

# Hamlet's tragic flaw assignment

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Many commentators on Hamlet have suggested his tragic flaw is his inability to act because he thinks too much. Do you agree? Every character in every book has benefits and flaws that will affect the outcome in their own situation. Sometimes their benefits overcome their flaws and everything turns out great. Other times a character's flaw can ruin what they have planned or ruin them as a person. A tragic flaw is a weakness or limitation of character, resulting in the fall of the tragic hero. (DIYanni 6-9) In Hamlet; written by the great William

Shakespeare, supposedly Hamlet's tragic flaw is the inability to act. I do not agree with it but if he acted differently in any situation, it could have turned into a worse problem or it could have made Hamlet go against his own morals. By overthinking everything Hamlet either overthought his plans and did not go through with them or overthought them to the point he came up with some outrageous idea that will actually hurt his situation even more. The more he thinks, the less he does is a great way to explain why Hamlet misses out on so many opportunities to get revenge.

A person only has a certain amount of chances and I think Hamlet ran out of chances. Although Hamlet is characterized as brave, loyal, and intelligent, he is actually overwhelmed by his own conscience and that leads to him overthinking. The reason behind why Hamlet overthinks is because I believe he cannot balance reason (rational) and passion (irrational) at all. When he is rational he thinks and thinks until he ends up not doing anything about the problem. When he uses passion he commits unnecessary crimes or choices, like killing Polonius.

When Hamlet felt he needed to see Claudius's reaction to his play to truly know it was him who murdered his father, all this did was delay the inevitable. Hamlet, continuing his procrastination, has numerous times he could have gotten his vengeance, but followed them up with excuses. Hamlet was worried that since Claudius was in a peaceful mind praying, Hamlet was scared that Claudius would have been forgiven and sent to heaven. In the rare cases, instead of thinking, Hamlet acts on impulse. Cases where this is relevant are when Horatio informs Hamlet that he saw his father's ghost, and when he kills Polonius in the bedroom.

Instead of thinking, he follows the ghost without question, and when Hamlet assumes that the person standing behind the curtains is Claudius instead of Polonius, he kills that person before even confirming whom it might be. It is very hard to know what is going on in Hamlet's mind. As he contemplates between choices, it is unnoticeable on what his real plan is. He struggles with finding that balance and because he doesn't find it which led to him missing big opportunities of revenge. "Thus conscience does make cowards of us all. (Hamlet, Act III, Scene I, Page 4), shows that Hamlet is aware of his inability to make any decisions and that makes him look like a coward. An opportunity that Hamlet just disregarded was that he promised to immediately get revenge for his father but he makes the wrong decision and spends the next few acts trying to prove Claudius's guilt instead. Even after Hamlet finds out that Claudius is guilty he still cannot kill him due to "Bad Timing" because he is praying and then that would mean he would go to heaven. Hamlet finds excuses for many things but makes himself believe it is a very valid reason why not to go through with his plan.

What Hamlet never really understood is consequences can arise when one procrastinates and he was the king of procrastination. Some other examples of Hamlet's procrastination is his inability to act not only on his father's murder but also his mother's marriage and his uncle taking the throne. The italicized quote below is another example of Hamlet overthinking a situation; this one regarding his mother's recent marriage to his uncle. " O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason/ Would have mourned longer- married with my uncle,] My father's brother, but no more like my father / Than I to Hercules.

Within a month,] Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears / Had left the flushing in her galled eyes ] She married. " (Act I, Scene II. pg 65, 150-156).

You would think Hamlet would kill his uncle after he killed his own father and married his mother but I feel like that just left Hamlet more confused than he was before. An example of when Hamlet delays killing Claudius is when he puts on a play to make Claudius feel guilty about murdering King Hamlet. Instead Hamlet should have just killed Claudius and been done with it.

Instead he procrastinates again and thinks that he needs to see that the king is guilty, when he knows that he is guilty. When Hamlet says, " The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Toppically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista; you shall see anon;'t is a knavish piece of work: but what o'that? Your majesty and we have free souls, it touches us not: let the galled jade winch, our wits are unwrung. " (3. 2. 211-215, Shakespeare) he is telling Claudius what the play is about, which is really a re-enactment of how Claudius killed King Hamlet.

Hamlet thought that he needed to see the reaction of the King because he doesn't fully believe that the ghost is telling the truth. Hamlet waits to see if the ghost is telling him the truth, so he can take his revenge. Once he sees that the ghost is telling the truth because of the reaction of the king, he decided to get revenge. After the play Hamlet knows that the ghost was telling the truth about Claudius killing King Hamlet, but he doesn't act right away. Killing the king is Hamlet's top priority but his thought gets in the way of this.

In Act 3, Scene 3 Hamlet says, " Now might I do it Pat, now he is praying; and now I'll dot. And so'a goes to heaven; and so I am revengd. That would be scann'd: a villain kills my father; and for that, I, his sole son, do this same villain send to heaven. Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge' a And how his audit stands who knows save heaven? But in our circumstance and course of thought, tis heavy with him: and I am then revengd, to take him in the purging of his soul, when he is fit and season'd for his passage? No! " (3. 3. 74-87, Shakespeare) and this causes him not to kill Claudius when he has the perfect chance to.

Hamlet knows that he needs to get revenge on his father, but his inability to act and kill causes him to miss his chance to get revenge on Claudius.

Hamlet doubted that his actions would turn out because he thought that since Claudius was in a peaceful state of mind that he would die peacefully and be forgiven of killing King Hamlet. Due to Hamlet's procrastination, he misses his opportunity at initiating his plan of killing Claudius and getting his revenge. Luckily, he does still in fact get his vengeance even though it was

not his plan to engage. There are also points in the play where Hamlet does not think, instead he acts on impulse.

When Horatio tells Hamlet that he saw his father's ghost, Hamlet does not hesitate or think about the consequences of going to talk with a ghost.

Hamlet says, " It will not speak; then I will follow it. " (1. 4. 64, Shakespeare) and follows the ghost away. Most people would be very frightened by this and would not want to talk to a ghost in case it was trying to haunt them.

Another time in the play when Hamlet does not think before he acts, is when Hamlet and Gertrude are talking in the bedroom and Hamlet kills Polonius. "

Hamlet: How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat. Dead! Polonius: O, I am slain! "

(3. 4. 4-25, Shakespeare) Hamlet assumes that the person standing behind the curtains is King Claudius but it was really Polonius. If he had thought before he acted, he wouldn't have killed Polonius. Finally, Hamlet's famous monologue (where he basically contemplates suicide and rationalizes why he is unable to avenge his father's death) is probably the most famous line of over-thinking this world has ever read: To be, or not to be: that is the question: / Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer / The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, / Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, / And by opposing end them.

To die, to sleep-/ No more- Thus conscience does make cowards of us all. (3. 1. 56-61 , 83). Hamlet's tragic flaw is partly his inability to act without thinking, but also his failure to think without acting on impulse. It just shows how over- thinking is like a rocking chair, it gives you something to do but it doesn't get you anywhere.