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WEEK 10

"Hamlet" is one of Shakespeare's most famous plays and is a tragedy that explores themes such as revenge, madness, and morality. The play follows the story of Prince Hamlet of Denmark, who is tasked with avenging his father's murder by his uncle Claudius, who has taken the throne and married Hamlet's mother.

Act 1 of "Hamlet" sets the stage for the events that will unfold in the play. It introduces the characters and their relationships to one another, as well as the main conflict of the play. The act opens with a conversation between two sentries, Francisco and Bernardo, who are guarding the castle of Elsinore. They are soon joined by Horatio, a scholar and friend of Hamlet's. The three men then witness the ghost of Hamlet's father, who appears on the castle battlements.

The scene shifts to the court of King Claudius, where he is holding court and making speeches about the death of his brother, the former king. He announces that he has married Queen Gertrude, Hamlet's mother, and that he is sending ambassadors to Norway to prevent an attack on Denmark. The court is then interrupted by the arrival of Prince Hamlet, who is grieving the death of his father. Hamlet is troubled by the hasty marriage of his mother to his uncle and is suspicious of the circumstances surrounding his father's death.

The next scene takes place in the private chambers of Queen Gertrude, where she and King Claudius attempt to console Hamlet. Hamlet is dismissive of their attempts and becomes increasingly agitated. He then encounters the ghost of his father, who reveals that he was murdered by Claudius and urges Hamlet to seek revenge. Hamlet is shocked and unsure of what to do, but he decides to feign madness in order to investigate the circumstances surrounding his father's death.

Act 2 of "Hamlet" begins with Polonius, a counselor to King Claudius, sending his servant Reynaldo to spy on his son Laertes, who is in France. Polonius then instructs his daughter Ophelia to avoid Hamlet, whom he believes is acting erratically because of his unrequited love for her. Ophelia agrees, but Hamlet soon enters and begins to speak to her in a cryptic and unsettling manner, causing her to become afraid.

The next scene takes place in the court of King Claudius, where two of Hamlet's school friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, have been summoned to find out what is troubling Hamlet. They attempt to get Hamlet to reveal his thoughts and feelings, but he remains evasive and uncooperative. The scene ends with Polonius suggesting to King Claudius that they use Ophelia to spy on Hamlet and find out the reason for his madness.

Act 1 and Act 2 of "Hamlet" are critical in establishing the main themes and conflicts of the play. Act 1 sets the stage for the tragedy to come, introducing the main characters and the central conflict of the play. It also introduces the supernatural element of the ghost of Hamlet's father, which sets in motion the events that will lead to Hamlet seeking revenge against Claudius.

Act 2 expands on the theme of madness, which will become a major focus of the play. Hamlet's feigned madness is the catalyst for the other characters to start questioning their own sanity, and it is a tool that Hamlet uses to investigate the truth about his father's death. The act also introduces the subplot of Polonius using his daughter to spy on Hamlet