

Joleigh Marney

Reading Questions 22-24

Reading 22 (1/17/2024):

Question 1- Whenever someone starts acting crazy, we never know if they are actually crazy. It takes a little bit to find out. They, also, seem to go crazy after they lose a loved one. Also, every time when Hamlet is talking to someone, he does not trust he acts crazy but whenever he's talking to someone he does trust, he acts normal.

Answer- *"In this act we see madness that is completely genuine. Ophelia lost her father, killed by the man who had loved her. He had gone mad, and now he was gone. Her brother was gone, and Ophelia went crazy. Both Hamlet and Ophelia's madness are caused by the murder of their father. But the murder of Hamlet's father was planned and calculated, and Hamlet's madness seems to be planned and calculated. The murder of Ophelia's father was spontaneous and accidental. There's no hint of the cunning in her that Hamlet displays."*

Question 2- There is a lot of people spying on Hamlet. They want to know if he is really crazy or just pretending to be. The more they spy on Hamlet, the more the king wants Hamlet dead.

Answer- *"Everyone is spying on and deceiving one another. Spying leads directly to Polonius's death. Claudius is plotting the murder of Hamlet, but he's deceiving both Hamlet and his nation in doing so. And Hamlet has to outwit various spies that Claudius keeps sending to accompany him. After that fails, he and Laertes plan to kill Hamlet by deception—through 'cloak and dagger' (and old term for spying), which means through poison and cheating."*

Question 3- Everyone throughout the play is deceiving each other. Hamlet is acting like he is crazy to the ones he does not trust. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern act like they are helping Hamlet and being a good friend to him but instead they are helping the king kill Hamlet. The king and Laertes deceive Hamlet when they fight. Laertes poisoned the sword and Claudius poisoned a drink. If Hamlet got struck by the sword, he would die. If Hamlet won the sword fight then drank the cup, he would die. Either way, Hamlet would die because he was deceived.

Answer- Did not have an answer for this one.

Question 4- Hamlet is trying to get revenge against Claudius because he killed Hamlet's father, took Hamlet's mother for his (Claudius) wife, and then tried to get rid of Hamlet. Laertes is trying to get revenge against Hamlet because Hamlet killed his father, even though it was by accident. Claudius and Laertes teamed up to kill Hamlet.

Answer- *"Now Laertes is obsessed with revenge as well as Hamlet. Both men want to avenge their fathers' deaths. Hamlet still wants to kill Claudius, Laertes wants to kill Hamlet, and Claudius is throughout this story the conniving ruler who will do anything to protect his own power."*

Reading 23 (1/17/2024):

Question 1- I think Shakespeare is making a point and wants it to stand out. If it was like the rest of the play, it might not have stood out as much. I also think that Shakespeare was getting preparing the audience for the coming up scenes/the end of the story. It ended up that the grave-diggers had been digging since Hamlet was born. They started their job the day Hamlet was born.

Answer- *“This scene is oddly comic when compared with the rest of the tragedy. We suddenly have two new characters show up, laughing, joking, and arguing as they dig the grave. It’s a dark kind of humor—they’re throwing out skulls as they sing and crack jokes, and they’re hardened to the whole situation. We should ask ourselves what this scene contributes to the bigger picture—obviously Shakespeare put this here for a reason. The clue seems to lie in the details the gravedigger provides when he tells Hamlet that he’s been digging graves since the day Hamlet was born. We also learn that’s the same day Hamlet was born. We also learn that’s the same day Hamlet’s father conquered Fortinbras. Why do you think Shakespeare put that for us? I think that Hamlet was supposed to see his own life, from the beginning to end, as one long series of graves. Grave after grave after grave, and we can joke, laugh, and sing, but the point remains that we’re doing it surrounded by death. It’s also interesting that Hamlet’s birth was the day his father conquered Fortinbras, and the day he dies was the day Fortinbras conquered. This shows us that Hamlet’s life has been one long, slow decline into complete defeat. The gravediggers are there to emphasize the dark themes of the book—they’re not there because the play just needed a little comic relief for some reason. (Although that’s also true!)”*

Question 2- Poison has been used a lot throughout this play and Claudius has used a lot of it. First, we find out that Claudius murdered Hamlet’s father by pouring poison into his ear. Then, when Claudius and Laertes plan to kill Hamlet, they used poison. Laertes put poison on the sword he used and Claudius put poison in a drink that he was going to give to Hamlet if he did win the sword fight, instead Hamlet’s mother drank the cup and died. They all ended up dying at the end either from the sword or the drink.

Answer- *“Poison obviously has an important role through this entire story, beginning with the poison which was poured into Hamlet the elder’s ear. Along with that poison, the metaphorical poison of deception was poured into the ear of Denmark. At the end, Claudius, Gertrude, Hamlet, and Laertes were all poisoned—but only Claudius was poisoned twice—once with the sword and once with the wine.”*

Question 3- I think that Hamlet pretended to be crazy. When Hamlet was around the people he trusted, he was perfectly fine and he talked normal. When he was talking to someone he did not trust, he acted like he was crazy.

Answer- *“This is obviously a matter of opinion. It seems clear that at least some of Hamlet’s madness was feigned—there was too much ‘method’ in it. But there are other portions where we can genuinely wonder, and it seems possible to read it both ways...”*

Question 4- As always, vengeance is never the path to go and it always ends up a tragic in the end. Hamlet was wanting revenge and ended up dying, Laertes was revenge and ended up dying, and Claudius was the cause for everything (the deceiving, the murder, the planning, etc.) and also ended up dying. It also hurts the others around them. Gertrude was watching the sword fight and accidentally drinks the cup Claudius poisoned for Hamlet.

Answer- *“Avenging the death of a father is pervasive in this story. Fortinbras is trying to avenge his father. Hamlet is trying to avenge his father. Laertes is trying to avenge his father. In the end, they actually all achieve their goal. Laertes kills Hamlet, Hamlet kills Claudius, and Fortinbras regains all his father’s land and more. So, isn’t that a happy ending? Everyone got what they wanted—except Claudius, but he was the bad guy so we don’t mind. And Hamlet has been asking for death right from the beginning—so it’s clear that he achieved his purpose. Gertrude, Ophelia, Polonius...they seemed to just be collateral damage. What are we supposed to see from this? Are we supposed to take away that vengeance is an empty thing? That when you achieve it, you’ve also lost it? That if vengeance is what you’re after, there’s no such thing as victory? Or are we supposed to see sometimes a happy ending and sad ending are the same thing? Is this a good moral lesson, or is this nihilism? What do you think?”*

Reading 24 (1/18/2024):

Question 1- There is a lot of eavesdropping between conversations and most of the time, they did not understand it completely and told someone what they thought. When they got it mixed up who liked Hero, Leonato went to tell Hero to expect a proposal from the prince. Now, Hero is waiting for the prince to propose when instead Claudio wants to marry her.

Answer- *“This whole play is full of eavesdropping. In this act, Don Pedro and Claudio decide that the prince will disguise himself as Claudio and woo Hero. Afterwards, he will hand her off to the real Claudio. Two people overheard this. Borachio got the news correct and passed it on—another man misunderstood what was happening and passed that on.*

Question 2- After eavesdropping came a lot of misunderstanding. When people were eavesdropping on the conversation about who likes Hero, they got the person actually liked Hero mixed up. Now, Hero got the wrong information. It reminds me of the telephone game. The father it gets from the beginning, the more mixed up it get. It also reminds me of gossiping, the more the gossip goes, it gets more mixed up to the point where it’s not even true.

Answer- *“Misunderstanding also plays a major role in this story. At this point, Leonato thinks that the prince is in love with his daughter, and he has told Hero as well.”*