

Hamlet Essay Help At The End Of The Play, Fortinbras Says Of Hamlet, "he Was Likely, Had Hebeen Put On,

Hamlet Essay Help At The End Of The Play, Fortinbras Says Of Hamlet, "He Was Likely, Had He Been Put On," is a profound statement that captures the complex legacy of Hamlet, the tragic prince of Denmark. This quote, spoken by Fortinbras in Shakespeare's Hamlet, offers a nuanced reflection on Hamlet's character and the tragic circumstances that led to his demise. For students and scholars alike, understanding the significance of this line is essential when crafting a compelling Hamlet essay or analysis. This article aims to provide comprehensive insights into this pivotal moment, exploring its context, meaning, and implications to aid in your essay writing and deepen your appreciation of one of Shakespeare's most enduring tragedies.

Understanding the Context of Fortinbras's Statement

The Ending of Hamlet

At the conclusion of Hamlet, the Danish royal family lies in ruins—King Claudius, Queen Gertrude, Laertes, and Hamlet himself are dead. The play concludes with Fortinbras, the Prince of Norway, arriving to find the carnage and take control of Denmark. His entrance signifies a shift in power and provides a lens through which to interpret Hamlet's fate.

Fortinbras's Role in the Final Scene

Fortinbras's arrival is crucial because it symbolizes order restored after chaos. Upon observing the dead, he remarks on Hamlet's tragic end, noting the potential that Hamlet possessed. The specific line, "He was likely, had he been put on," is part of a larger reflection on Hamlet's character and the circumstances that prevented him from achieving his potential.

The Meaning of the Line: "He Was Likely, Had He Been Put On"

Interpreting the Phrase

The phrase suggests that Hamlet had the qualities or potential to do great things but was ultimately thwarted by fate, circumstance, or internal conflict. It implies that Hamlet's true nature or capabilities could have been realized had certain conditions been different.

Possible Interpretations

- Hamlet's Noble Potential: Fortinbras recognizes Hamlet's noble qualities—intelligence, integrity, and a philosophical mind—that could have led to a different destiny.
- The Tragedy of Circumstance: The phrase underscores how external factors—political intrigue, revenge, internal indecision—prevented Hamlet from fulfilling his potential.
- A Reflection on Human Fate: It raises broader questions about destiny and free will—whether Hamlet's downfall was inevitable or a result of missed opportunities.

The Significance of Fortinbras's Comment in Hamlet's Overall Narrative

Foreshadowing and Reflection

This line acts as a form of foreshadowing and reflection, emphasizing that Hamlet's tragedy was not solely personal but also intertwined with the political and social upheaval of Denmark.

Hamlet's Tragic Flaw and Potential

By suggesting Hamlet was "likely" to succeed, Fortinbras highlights the contrast between what Hamlet was capable of and what he achieved, emphasizing the theme of tragic flaw—his indecision and contemplation.

Implications for Interpretation and Analysis

- Hamlet as a Tragic Hero: The line supports the view of Hamlet as a tragic hero with noble qualities, whose downfall was rooted in his own hesitations and external forces.
- The Play's Reflection on Power and Responsibility: It prompts analysis of Hamlet's leadership potential and the consequences of inaction.

How to Use This Line in a Hamlet Essay

Incorporating the Quote Effectively

When writing an essay on Hamlet, consider how this line encapsulates key themes:

- Human potential and tragedy
- The nature of fate versus free will
- The complexity of Hamlet's character

Use the quote to support arguments about Hamlet's noble qualities and the tragic circumstances that prevented him from fulfilling his destiny.

Analyzing the Line for Deeper Insights

- Discuss how Fortinbras's perspective offers a posthumous judgment of Hamlet.
- Explore how the line reflects on Hamlet's internal struggles and external conflicts.
- Connect this to the play's overarching themes of mortality, action, and destiny.

Common Themes in Hamlet Related to Fortinbras's Observation

Noble Potential and Tragedy

Hamlet's intelligence and philosophical nature set him apart, but his failure to act decisively leads to tragedy. Fortinbras's remark underscores this dichotomy.

Fate, Free Will, and Responsibility

The line invites discussion on whether Hamlet's downfall was predetermined or a consequence of choices made.

Political and Personal Revenge

Hamlet's internal conflict about avenging his father mirrors broader themes of justice, honor, and political responsibility.

Conclusion: The Legacy of Hamlet and the Power of the Quote

Fortinbras's statement, "He was likely, had he been put on," encapsulates the complex interplay of potential, fate, and tragedy that defines Hamlet's character. It invites readers to consider what might have been and reflects on the universal themes of human aspiration and the tragic consequences of inaction.

For students seeking Hamlet essay help, understanding this line provides a valuable lens through which to analyze the play's themes and characters. Whether exploring Hamlet's noble qualities, the influence of external circumstances, or the play's philosophical questions about destiny and free will, this quote serves as a powerful anchor for your analysis.

By integrating this reflection into your essay, you can demonstrate a nuanced understanding of Hamlet's character and the profound tragedy that unfolds. Remember to support your interpretations with specific examples from the text, and consider how Fortinbras's perspective adds depth to your analysis of Hamlet's enduring legacy.

If you need further assistance with your Hamlet essays, consider focusing on themes like revenge, mortality, or the play's structure. Analyzing key lines such as Fortinbras's remark can elevate your essay, providing insight and scholarly depth that impresses your reader.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does Fortinbras mean when he says Hamlet was 'likely, had he been put on' at the end of the play?

Fortinbras suggests that Hamlet's noble qualities and potential might have been fully realized if circumstances had been different, implying that Hamlet was a figure who could have achieved more or been recognized for his true character under better conditions.

How does Fortinbras' comment reflect the theme of fate versus free will in Hamlet?

Fortinbras' remark highlights the idea that Hamlet's fate was influenced by external forces beyond his control, emphasizing the play's exploration of how destiny and personal choices shape outcomes.

In what way does Fortinbras' statement about Hamlet serve as a commentary on Hamlet's character?

It suggests that Hamlet possessed the qualities of a great leader or hero, but his potential was never fully realized due to the tragic events and internal conflicts he faced.

Why is Fortinbras' role significant at the end of Hamlet, especially in relation to his comment about Hamlet?

Fortinbras' arrival and his remark serve as a form of closure, acknowledging Hamlet's noble nature and positioning him as a tragic hero whose potential was cut short, while also symbolizing a new beginning through his ascension to the throne.

How does the phrase 'had he been put on' relate to Hamlet's internal struggles throughout the play?

It reflects Hamlet's internal conflict and indecision, suggesting that if he had been able to act more decisively or if circumstances allowed, he might have fulfilled his potential as a leader or avenger.

What is the significance of Fortinbras' statement in the context of the play's conclusion?

The statement underscores the tragic loss of Hamlet's potential and emphasizes the play's themes of missed opportunities, fate, and the consequences of action and inaction.

How can Hamlet's characterization be interpreted through Fortinbras' comment about being 'likely'?

It indicates that Hamlet was a character of great promise and inherent nobility, who, under different circumstances, could have been a heroic figure or a successful ruler.

Does Fortinbras' remark suggest a sense of regret or admiration for Hamlet? Why?

It leans more toward admiration, implying that Hamlet had qualities that could have led to greatness if circumstances had been different, highlighting a recognition of his noble potential.

How does the play's ending, with Fortinbras' comment, influence the overall message about human nature and destiny?

It suggests that human potential is often thwarted by fate or internal struggles, and that recognizing noble qualities in others is a key theme, reinforcing the play's contemplation of mortality, ambition, and the unpredictability of life.

What literary devices are used in Fortinbras' statement about Hamlet, and what is their effect?

The phrase employs understatement and conjecture, which serve to elevate Hamlet's character and evoke a sense of tragic nobility, encouraging the audience to reflect on what might have been.

Additional Resources

Hamlet Essay Help: At The End Of The Play, Fortinbras Says Of Hamlet, "he Was Likely, Had He Been Put On,"

When analyzing William Shakespeare's Hamlet, one of the most intriguing and often debated lines occurs at the conclusion of the play, when Fortinbras remarks about Hamlet: "he was likely, had he been put on,"—a phrase that invites deep reflection on Hamlet's character, fate, and the play's overarching themes. This line encapsulates the complex interplay of destiny, reputation, and the tragic potential that Hamlet embodied but ultimately did not fully realize. In this guide, we'll explore the significance of Fortinbras's statement, its contextual placement within the play, and its broader implications for understanding Hamlet's character and the tragic narrative.

Understanding the Context: Fortinbras's Final Words

The Scene and Its Significance

At the very end of Hamlet, after a series of tragedies—most notably Hamlet, Claudius, Gertrude, Laertes, and others—the surviving characters gather amid the chaos. Fortinbras, the prince of

Norway, arrives to find the Danish royal family dead and the state in disarray. His words about Hamlet serve as a reflection on what could have been, had circumstances been different.

The Line in Full

While the exact phrasing varies slightly across editions, a common version reads:

"But I do prophesy the election lights / On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice."

However, in some versions, especially the Folio, the phrase about Hamlet appears as:

"He was likely, had he been put on, / To have proved most royal."

This commentary suggests that Hamlet possessed the qualities of kingship and greatness but was perhaps prevented from fully stepping into that role.

Analyzing the Line: "He Was Likely, Had He Been Put On"

Literal Meaning and Interpretation

The phrase indicates that Hamlet had the potential to be a great ruler—"most royal"—but his greatness was not realized in life. The words "had he been put on" imply that circumstances, delays, or internal conflicts prevented Hamlet from fully assuming his destined role. Essentially, Fortinbras is suggesting that Hamlet was, in essence, a kingly figure who was hindered by fate or his own hesitations.

The Nuance of 'Being Put On'

The phrase "being put on" can be understood in multiple ways:

- Assumption of Royalty: Hamlet was destined or capable of becoming king but was not installed or recognized as such during his lifetime.
- Putting on a Persona or Role: Hamlet's internal struggles and philosophical debates might have prevented him from fully adopting the role of a decisive ruler.
- Circumstantial Readiness: External factors—like the political chaos, his indecision, or internal moral conflicts—kept him from "putting on" the mantle of kingship.

Understanding this phrase helps us appreciate the tragic tension between Hamlet's innate qualities and the societal or personal barriers that limited their expression.

Thematic Significance of Fortinbras's Remarks

Hamlet's Tragic Flaw and Potential

- Tragic Hero Qualities: Hamlet exhibits many qualities of a tragic hero—intelligence, nobility, a sense of justice—but also flaws such as indecision and overthinking.
- Potential for Greatness: Fortinbras's statement underscores that Hamlet had the potential to be a

"most royal" figure, a king who could have restored order and justice.

- Unfulfilled Destiny: The line highlights the tragedy of unfulfilled potential, a common theme in Shakespearean tragedies.

Fate, Free Will, and Circumstances

- The line invites reflection on whether Hamlet's downfall was due to personal flaws or external forces beyond his control.
- Had he been put on—a phrase that hints at missed opportunities and the role of fate in his life.

Political and Moral Commentary

- Fortinbras, as a political successor, recognizes Hamlet's nobility and capacity for leadership, contrasting him with other characters who act out of self-interest.
- The remark frames Hamlet as a figure of moral and political virtue—someone who, under different circumstances, could have been a stabilizing monarch.

Broader Literary and Philosophical Implications

The Question of Hamlet's Suitability as King

- Was Hamlet meant to be king? The play suggests that he possesses the qualities of a ruler but is thwarted by internal and external conflicts.
- The phrase "had he been put on" raises questions about the nature of kingship—whether it is inherent or conferred.

Reflection on Human Potential and Tragedy

- Shakespeare explores the idea that human potential can be thwarted by indecision, morality, or circumstance.
- Hamlet, as a tragic figure, embodies the tension between what he is and what he could have become.

Practical Takeaways for Essay Writing and Analysis

If you're crafting an essay on Hamlet or analyzing this specific line, consider the following points:

1. Contextualize Fortinbras's remark within the play's ending to understand its significance.
2. Explore Hamlet's character traits—his nobility, indecisiveness, and philosophical depth—and how these relate to the idea of potential.
3. Discuss themes of fate, free will, and destiny—how they influence Hamlet's actions and ultimate fate.
4. Examine the political implications—how Fortinbras's recognition of Hamlet's qualities reflects on leadership and legitimacy.
5. Reflect on the tragedy of unfulfilled potential—a universal theme that resonates beyond the play.

Summary: The Enduring Significance of Fortinbras's Comment

In conclusion, Fortinbras's statement that Hamlet was "likely, had he been put on," to be "most royal," encapsulates a profound reflection on the tragic hero's latent greatness and the circumstances that prevented its realization. It serves as both a lament for lost potential and a meditation on fate, leadership, and the human condition. For students and readers alike, this line offers a rich vein of analysis—inviting questions about destiny, morality, and the qualities that define true kingship.

By understanding this closing remark, we gain deeper insight into Hamlet's complex character and the tragic tapestry Shakespeare weaves—one where potential is ultimately overshadowed by indecision and circumstance, leaving a lasting legacy of what might have been.

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