

How Hamlet Feels About Gertrude

Passages of how Hamlet feels about Gertrude:

Act I, Scene ii,

138

143-158

176- 181

Act I, Scene v,

105

Act III, Scene ii,

128- 131

133- 140

158- 159

235- 237

396- 407

Act III, Scene iv, (The confrontation scene between Hamlet and Gertrude)

Basically all of the scene excluding the beginning where Polonius speaks to Gertrude

The question How Does Hamlet Feel About Gertrude brings immediately to mind very strong emotions, most of which are not the least bit positive. Two months have passed, and already Queen Gertrude has married another man. It is bad enough that Gertrude has married again with such "wicked speed" (I, ii, 156), but what makes it much worse in Hamlet's eyes is that she married King Hamlet's brother, Cladius. From the start of the play, Hamlet's anger and disappointment toward his mother are shown. In Scene I, Act ii, Hamlet meets his friend, Horatio, and reveals his disappointment in his mother's decision. Hamlet tell Horatio that "The funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables" (I, ii, 180-181). To Hamlet, it seems the marriage has followed so fast upon his father's death that he can barely tell that any time has passed at all since his father's funeral. His mother's marriage to Cladius deeply hurts Hamlet and he feels that it may "break [his] heart" (I, ii, 158). It even causes Hamlet to say that "frailty, thy name is women." That is very strong comment to make and the cause of such thinking all comes down to his mother and how she let Hamlet down. As the play continues, Hamlet's anger seems to increase. In the beginning of the play, Hamlet feels he must "hold [his] tongue" (I, ii, 158) and

not speak to his mother, but later in the play he wants to confront her. He becomes so angry that he feels he could "drink hot blood" (III, ii, 398). Hamlet is enraged to the point of wanting to "speak daggers to her" (III, ii, 404).

Although Hamlet's anger is evident throughout the play, the most direct display of his anger occurs when he confronts his mother in Act III, Scene iv. There is no mistaking his rage when he begins to speak everything that he has previously kept hidden from his mother. So dangerous does he seem in his wrath that Gertrude even cries for help. This cry results in Polonius' death and if it were not for the promise Hamlet made to his father not to kill Gertrude, Hamlet may have very well killed his mother as well. Instead of causing her bodily harm, Hamlet tries to make her realize what a horrendous thing she has done. Hamlet so shames his mother that she cries out: "O, speak to me no more" (95). But Hamlet is unwilling to stop, he means to drive home those "daggers" he spoke of earlier.

Although throughout the play the anger toward his mother is most easily recognized, there are other feelings that Hamlet holds for his mother. Hamlet still cares for his mother and still hopes that she will redeem herself. Why would Hamlet be so mad at his mother if he did not love her? Hamlet tells Gertrude that "he is cruel only to be kind" (III, iv, 179). He hopes that his words, although strong and painful, will make her see what she has been avoiding all along, that her lust for Cladius is sinful and unlawful. He asks her to "repent what's past" (III, iv, 151). Hamlet would not ask this of her if he did not believe deep inside that his mother could be redeemed. He realizes that it is possible for his mother to gain back some of what she has lost, including Hamlet's respect, by keeping herself away from Cladius' bed. In addition to asking her to repent, Hamlet asks his mother to tell Cladius that he is still mad. Hamlet would not make such a request if he did not have at least some faith in his mother. He has enough trust in her to make this request. Even though anger seems to be at the forefront, he still cares for his mother deep inside. The real question may be how does this all affect the play? The most obvious reason has to do with Cladius and Hamlet. The fact that Cladius killed Hamlet's father is by itself alone enough reason for Hamlet to kill Cladius, but add on top of that the fact that Cladius is now sleeping with King Hamlet's wife. Hamlet could not be in much worse a situation. The situation adds to the theme of revenge and gives more reasoning behind it. It gives Hamlet more reason to seek Cladius' death, not only is Cladius king, he has managed to take away the mother that Hamlet used to know and love. Now, Hamlet cannot even think of his mother without becoming angry. Also, the interaction between Hamlet and his mother, especially the confrontation, really helps readers look into Hamlet's character and it helps readers see how extremely angry and sad Hamlet is. It brings out the emotion in Hamlet and Hamlet confronting his mother is easily one of his most passionate moments. In addition to being important to the theme of revenge and showing Hamlet's character, the situation that Hamlet is in with his mother is in itself an interesting dilemma that adds to the story. It gives Hamlet a different kind of problem to deal with. Dealing with his mother is not something that can be solved by murder like his problem with Cladius, rather it is a problem that Hamlet must find a different way of dealing with, especially on an

emotional level. Part of the reason he is so melancholy is his mother's marriage and throughout the play he is forced to deal with the feelings that have arisen from the conflict he is in. In a way, confronting his mother provides Hamlet with a way to vent his anger and let loose some of the rage he has held in. Although the change in Hamlet from thoughtful to rash may have been triggered by Polonius' death as many believe, maybe instead it was actually caused by his confrontation with his mother which allowed Hamlet to let loose some of his painful emotions held inside and thereby, freeing Hamlet's mind to act. Either way, Hamlet's feelings toward Gertrude are a very integral part of the play Hamlet.