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| **Hamlet - Appearance vs. Reality 2** | |
| Hamlet one of Shakespeare's greatest plays, where the young  Prince of Denmark must uncover the truth about his father’s death.  Hamlet a play that tells the story of a young prince whose father  Recently died. Hamlets uncle Claudius marries his mother the queen  and takes the throne. As the play is told Hamlet finds out his father  was murdered by the recently crowned king. The theme that remains  constant throughout the play is appearance versus reality. Things  within the play appear to be true and honest but in reality are  infested with evil. Many of the characters within the play hide  behind a mask of falseness. Four of the main characters that hid  behind this mask are Polonius, Rosencrantz (Guildenstern), the king  Claudius. From behind this mask they give the impression of a person  who is sincere and genuine, in reality they are plagued with lies and  evil. Their appearance will make it very difficult for Hamlet to  uncover the truth, the characters hide behind.  Polonius the kings royal assistant has a preoccupation with  appearance. He always wants to keep up the appearance of loving and  caring person. Polonius appears like a man who loves and cares about  his son, Laertes. Polonius speaks to his son with advice that sounds  sincere but in reality it is rehearsed, hollow and without feeling.  Polonius gives his advice only to appear to be the loving caring  father. The reality is he only speaks to appear sincere as a  politician, to look good rather than actually be good: "And borrowing  dulls the edge of husbandry. This above all: to thine own self be  true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be  false to any man. Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!" Act 1  Polonius gives his son Laertes his blessing to go away, he sends  a spy to follow him and keep an eye on him. This shows his lack of  trust for anyone, he gives the appearance of a confident father who  trusts his son to go off on his own. In reality he lies about his  trust for his son by sending a spy to watch him. His advice he gives  his son is rehearsed and only said to give the appearance of a loving  father. Polonius further adds to the theme appearance verses reality  by ordering Ophelia to stop seeing Hamlet. He lies to her telling her  that Hamlet does not love her, he only lusts for her, in truth he does  love her: Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know, When the blood  burns , how prodigal the soul Through the play Polonius hides behind  his mask appearing to be honest loving parent. In reality Polonius  lies, manipulates people and eavesdrops on peoples conversation.  Polonius helps contribute to the theme appearance verses reality by  showing how his appearance is not his true nature, behind the mask  there lies someone totally different.  Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are two of Hamlets childhood friends  who when asked by the king, try to find out what is troubling the  young prince. Both help to contribute to the theme by showing there  appearance of being Hamlets friends. The pair go to Hamlet pretending  to be his friends when in truth they are only there because the king  asked them to find the truth. There is some irony within the twins,  they are asked by the king to find out the truth by hiding within a  lie, by pretending to be his friend: A dream is but a shadow Act II.  Hamlet knows there purpose for their visit is to dig into his  soul to find the real reason for his actions as of late. As the play  continues the twins are asked again by the king to go to Hamlet and  try again to find the real reason for Hamlets behaviour. Hamlet  insults them at every chance knowing they are lying to him about there  purpose of the visit: Tis as easy as lying; govern these vantages with  you finger and thumb, give it breath with your mouth...Act III  As the melodrama continues Hamlet goes with the twins to reclaim  money that another state owes Denmark. Hamlet is sent by the king to  retrieve the assets. In actuality Hamlet is sent off to wither  because the king, Claudius knows that Hamlet knows too much and must  be killed. The twins show there appearance of being Hamlets friends  but in truth they have a hidden reason for visiting with Hamlet. Both  show that it will be very difficult for Hamlet to uncover the fidelity  hidden within the lies.  Claudius the king of Denmark conduct in council gives him the  appearance of an Honest and honourable man. In Act one scene two  Claudius in the presence of council shows his true skill and ease of  manner at speaking. Claudius speaks well of the spent king by  showing a general love for him by all his subjects. Claudius show  respect for the old sovereign by speaking kind words of him. In  reality he cares little for the old king, he speaks kindly only to  give the appearance of loving brother.  Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  The memory be green, and that it us befitted  To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom  To be contracted in one brow of woe Act I  As Claudius sends Voltimand and Cornelius off to give the king of  Norway the message of Fortibras, he thanks and gives them complete  trust, in the deliverance of the notation. This shows his trust and  caring for his subjects in front of the council, wining even more  consent from the council: We doubt it nothing: heartily farewell. Act  I Claudius increases his appearance of a honest and honourable man, in  front of the council by showing his respect for Polonius. He gives  him the power to let his son Laertes stay or leave for Norway.  Claudius speaks highly of Polonius giving him thanks and saying the he  was responsible for Claudius becoming king:  The head is not more native to the heart,  The hand more instrumental to the mouth,  Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.  What woudlst thou have, Laertes (Act I ii, 47-50)  This council would see this as a man who greatly respects his  subjects and cares for them. This adds to the difficulty of  uncovering the truth for Hamlet later. Hamlet enters the council  chamber and speaks with Claudius. The king (Claudius) speaks with  Hamlet seeming to be concerned with Hamlet. He gives advice that over  grieving is not healthy, this shows a concern for Hamlets well-being.  This conduct of Claudius gives him the appearance of being kind in  front of council that accepts him even more for his family values: How  is it that the clouds still hang on you? Act I Claudius appears to be  even more caring when insulted by Hamlet he still shows love and  general care for Hamlet. A normal king would have become angry and  Hamlet would have gotten into trouble. Claudius shows the council that  he is understanding of Hamlet's grief over his father: A little more  than kin, and less than kind. Act I . Claudius gives Hamlet advice  that over grieving can be harmful and not healthy. Claudius tells  Hamlet that he is an admirable person for grieving  for so long over his dads death. Yet again Claudius keeps putting on  the appearance of the honourable man.  Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,  To give these mourning duties to your father:  But, you must know, you father lost a father;  That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound  In filial obligation for some term  To do obsequious sorrow; but to persevere  In obstinate condolement is a course Act I  Claudius further makes it difficult to uncover the truth by  announcing that Hamlet is next in line for the throne of Denmark.  This shows that Claudius would let Hamlet become the next king when  he is gone. This reveals a love and care for Hamlet to the council  and Gertrude making Claudius appear to be kind, loving person: You are  the most immediate to our throne; And with no less nobility of love  Act I  Claudius final conduct that makes him a difficult truth to  uncover, is his care and want that Hamlet remain in Denmark. Claudius  is insulted by Hamlet, he asks Hamlet to stay only that his queen  Gertrude wants Hamlet to stay. Claudius appears to be concerned with  Hamlets well-being, Gertrude and council see this ,making Claudius a  more deserving person to be king.  As Claudius speaks in council he gives the appearance of someone  who is a deserving person that should be king. Claudius is voted in  as king meaning he is already approved by everyone. Claudius gives  respect to his subjects giving the council the impression that he  respects them. The king shows general concern for Hamlet, his nephew.  This will make it very difficult to prove the truth about Claudius  in the future for he has not only, one the love and respect of council  (that voted him in). But also has prevented an attack on Denmark (from  Fortinbras) proving that he is good king that can protect the state  from harm. Claudius makes it very difficult for Hamlet to uncover the  truth about the true nature of Claudius in the future.  Through the characters within the play all help to show the theme,  that being appearance verses reality. Polonius, Rosencrantz  (Guildenstern) and the king all appear to be good and honest. As  Hamlet finds out, all contain lies and have hidden intentions within  them. As each character is presented in the play all appear to be  good and honest making it a difficult task for Hamlet to uncover the  hidden truth about the nature of each character. As Hamlet best said  it something’s is rotten in Denmark That being the lies which have  replaced or covered the true state of each character. | |
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