ With true-love showers. (line 43-45, Act 4, Scene 5). By associating Aphelion's figure with the presence of flowers, Shakespeare also lets audience know about women's beauty and fragility as that of flowers: although women are romantic and pretty outside, they are truly somber and vulnerable indeed.