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What Someone's Quest for Revenge Can Do to An Outside Force

The human soul is just as complex and delicate as the human body; any negative situation could certainly compromise its purity. In one of the most renowned tragedies known throughout history, actor and playwright, William Shakespeare represents tragedies in a metaphoric and symbolic way. In his best-known work, *Hamlet* tells the story of how the Prince of Denmark, Hamlet, is consumed by his grief over the death of his father, the late King Hamlet. Over the course of the play, Prince Hamlet is visited by his father's ghost and learns that his uncle, Claudius, poisoned his father in his sleep in order to gain the Danish throne. Afterwards, his son is on a mission to seek revenge against his uncle on his father's behalf, but the pursuit of that goal will plunge him into pure madness. However, Prince Hamlet is not the only one who is consumed by despair. Laertes pursues Hamlet for vengeance for the murder of his father, and he then challenges the prince to a fencing duel. Her broken heart between her prince charming's sheer madness, her brother's enraged state, and the murder of her father devours Laertes's sister, Ophelia is now the one being dragged through all of this, and greeting her sad and loneliness with open arms. Being consumed by madness is like a "Domino Effect." In other words, when one person is being devoured internally, others are also

being infected externally by the symptoms of madness too.

Grieving over the death of a loved one takes a drastic toll on an individual. It is a normal emotion for any human being to experience in their lifetime. In Prince Hamlet's case, he is, without a doubt going through this human emotion. However it is taken to new heights once he encounters the spirit of his recently deceased father. As soon as the young prince receives the shocking information given directly to him, his internal emotions switch gears from grief to internal rage. Now that his inner emotions are sky high, the young prince is on the road to his deterioration into madness. In Act One Scene Five, after Prince Hamlet's paranormal experience, he stands alone trying everything in his power to compose himself, and take in the information that was given to him so suddenly. "O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain! My tables- meet it is I set it down that one may smile and smile and be a villain. At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark. So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word. It is "adieu, adieu, remember me". I have sworn't" (Shakespeare, 1.5 lines 113-119). From the young prince's perspective, this is the turning point for his emotions. At this exact moment, Hamlet's emotions slowly transition in to confusion, and anger towards his uncle Claudius. Once he recognizes his enraged state, the prince vows to seek revenge against his deceiving uncle for his secret crime that he has kept hidden from everyone around him, particularly Gertrude and Hamlet. Another situation where Prince Hamlet internally battles with his emotions is when he is about to kill Claudius after the presentation of the play. However, he discovers his uncle praying to God, and he is asking for forgiveness of his sinful deed. "Now might I do it <pat, > now he is a praying, and now I'll do it. And so he goes to heave, 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” (Shakespeare, 3.3 lines 77-83). At this moment, Prince Hamlet was given the ultimate opportunity to officially end his uncle’s life. However, he comes to the realization that if he does murder his uncle while in prayer to God, he fears that his uncle’s immortal soul will be forgiven of his sinful crime, and give him passage to heaven. In the end, the young prince withdraws from his intended plan, and waits for the next proper moment to complete his act of vengeance, but the prince knew very well that this might have been the only opportunity.

Though it may seem Hamlet is the only character going through his own emotional roller coaster, there is yet another male character that will soon be joining the young prince in the quest for revenge. Laertes, the son of Polonius, who was Claudius’s “right hand.” Throughout almost the entire play, Laertes is away studying in France. Once Laertes returns, Claudius and Prince Hamlet’s mother, Gertrude, give him the most dreadful news. Laertes is informed that his father is now deceased, and that the young prince himself murdered him. “How came he be dead? I’ll not be juggled with. To hell, allegiance! Vows, to the blackest devil! I dare damnation. To this point I stand That both the worlds I give to negligence, Most thoroughly for my father” (Shakespeare, 4.5, lines 148- 154). Young Laertes is in complete shock that his father is dead, but also that the prince of Denmark’s hands murdered him. Claudius now has the advantage of deceiving the young boy to manipulate him into seeking vengeance against the prince. In other words, Claudius is going to plot against Prince Hamlet, and use Laertes to kill him for him instead. Later on, Claudius is seen walking with Laertes in tow discussing his plan. “I will do’t, And for <that> purpose I’ll anoint my sword. I bought an unction of a mountebank So mortal that, but dip a knife in it, Where it draws blood no cataplasm so

rare, Collected from all simples that have virtue Under the moon, can save the thing from death That is but scratched withal. I'll touch my point with this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly, It may be death" (Shakespeare, 4.7, lines 159-168). Claudius and Laertes discuss how to end Prince Hamlet's life for good. Claudius plans to have Laertes challenge the prince to a fencing duel to the death. However, Claudius is planning to have Laertes's sword tip dipped into a deadly poison, in hopes of killing the young prince from one swipe or stab during the duel. It is certainly a devious plan on Claudius's part, but this is definitely a turning point for Laertes. At this moment, Claudius, and his devilish scheme have manipulated Laertes, so he is being lied to and blinded by Claudius's true nature. Now that he's under Claudius's manipulative spell, Laertes's internal soul is about to be clouded with the smog of anger and vengeance, and he will stop at nothing until he has been rewarded his true desire at that moment.

Between Prince Hamlet's drastic and emotional transformation, and Laertes being manipulated into seeking vengeance, it is clear that someone externally will be affected by their mental and emotional instabilities, particularly one young lady at the center of all of this. Ophelia, is the young daughter of Polonius, and younger sister to Laertes. She and Prince Hamlet were lovers for quite some time, but ever since Hamlet became distant with her, she begins to question her lover's odd behavior. After trying to confront him about his recent behavior, the young prince lashes out at her. He repeats to her that she should become a nun and no longer be oppressed by the acts of true love. In the aftermath of his outburst, Ophelia is left dumbfounded like a deer in headlights. "O what a noble mind is here o' erthrowm! The courtier's, soldiers, eye, tongue, sword, (Th' expectancy> and rose of the fair state, The glass of fashion and the mold of form, Th'

observed of all observers, quite, quite down! And I, of ladies most deject and wretched, That sucked the honey of his musicked vows, Now see <that> noble and most sovereign reason, Like sweet bells jangled, out of time and harsh; That unmatched form and stature of blown youth Blasted with ecstasy. O, woe is me T' have seen what I have, see what I see!" (Shakespeare, 3.1, lines 163-175). The innocent girl had just been told off and all she can do is stand there in utter shock, and not even attempt to go after him. It is understandable that she just encountered her true love's counter personality, but she has no idea what she will experience over the course of Hamlet's quest for revenge. Later on, when her brother returns from France and her own lover has now murdered father, Ophelia takes a tragicturn for the worse. As soon as Laertes learns of his father's gruesome fate, Ophelia greets him singing a peculiar song that no one can fully comprehend. She is also speaking and addressing everyone in an appalling manner. "There's fennel for you, and columbines. There's rue for you, and here's some for me; we may call it herb of grace o' Sundays. There's a daisy. I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died. They say he made a good end" (Shakespeare, 4.5, lines 204-209). Poor, sweet, and innocent Ophelia, she speaks from a broken heart, and none of this was of her doing. When she was giving out the flowers, it is a subtle way to symbolize her innocence. In other words, symbolizing herself as a virgin. However, Ophelia mentions the violets associated with her father's death. Violets in conjunction with death are also the symbol of maidenhood and resurrection. Depending on its color, it can be a symbol of royalty, power, confidence, spirituality, intuition, chastity, innocence, and purity.

Revenge is like a ticking time bomb waiting to explode. When one person is clouded with only vengeance left inside the human soul, others will follow in this domino effect. In the end, Prince Hamlet, Laertes, and Ophelia meet their tragic end. Laertes challenges Hamlet to a fencing duel and Hamlet stabs Laertes to death. However, since the tip of Laertes's sword was dipped in the deadly poison, when Hamlet is struck and infected by its lethal venom, the young prince meets his end. As for Ophelia, she could not take her pain any longer, and she commits suicide by drowning in the nearby brook. Overall, revenge will only result in destruction in the end. For Hamlet, Laertes, and Ophelia, all were victims of revenge. Each person became clouded with its destructive nature, and the residue of madness left in its aftermath. Getting justice for someone is one thing, but it is never worth giving up life itself. For all three characters, they lead by a tragic example, that revenge is a dangerous path with no winners.