How Claudius Acts In Hamlet Essay, Research Paper

Act III, Scene I

The scene begins with Claudius questioning Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. The two tells the king what they have found out about Hamlet??s madness (which is nothing), but leaves out the important truth that they have already revealed to Hamlet that they were sent for as spies by the King. Somehow, Claudius doesn??t seem as regal and dignified as he was the first time we saw him in Act I, Scene II. Due to the problem with Hamlet??s madness, he seems to have become less certain of what he is doing. He has lost the confidence he seemed to have the first time he appeared. He??s not sure which way to approach Hamlet, and his choices seem to be less thought out now. For example, his choice of using Rosencrantz and Guildenstern was apparently not a wise one, for it was obvious that they would fail him by telling Hamlet that they were sent for. Also, as proof that Claudius is not all too certain how to make his own decisions and plans, we now see another side of Claudius that is very, very dependent on Polonius.

For the most part, Claudius was upset that the two weren??t able to produce more information on Hamlet??s madness, however he is still happy to hear about Hamlet??s proposal to invite the king and queen to the play. Because Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, have failed him, Claudius now has to go along with Polonius?? plan of hiding and spying. An important scene comes when Claudius mutters something about his guilt just before the two go into hiding, and after Polonius has just finished saying, ????We are oft to blame in this, Tis too much proved, that with devotion??s visage And pious action we do sugar o??er The devil himself.?? Claudius says to himself, ??O, ??tis too true. How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience! ?K O heavy burden!?? For the first time, we see a great possibility of Claudius being the murderer of the late king Hamlet. He admits that something is bothering him, and it is giving him a heavy burden. This shows that Claudius is not who we once thought he was in Act I, Scene II, when he seemed to be the perfect king. During Hamlet??s confrontation with Ophelia, I believe that Claudius is hiding behind some structure, listening to every word. He is listening for clues that ??love?? had been the problem with Hamlet. Perhaps he is thinking that if it isn??t because of love, then it may have been because of his murder of the late king, which has made young Hamlet crazy. When the confrontation is over, and the King speaks to Polonius, he tells Polonius that it??s certainly not love that drove Hamlet mad, but some other reason. And in fear of trouble, Claudius does what I feel is a rather cowardly thing to do by sending Hamlet away, and thus letting others deal with his madness. It seems that he feels because he cannot find the source of Hamlet??s madness, he is giving up his responsibilities, and instead sending Hamlet away, which is just the opposite of what he had tried to do in the first scene, which is to try to keep Hamlet in Denmark.

Later, we see that Claudius listens to Polonius??s advice and plans once again, this time the plan is to have the queen do the dirty work by questioning Hamlet. And once again this troubled king shows no sign of disapproval to Polonius?? advice.

Just as predicted, it seems like both Claudius and Polonius forgot about the quick comment Polonius made earlier, that if he was wrong about ??love?? being the source of Hamlet??s madness, then he would become a tenant farmer. This of course show that Polonius is simply too important to the king and both of them know this, thus that promise never came true.