

April hamlet, but in
order to resolve the



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HAMLET'S HESITATION
In Shakespeare's Hamlet, a ghost tells Hamlet that his uncle, Claudius, is responsible for the death of his father.

Hamlet is driven to reveal the truth of his father's death and seeks to avenge his murder to achieve justice. In his quest to right the wrongdoing, Hamlet delays acting toward justice for many reasons. The main factor for Hamlet's hesitation is attributed to his self-discipline. He lacks of ability to act on his emotions.

Hamlet is an intelligent, moral, and reserved character. He restrains himself to act rationally and not on emotion. This hesitation is a tragic flaw for Hamlet, but in order to resolve the truth, it is necessary. Hamlet has doubts about the validity of the ghost; he is too rational a character to seek revenge on Claudius based on a conversation with a supernatural spirit. He is unsure whether it was his father's ghost, or some evil deity trying to trick him.

Hamlet needs to prove that Claudius killed his father before he can act out revenge against him. He also needs to prove it to Gertrude, because he loves his mother and doesn't want to hurt her by killing Claudius, without proving it warranted.

Hamlet's hesitation is justified because he feels morally obligated to prove that Claudius murdered his father before justice can be carried out. He doesn't want to kill an innocent person. This would be an injustice on his part, and two wrongs don't make a right. Hamlet is also unsure of other people's involvement in the conspiracy against his father. He doesn't know if Claudius acted alone or had help in the murder.

He is disturbed that his mother is now married to Claudius, just two months after his father's death, and is unsure whether she had conspired with Claudius to kill his father. This complicates things further, giving more reason for Hamlet to hesitate, and rationally plan his next move. This invokes Hamlet to act as if he is going mad. He does this to distract the focus of others from his true intention of finding out the truth. He hopes that in doing so, he can reveal the involvement, if any, of others, along with proving Claudius' guilt. He plans to accomplish this by devising a play that parallels the conspiracy against his father's death. The play he develops portrays a reenactment of Claudius poisoning Hamlet's father, and will expose the guilty and alleviate all thoughts that the ghost was the devil. Hamlet explains his reasoning by saying: "guilty creatures, sitting at a play, Have by the very cunning of the scene Been struck so to the soul that presently They have proclaimed their malefactions; For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak With most miraculous organ.

I'll have these players Play something like the murder of my father Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks; I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench, I know my course. The spirit that I have seen May be the devil; and the devil hath power To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps Out of my weakness and my melancholy, As he is very potent with such spirits, Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds More relative than this. The play's the thing Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king." (Act II.

Scene 2, 543-559) Hamlet views Claudius' reaction to the play. Claudius' response is indicative of a guilty person, verifying Hamlet's suspicion. Hamlet can now act out his vengeance on Claudius, since he has proven Claudius'

guilt and has grounds for carrying out justice. Hamlet is now ready to take action against Claudius. Likewise, in flushing him out, Hamlet has tipped Claudius off to his knowledge of the murder, and he knows Claudius will take action against him if he doesn't seize the moment. He is provided the opportunity as he follows Claudius up, away from the play.

However, once again he hesitates because he finds Claudius to be praying, repenting his wrongdoing. Hamlet feels that if he were to kill Claudius while praying it would defeat the purpose he was trying to achieve, making Claudius suffer for murdering his father. Hamlet feels that if he kills Claudius while he is repenting his sins, that Claudius will go to heaven, and that would not achieve the justice he deserves. Hamlet wants Claudius to go to hell.

Hamlet explains this when he says: " 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 revenged. That
would be scanned; A villain kills my father; and for that, I, his sole son, do
this same villain send To heaven. O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.

. But in our circumstance and course of thought, Tis heavy with him: and am
I then revenged, To take him in the purging of his soul, When he is fit and
seasoned for his passage? No. ..

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage, Or, in the incestuous pleasure of his
bed; At game, a-swearing, or about some act That has no relish of salvation
in't; Then trip him, that his soul may be as damned and black As hell,
whereto it goes. My mother stays: This physic but prolongs thy sickly
days."(Act III, Scene 3, 75-80, 84-88, 90-97)Hamlet's hesitation is once again
justified, because killing Claudius while he is praying would not achieve the

justice he desires. Hamlet proceeds to go into Gertrude's room. He finds someone hiding behind the tapestry. Thinking that it's the king, Hamlet hesitates no longer and plunges his sword through the tapestry, into the person concealed behind it. To his disappointment he finds the person to be Polonius, and not the king. This is a bit of irony, since Hamlet ceased to hesitate and killed an innocent person anyway.

After all of the procrastinating and delaying, Hamlet finally receives justice. He exposes the king as a conspirator and cuts his throat, but loses his own life in doing so. Hamlet's hesitation prolonged his emotional agony, but it succeeded in amplifying his anger and desire for justice. Claudius killed his father, and he was aware of the consequences he would face in avenging his death.

The reasons Hamlet had to hesitate were justified and only increased his emotional level in striving for justice. Works Cited Shakespeare, William. The Norton World Anthology of World Masterpieces. Vol. 1, W.

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