

## Chapter 1 : To be, or not to be - Wikipedia

*The book Shakespeare and the Problem of Meaning, Norman Rabkin is published by University of Chicago Press. Shakespeare and the Problem of Meaning, Rabkin About.*

Things end poorly for everyone, including the "good guys. All Shakespearean tragedies include these elements in some shape or form. What Is a Tragedy? Today in theater and literature a tragedy is a work that has an unhappy ending. Tragedy is a serious play or drama typically dealing with the problems of a central character, leading to an unhappy or disastrous ending brought on, as in ancient drama, by fate and a tragic flaw in this character, or, in modern drama, usually by moral weakness, psychological maladjustment, or social pressures. A Shakespearean tragedy is a specific type of tragedy a written work with a sad ending where the hero either dies or ends up mentally, emotionally, or spiritually devastated beyond recovery that also includes all of the additional elements discussed in this article. Examples of the Elements in Macbeth The 9 Elements of a Shakespearean Tragedy Below we are going to take a more in-depth look at each of the elements of Shakespearean tragedy, as well as explore a few examples. The Tragic Hero A tragic hero is one of the most significant elements of a Shakespearean tragedy. This type of tragedy is essentially a one-man show. It is a story about one, or sometimes two, characters. The hero may be either male or female and he or she must suffer because of some flaw of character, because of inevitable fate, or both. The hero must be the most tragic personality in the play. This person hails from the elite stratum of society and holds a high position, often one of royalty. Tragic heroes are kings, princes, or military generals, who are very important to their subjects. Take Hamlet, prince of Denmark; he is intellectual, highly educated, sociable, charming, and of a philosophic bent. When Hamlet takes revenge for the death of his father, he is not only killing his uncle but inviting his own death at the hands of Laertes. And as a direct result of his death, the army of Fortinbras enters Denmark to take control. Characteristics of a Tragic Hero 2. Evil Shakespearean tragedies play out the struggle between good and evil. Most of them deal with the supremacy of evil and suppression of good. In other words, its subject is the struggle of Good and Evil in the world. For example, in Hamlet, the reader is given the impression that something rotten will definitely happen to Denmark foreshadowing. Though the reader gets an inkling, typically the common people of the play are unaware of the impending evil. In Julius Caesar, the mob is unaware of the struggle between good and evil within King Caesar. They are also ignorant of the furtive and sneaky motives of Cassius. Goodness never beats evil in the tragedies of Shakespeare. The reason for this is that the evil element is always disguised, while goodness is open and freely visible to all. The main character the most pious and honest person in the tragedy is assigned the task of defeating the supreme evil because of his goodness. As a result, he suffers terribly and ultimately fails due to his fatal flaw. This tragic sentiment is perfectly illustrated by Hamlet in the following lines: O cursed spite, That ever I was born to set it right. It is another absolutely critical element of a Shakespearean tragedy. Every hero falls due to some flaw in his or her character. Here I will once again reference A. He suffers from procrastination. He finds a number of opportunities to kill his uncle, but he fails because of his indecisive and procrastinating nature. Every time, he delays taking action. In one case he finds an opportunity to kill Claudius while Claudius is praying. He wants to kill Claudius when he is in the act of committing a sin. Tragic Waste In Shakespearean tragedies, the hero usually dies along with his opponent. The death of a hero is not an ordinary death; it encompasses the loss of an exceptionally intellectual, honest, intelligent, noble, and virtuous person. In a tragedy, when good is destroyed along with evil, the loss is known as a "tragic waste. Hamlet is a perfect example of tragic waste. Even though Hamlet succeeds in uprooting the evil from Denmark, he does so at the cost of his death. In this case, the good Hamlet gets destroyed along with evil Claudius. Neither of them wins. Instead, they fail together. Conflict Conflict is another imperative element of a Shakespearean tragedy. There are two types of conflicts: External Conflict External conflict plays a vital role in the tragedies of Shakespeare. External conflict causes internal conflict in the mind of the tragic hero. Every tragic hero in a Shakespearean play is confronted with external conflicts that must be addressed. Hamlet, for example, is confronted with external conflict in the shape of his uncle, Claudius. This external conflict gives rise to internal conflict, which hinders

Hamlet from taking any action. Internal Conflict Internal conflict is one of the most essential elements in a Shakespearean tragedy. It refers to the confusion in the mind of the hero. The tragic hero always faces a critical dilemma. Often, he cannot make a decision, which results in his ultimate failure. Again, Hamlet is a perfect example. He is usually a doer, but over the course of the play, his indecision and frequent philosophical hangups create a barrier to action. Internal conflict is what causes Hamlet to spare the life of Claudius while he is praying. Catharsis Catharsis is a remarkable feature of a Shakespearean tragedy. In other words, Shakespearean tragedies help the audience to feel and release emotions through the aid of tragedy. When we watch a tragedy, we identify with the characters and take their losses personally. A Shakespearean tragedy gives us an opportunity to feel pity for a certain character and fear for another, almost as if we are playing the roles ourselves. Tears flow freely when a hero like Hamlet dies. At the same time we feel both sorry for Hamlet and happy that Claudius has received his proper punishment. Supernatural Elements Supernatural elements are another key aspect of a Shakespearean tragedy. They play an important role in creating an atmosphere of awe, wonder, and sometimes fear. Supernatural elements are typically used to advance the story and drive the plot. The ghost Hamlet sees plays an important role in stirring up internal conflict. It is the ghost who tells Hamlet his father was killed by his uncle Claudius and assigns him the duty of taking revenge. Similarly, the witches in Macbeth play a significant role in the plot. These witches are responsible for motivating Macbeth to resort to murder in order to ascend the throne of Scotland. Absence of Poetic Justice Poetic Justice means good is rewarded and evil is punished; it refers to a situation in which everything comes to a fitting and just end. There is no poetic justice in the tragedies of Shakespeare, rather, these plays contain only partial justice. Shakespeare understood that poetic justice rarely occurs outside of fiction. Good deeds often go without reward and immoral people are often free to enjoy life to its fullest. Good is crushed along with evil. Hamlet dies along with Claudius. Comic Relief Comic relief is our final key element. But Shakespeare wanted to relieve the tension for the reader and lighten up the mood here and there. A few examples of comic relief scenes include the grave digger scene in Hamlet, the drunken port scene in Macbeth, the fool is smarter than the king dialogue in King Lear, and the Polonius in the wings speech in Hamlet. We also have the following scene in Romeo and Juliet: Ask for me to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man. What man dost thou dig it for? For no man, sir. How absolute the knave is! We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us.

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