

# Revenge tragedy: hamlet

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For a play to be considered a revenge tragedy, revenge has to be a prevalent theme throughout. Revenge needs to be intertwined in character interactions, and have a strong hold on the driving force of the plot. The desires of Hamlet, Laertes, and young Fortinbras each exhibit how the plot of Hamlet, by William Shakespeare revolves entirely around theories of revenge. The theme of revenge starts off very early in the play, when Hamlet speaks with the ghost of his deceased father.

When the ghost tells Hamlet how Claudius murdered him, Hamlet is infuriated and overtaken with feelings of responsibility to right the wrong that has been done; to murder Claudius. The effects of this experience on Hamlet are portrayed clearly in the following quote, “ And so I am revenged. That would be scanned: A villain kills my father, and for that, I, his sole son, d this same villain send to heaven;” (p. 161, 3. 4). This quote clearly exemplifies Hamlets feeling toward this event.

Being his fathers only son, he feels completely responsible for his fathers vengeance.

Revenge has caused the downfall of many a person. Its consuming nature causes one to act recklessly through anger rather than reason. Revenge is an emotion easily rationalized; one turn deserves another. However, this is a very dangerous theory to live by. Throughout Hamlet, revenge is a dominant theme. Fortinbras, Laertes, and Hamlet all seek to avenge the deaths of their fathers. But in so doing, all three rely more on emotion than thought, and take a very big gamble, a gamble which eventually leads to the downfall and death of all but one of them. King Fortinbras was slain by King Hamlet in a

sword battle. This entitled King Hamlet to the land that was possessed by Fortinbras because it was written in a seal'd compact. "...our valiant Hamlet-for so this side of our known world esteem'd him-did slay this Fortinbras."

Young Fortinbras was enraged by his father's murder and sought revenge against Denmark. He wanted to reclaim the land that had been lost to Denmark when his father was "...Now sir, young Fortinbras...as it doth well appear unto our state-..... ...to exact revenge for his father's death. Revenge can be an invaluable tool to amass success and wealth, or it can be a fatal flaw that guarantees immanent death. It is a dangerous emotion, which can easily consume, however it can be used to great satisfaction. Perhaps it is these qualities that lead us to allow ourselves to act on its impulses. The lessons learned by both Hamlet and Laertes are something that should be remembered. Revenge is not to be taken lightly. When acted on this is one emotion that can definitely come back to haunt you.