

# Hesitant hamlet

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



Hesitant Hamlet Throughout the play, Hamlet is shown not acting quickly in crucial situations, which brings us to his tragic flaw, hesitancy. Hamlet, stopping to think situations through, lets opportunities slip right through his hands that will immensely affect so many people in the future. If Hamlet would just act on instinct, than hesitancy would never be an issue.

Unfortunately for Hamlet, in this play he does not have all the time in the world to get revenge towards Claudius. Early on in the play Hamlet sees the ghost of his father's spirit and it beckons him to follow if he wishes to speak to it. Hamlet being encouraged not to follow by his comrades says, " It will not speak, then I will follow it" (Shakespeare 1. 4). Almost without thinking Hamlet makes the decision to follow the ghost, this will later prove totally uncharacteristic of him. Thinking they can still convince him, his friends, Horatio and Marcellus, try once again to stop him only to hear, " Hold off your hands; my fate cries out; by heaven I'll make a ghost of him that let's me" (Shakespeare 1. 4). Hamlet lets it be known here that he has made his mind up and anyone who tries to stop him, he will make a ghost out of, heaven willing. Hamlet does not show any signs of hesitancy here, but will soon allow it to get in his way for at the wrong time. After meeting with the ghost, Hamlet is aware of his uncle Claudius being the one who murdered his father. Hamlet, longing to avenge his father's death gets the perfect chance catching Claudius off guard while he is alone on his knees praying. Hamlet speaks saying, " Now might I do it pat, now he is praying. And now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven. And so am I avenged" (Shakespeare 3. 3). Hamlet does not act, leaving Claudius harmless while he is apparently repenting and talking to God. Hamlet wants to make sure Claudius dies and is on his way to

the burning pits of hell instead of heaven. Unfortunately, moments later Claudius rises from his knees and quotes, " My words fly up, my thoughts remain below; words without thoughts never to heaven go" (Shakespeare 3. 3). Claudius amazingly says it himself that his words are not sincere and they wont make it to heaven. Hamlet makes the biggest mistake of his life here, not taking advantage of the picture perfect moment to kill Claudius. Hamlet's indecision is a sign of moral ambivalence which he overcomes way too late (Magill 357). As a result of Hamlets choice to not kill Claudius when he had the opportunity, numerous lives would be taken in dramatic fashion. Polonius would be the first, starting a chain reaction of death after he was stabbed by Hamlet while eavesdropping behind a curtain. Shortly after her fathers death, Ophelia, unable to control the pain and her mental insanity, puts herself out of her misery by drowning herself to death. Laertes, Ophelia's brother, responds to her death by saying, " Too much water hast thou, poor Ophelia, and therefore I forbid my tears" (Shakespeare 4. 7). Hurt by his sister's death, Laertes tries to restrain his tears, for Ophelia has already had her share of water (Durband 257). Hamlet, returning from a ship comes back to an infuriated Laertes who is ready to get his revenge. Laertes, teaming up with Claudius, challenges Hamlet to fight in a fencing match. Hamlet, without reasoning willingly accepts this challenge, unaware of Laertes weapon being poisoned. King Claudius, who is watching the match alongside Queen Gertrude, poisons the wine which he intends Hamlet to drink. After Hamlet strikes first Claudius says, " Stay, give me a drink" (Shakespeare 5. 2). Unfortunately for Claudius, Hamlet declines this offer and Gertrude drinks from it instead. Hamlet and Laertes have one more bout in which both are

wounded. Lying on the ground, Hamlet sees his mother dead and says, " O villany! Let the door be locked; Treachery, seek it out" (Shakespeare 5. 2). Hamlet, starting to die from the poisoned weapon overcomes his tragic flaw of hesitancy by instantly killing Claudius without reasoning. After finally avenging his father's death, Hamlet himself dies after saying, " The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit" (Shakespeare 5. 2). The powerful poison took Hamlets life from him, but gave him the time to kill Claudius before it took him. Due to Hamlets hesitancy to kill Claudius when he first had the opportunity, numerous lives were unnecessarily taken including his own. It only took one crucial decision for Hamlet to control his destiny as well as the others who died. Thankfully Hamlet overcame his hesitancy in the end and was able to avenge the death of his father.