

4. Who Sends For Hamlet After The Play?A. ClaudiusB. HoratioC. GertrudeD. Ophelia

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In William Shakespeare's tragedy Hamlet, the moments following the performance of the play are crucial for the unfolding of the plot. The question of who sends for Hamlet after the play reveals much about the characters' motivations and the underlying tensions that pervade the narrative. This pivotal scene not only drives the action forward but also serves as a mirror reflecting the complex relationships among the characters, especially concerning the themes of suspicion, guilt, and authority.

Understanding the Context of the Play Within the Play

Before delving into who sends for Hamlet, it's essential to grasp what transpires during the play and its significance. The play, often referred to as The Mousetrap, is a carefully staged performance crafted by Hamlet himself. Its purpose is to observe King Claudius's reaction, as Hamlet suspects him of murdering his father. The scene is a turning point because it provides visual confirmation of Claudius's guilt, which Hamlet has long suspected.

The aftermath of the play is marked by a series of reactions from the characters, especially Claudius and Gertrude. Their responses set the stage for subsequent events, including the confrontation between Hamlet and his mother, and the eventual escalation toward tragedy.

Who Sends for Hamlet? Analyzing the Main Characters

The question of who sends for Hamlet after the play involves four key characters:

- **Claudius**
- **Horatio**
- **Gertrude**
- **Ophelia**

Each character's role in summoning Hamlet reveals their intentions and emotional states, which are central to understanding the play's progression.

Claudius: The Likely Suspect

Claudius's Reaction and Motivation

Claudius, the newly crowned king and Hamlet's uncle, is the primary suspect in Hamlet's mind regarding the murder of King Hamlet. After the play, Claudius's reaction is critical because it confirms Hamlet's suspicions. During the performance, Claudius's guilty conscience is revealed when he reacts abruptly, standing and leaving the scene, signaling his discomfort.

Following the play, the natural assumption is that Claudius would want to summon Hamlet to confront him or to manage the fallout of his perceived guilt. In fact, it is Claudius who ultimately sends for Hamlet, as part of his attempt to control the situation and assess Hamlet's intentions. This summons sets in motion the subsequent plans to spy on Hamlet and to decide his fate.

Evidence from the Text

In Act 3, Scene 3, Claudius's attempt to pray and his subsequent decision to send Hamlet away reveal his desire to avoid exposure and deal with Hamlet's suspicions. Later, in Act 4, Claudius orders Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to deliver Hamlet to England, further cementing his role as the one orchestrating Hamlet's movements.

Horation: The Friend's Role

Horation's Involvement

Horation, often referred to as Horatio in the play, is Hamlet's loyal friend and confidant. Unlike Claudius, Horation's primary concern is Hamlet's well-being. When the play concludes, Horatio is among the characters who are present and aware of the events that have transpired.

While Horation does not directly send for Hamlet, he acts as an intermediary and a voice of reason. In some productions, he is the one who informs Hamlet of the king's commands or the upcoming events. His role is more of an observer and supporter rather than an orchestrator of Hamlet's movements.

Horation's Perspective

Horatio's loyalty makes him a key figure in the aftermath. His concern for Hamlet's safety influences his actions, but he typically responds to directives from others rather than issuing commands himself. Therefore, in the context of the question, Horation does not send for Hamlet but is rather a passive recipient of orders or information.

Gertrude: The Queen's Actions

Gertrude's Role

Queen Gertrude, Hamlet's mother, is a complex character whose actions are motivated by a mixture of loyalty, guilt, and confusion. After the play, Gertrude's concern for Hamlet's emotional state leads her to seek him out.

In Act 4, Scene 1, Gertrude reports to Claudius that Hamlet has killed Polonius and is considered dangerous. Her involvement in calling for Hamlet depends on the circumstances. Sometimes, she is depicted as the one who requests Hamlet's presence or is instructed to summon him.

Her Influence on Hamlet's Summons

In some interpretations, Gertrude's actions are instrumental in bringing Hamlet to a specific location or in informing others to do so. However, she does not explicitly send for Hamlet herself in the original text. Her role is more reactive—reacting to the chaos and trying to manage the situation.

Ophelia: The Tragic Figure

Ophelia's Role in the Post-Play Scene

Ophelia, Hamlet's love interest, is deeply affected by the events surrounding the play and its aftermath. She is not involved in summoning Hamlet but is part of the broader web of relationships and tensions.

Her mental state deteriorates after her father's death, and she is more of a passive figure in the scene. She does not send for Hamlet; instead, her actions are influenced by her grief and the tragic circumstances.

Her Impact on the Narrative

While Ophelia does not directly influence who sends for Hamlet, her fate and actions contribute to the overall atmosphere of suspicion, betrayal, and tragedy that culminate after the play scene.

Conclusion: Who Sends For Hamlet? The Answer and

Its Significance

The primary character responsible for sending for Hamlet after the play is Claudius. His reaction to the play and subsequent actions clearly indicate his desire to control Hamlet and assess his behavior. Claudius's decision to summon Hamlet demonstrates his awareness of Hamlet's suspicions and his attempt to contain the situation.

While Horatio, Gertrude, and Ophelia are involved in subsequent interactions with Hamlet, it is Claudius who takes the initiative to summon him, making him the key figure in this moment of the play. This action underscores the themes of manipulation, power, and guilt that run throughout Hamlet.

In summary:

- Claudius is the one who sends for Hamlet after the play, motivated by guilt and a desire to manage the fallout.
- Horatio serves as a loyal friend and confidant but does not initiate the summons.
- Gertrude is more reactive than proactive in summoning Hamlet.
- Ophelia remains a passive figure, affected by the events but not involved in the summons.

Understanding who sends for Hamlet after the play provides insight into the characters' motivations and the unfolding tragedy. It highlights the central role Claudius plays in the political and emotional landscape of Denmark, setting the stage for the tragic climax of the play.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who sends for Hamlet after the play in Shakespeare's tragedy?

Claudius

What role does Claudius play in summoning Hamlet following the play?

Claudius sends for Hamlet to speak with him after the play concludes.

Is it Ophelia or Gertrude who calls for Hamlet after the play?

No, it is Claudius who sends for Hamlet, not Ophelia or Gertrude.

Why does Claudius send for Hamlet after the play?

Claudius does so to confront Hamlet and gauge his reactions, especially regarding the play's depiction of murder.

Does Horatio send for Hamlet after the play?

No, Horatio does not send for Hamlet; it is Claudius who does.

What does Gertrude do after the play?

Gertrude is concerned and seeks to speak with Hamlet, but she does not send for him; instead, Claudius does.

How is Ophelia involved in the events following the play?

Ophelia is not involved in sending for Hamlet; her role is more related to her interactions with him earlier in the play.

Which character's action triggers Hamlet's confrontation with Claudius after the play?

Claudius's decision to send for Hamlet triggers the subsequent confrontation.

Additional Resources

Who Sends For Hamlet After The Play?

An In-Depth Analysis of the Key Figures in Shakespeare's Hamlet

Introduction

In William Shakespeare's Hamlet, the scene following the play-within-a-play is pivotal. It marks a turning point in the narrative, revealing crucial truths and setting the stage for subsequent actions. Central to this moment is the question: who sends for Hamlet after the play? This inquiry unpacks the motivations, character dynamics, and thematic significance behind the decision to summon Hamlet. The primary figures involved are Claudius, Horatio, Gertrude, and Ophelia. Each offers a distinct perspective rooted in their personalities, relationships, and stakes within the story. This article delves into each figure's role and motivations, providing a comprehensive understanding of this critical moment.

The Context of the Play-Within-A-Play Scene

Before examining who sends for Hamlet, it's essential to understand the scene's context. In Act 3, Scene 2, Hamlet stages The Mousetrap, a play that mirrors the suspected murder of King Hamlet by Claudius. The play's purpose is to observe Claudius's reaction, which will serve as confirmation of his guilt. When Claudius reacts guiltily, Hamlet gains the evidence he needs to confront his uncle.

Following this, the question arises: who responds to Hamlet's call? The response is not merely procedural but laden with thematic importance—signaling trust, suspicion, authority, or concern. Let's analyze each figure's potential role in this pivotal moment.

Claudius: The King's Decision to Summon Hamlet

Who Is Claudius?

Claudius, the current king of Denmark, is a complex figure—politically astute, morally ambiguous, and driven by self-interest. His guilt over his fratricide (murder of King Hamlet) is palpable, especially after the play-within-a-play exposes his conscience. His actions post-play reveal his awareness of being under scrutiny and his attempts to maintain control.

Why Would Claudius Send for Hamlet?

The most straightforward interpretation is that Claudius is the one who sends for Hamlet. Several factors support this:

- Authority and Duty: As king, Claudius holds the highest authority. When Hamlet appears distressed or agitated, it's natural for him to summon the prince to address his behavior.
- Concern over Hamlet's Behavior: Hamlet's erratic actions, including his contemplations of revenge and his strange interactions, may prompt Claudius to seek clarification—either to suppress potential threats or to understand Hamlet's intentions.
- Guilt and Anxiety: Having just been exposed as a murderer, Claudius may want to control the narrative, ensuring Hamlet's loyalty or at least his silence. Summoning Hamlet provides an opportunity to gauge his motives and perhaps manipulate him.
- Political Strategy: Hamlet's behavior could be perceived as a risk to the stability of the court. By summoning him, Claudius can keep him close and monitor him.

Evidence from the Text

While the text does not explicitly state who sends for Hamlet, context clues suggest Claudius's involvement:

- Stage Directions: The scene indicates that Claudius and Gertrude are present at the court, and Hamlet enters after the play. It's plausible Claudius, as the host and authority figure, would summon Hamlet to inquire about his behavior.
- Claudius's Reaction: His nervousness and guilt after the play suggest he is aware of the need to manage Hamlet's suspicions. Sending for Hamlet would be a logical step to address any concerns directly.

Conclusion on Claudius's Role

Given his position, motives, and the context, it's reasonable to conclude that Claudius is the one who sends for Hamlet after the play. His actions are driven by a combination of guilt, political caution, and a desire to control the narrative surrounding the murder revelation.

Horatio: Hamlet's Trusted Friend and Confidant

Who Is Horatio?

Horatio is Hamlet's close friend and confidant, depicted as a rational, loyal, and insightful character. His role throughout the play is to serve as Hamlet's advisor and moral compass.

Would Horatio Send for Hamlet?

While Horatio is present during the play and aware of Hamlet's distress, it is unlikely that he would be the one to send for Hamlet in the immediate aftermath of the play. Several reasons support this:

- Subordinate Role: Horatio is not a person of authority; he lacks the political power to summon the prince or the king.
- Loyalty to Hamlet: His primary role is to support Hamlet, not to make decisions on behalf of the court.
- Context of the Scene: The scene's tone suggests that Hamlet himself is summoned or chooses to respond to an invitation, rather than being called by someone else.

Potential Scenarios Involving Horatio

- Hamlet's Initiative: Hamlet might have instructed Horatio to stay close or perhaps asked him to inform others if needed, but there's no explicit evidence of Horatio acting as an intermediary.
- Horatio's Role After the Play: His focus is on observing Claudius's reactions and comforting Hamlet, rather than initiating calls or summons.

Conclusion on Horatio's Role

While Horatio is an essential confidant, it is unlikely he is the one who sends for Hamlet. His role is more of an observer and supporter than an agent of communication or action in this scene.

Gertrude: The Queen's Response

Who Is Gertrude?

Gertrude, Hamlet's mother and the Queen of Denmark, is a significant figure in the play. Her relationship with Hamlet is complex, marked by concern, guilt, and a desire to maintain family and political stability.

Does Gertrude Send for Hamlet?

It is plausible that Gertrude could have sent for Hamlet, given her proximity and concern. However, textual evidence and scene context suggest otherwise:

- Her Position: As queen, she is present at court but not necessarily the one to summon Hamlet, especially since the scene unfolds with Hamlet already in the court or approaching.
- Her Relationship with Hamlet: She appears more emotionally involved than authoritative; her primary role is to observe and react rather than command.
- Scene Dynamics: The scene indicates that Hamlet enters or is summoned by others, possibly Claudius, rather than Gertrude.

Her Motivations and Possible Actions

- Concern for Hamlet: She is worried about her son's behavior, especially after the play exposes Claudius's guilt.
- Family Loyalty: She might wish to speak with Hamlet privately, but the scene does not specify her role in the immediate call.

Conclusion on Gertrude's Role

While Gertrude's concern is evident, there's no direct textual evidence that she personally sends for Hamlet after the play. Her role is more reactive and emotional than authoritative in this context.

Ophelia: The Tragic Figure

Who Is Ophelia?

Ophelia, Hamlet's beloved, is a tragic figure caught between her loyalty to her father Polonius, her love for Hamlet, and her frailty. Her actions are driven by her emotional state and societal expectations.

Would Ophelia Send for Hamlet?

It is highly unlikely that Ophelia would send for Hamlet after the play:

- Lack of Authority: Ophelia is a young noblewoman with no political power or authority to summon the prince.
- Her Role in the Scene: Her appearance in the scene is more as a witness or victim of Hamlet's erratic behavior rather than an agent of communication.
- Emotional State: Ophelia's mental and emotional distress after Hamlet's rejection and the chaos in Denmark makes her unlikely to initiate such an action.

Her Possible Involvement

- Being Summoned: She might have been called or informed about Hamlet's behavior, but the scene's focus is on Hamlet, Claudius, and Gertrude.
- Supporting Hamlet: She's more likely to be a passive recipient of others' actions rather than an active participant in summoning him.

Conclusion on Ophelia's Role

Ophelia does not send for Hamlet; her role is largely passive in this scene, serving as a tragic figure observing events unfold.

Synthesis and Final Analysis

Having examined each key figure, the consensus points toward Claudius as the primary individual responsible for sending for Hamlet after the play. This conclusion is supported by the following:

- Position of Authority: As king, Claudius has the means and responsibility to summon Hamlet.
- Motivations: His guilt and suspicion make him eager to confront Hamlet directly.
- Textual Clues: The scene's context and the characters' roles suggest Claudius's initiative.

Alternate possibilities, such as Horatio or Gertrude, are less supported. Horatio's loyalty and supportive role do not extend to initiating communication; Gertrude's concern leads her to emotional reactions rather than authoritative commands; Ophelia lacks the agency.

Thematic Significance of Who Sends for Hamlet