

Global Literature

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Shakespeare: Hamlet

Acts 3-5

In Act 3 of Shakespeare's Hamlet, the play's central conflict escalates as Hamlet continues his plan to expose his father's murderer. He arranges a play that mimics his father's murder, hoping to provoke a reaction from King Claudius. Claudius reacts, and Hamlet confirms his guilt. Hamlet then accidentally kills Polonius, mistaking him for Claudius, which drives Ophelia to madness and eventually leads to her death.

In Act 4, Hamlet is sent to England by King Claudius, who plots to have him killed. However, Hamlet outwits his captors and returns to Denmark. Meanwhile, Ophelia's brother, Laertes, seeks revenge against Hamlet for the death of his father and sister. Claudius devises a plan to have Hamlet and Laertes duel, with Laertes using a poisoned sword.

In Act 5, the final act of the play, the duel takes place. Hamlet is wounded with the poisoned sword, but he also wounds Laertes with it. Meanwhile, Queen Gertrude accidentally drinks poisoned wine intended for Hamlet and dies. Laertes confesses his role in the plot and forgives Hamlet before dying. Hamlet finally kills Claudius, avenging his father's death, but he too succumbs to his wounds and dies.

Overall, Acts 3-5 of Hamlet are a culmination of the play's major themes of revenge, madness, and mortality. The plot intensifies as Hamlet's plan to avenge his father's death comes to fruition, but at a great cost to himself and those around him. The tragic ending highlights the play's examination of the fragility of life and the consequences of our actions.

