

Ophelia character sketch



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Hamlet is a very complex play based upon the relationships within the walls of Elsinore Castle in Denmark. Hamlet is the main character and the focus point in all the emotions and feelings in the play. Gertrude (Hamlet's mother), and Claudius (Hamlet's uncle and his mother's new husband and the new king of Denmark) all of these characters play major roles in the play.

Ophelia is outside the family connections of these three characters but she still impacts the play with her bubbly personality that she is forced to do by her father and the manipulations and mistreatment of others. Hamlet has the first reason to be hurt by Ophelia because she follows her father's orders regarding Hamlet and his true intentions for their love. Polonius tells Ophelia that Hamlet will not do anything but be pimp with the girls since he is supposed to have an arranged marriage. After telling Ophelia this, Polonius and Claudius try to have Ophelia become bait to find out why Hamlet is acting crazy.

Hamlet begins with his overwhelming sarcasm toward Ophelia, "I humbly thank you, well, well, well," he says to her regarding her initial pleasantries (3. 1. 91). Before this scene, he has heard the King and Polonius establishing a plan to deduce his unusual and grief-stricken behavior. Hamlet is well aware that this plan merely uses Ophelia as a tool, and as such, she does not have much option of refusing without angering not only her father but the conniving King Claudius as well.

Hamlet constantly refuses that he cared for her. He tells her and all of his uninvited listeners, "No, not I, I never gave you aught" (Ham. 1. 94-95). Hamlet has a right to direct his anger to Ophelia because it was her that

repelled against him. Her father forced her, and if she did try to disobey her father she could be disowned. Furthermore, Ophelia cannot know that Hamlet's attitude toward her reflects his disillusionment in his mother. Hamlet's inconstancy can only mean deceitfulness or madness.

Hamlet puts Ophelia in a trap that has been laid by him in order for his revenge to continue, in part Ophelia love and idealize her lover, and her shock is genuine when Hamlet demands " get thee to a nunnery" (line 115). Hamlet says this to show that Ophelia can be easily controlled by others and not only throwing herself at Hamlet but also letting her father control Ophelia. Hamlet calls her a prostitute that can be easily be misled away by other's intentions.

The melancholy, grief, and madness that Hamlet suffers from may well have been the propelling force for all of his unfortunate action towards Ophelia in Shakespearean play. It is worth allowing that the first of the two are real; his melancholy and grief are not the same as Ophelia's. Ophelia is the more tragic of the two because her madness is not feigned. Furthermore, it is caused by the very love of her life is even more disastrous for her poor young life and possibly pregnancy. They are each malcontents with no real happiness made available to them given their unfortunate circumstances.