

Shakespeare

A Bad Death

Task 1

Watch the interview with Tonderai about how Zimbabwean people see the story of 'Hamlet'. Use the correct words to complete the three summaries.

mother / slow / funeral / Hamlet / important /
away / murder / uncle / death / Hamlet's
father / understandable / bedroom

(00.00–01.26)

The Shona people are the largest tribe in Zimbabwe. They have very specific beliefs about _____. For example, a 'bad' death is one which was caused with evil intentions, for example a _____. Someone who causes a bad death must be punished so that the dead person can rest. Therefore, a Zimbabwean audience sees _____ as the victim of a bad death, and they understand that _____ has a duty to find out what happened and try to put it right.

(01.27–3.42)

About one-third of Zimbabwean people live outside Zimbabwe. When they come back to Zimbabwe, for a visit, they need to find out what's been happening while they were _____. It's _____ not to form opinions or make decisions too quickly. Therefore, from a Zimbabwean perspective, it's _____ that Hamlet takes a long time to find out about his father's death and take action. In contrast, Western audiences and actors sometimes feel that Hamlet is too _____ to act.

(03.43–end)

Tonderai's company performed 'Hamlet' in Zimbabwe and South Africa. In Zimbabwe, they started the play with a traditional _____ procession, to make people think about death. The audience slowly learned how evil Hamlet's _____ is. They were shocked at the scene where Hamlet questions his _____ in her _____.

Task 2

We make passive sentences with **be + past participle**. We can use different forms of *be* to make different kinds of passive sentence:

Shakespeare **is known** all over the world. ('is' = present simple)

'Hamlet' **was written** in around 1600. ('was' = past simple)

It **has been described** as Shakespeare's best play. (has been = present perfect)

The ghost of Hamlet's father wants **to be revenged**. ('to be' = infinitive)

Put the words in the correct order to make sentences from the interview with Tonderai.

- In 'Hamlet', / killed / has / by / been / a king who / his brother. / you have

- The ghost says / been / until his death / has / rest in peace / he cannot / revenged.

3. who has / to / be / The person / has / punished. / made him die

4. as / to do / Hamlet / someone who / viewed / is / takes too long / what he does.

5. with a funeral. / the fact that / we began the show / enchanted / Audiences / were / by

6. sung / at funerals. / We started off / which / with / is / a very famous folk song

5. Audiences _____ (enchant) by the fact that we began the show with a funeral. (past simple)

6. We started off with a very famous folk song which _____ (sing) at funerals. (present simple)

Task 3

Can you remember the passive sentences from the previous task? Type in the correct words. Each gap has two or three words.

- In 'Hamlet', you have a king who _____ (kill) by his brother. (present perfect)
- The ghost says he cannot rest in peace until his death _____ (revenge). (present perfect)
- The person who has made him die has to _____ (punish). (infinitive)
- Hamlet _____ (view) as someone who takes too long to do what he does. (present simple)

Answers

Task 1

(00.00–01.26)

The Shona people are the largest tribe in Zimbabwe. They have very specific beliefs about death. For example, a 'bad' death is one which was caused with evil intentions, for example a murder. Someone who causes a bad death must be punished so that the dead person can rest. Therefore, a Zimbabwean audience sees Hamlet's father as the victim of a bad death, and they understand that Hamlet has a duty to find out what happened and try to put it right.

(01.27–3.42)

About one-third of Zimbabwean people live outside Zimbabwe. When they come back to Zimbabwe, for a visit, they need to find out what's been happening while they were away. It's important not to form opinions or make decisions too quickly. Therefore, from a Zimbabwean perspective, it's understandable that Hamlet takes a long time to find out about his father's death and take action. In contrast, Western audiences and actors sometimes feel that Hamlet is too slow to act.

(03.43–end)

Tonderai's company performed 'Hamlet' in Zimbabwe and South Africa. In Zimbabwe, they started the play with a traditional funeral procession, to make people think about death. The audience slowly learned how evil Hamlet's uncle is. They were shocked at the scene where Hamlet questions his mother in her bedroom.

Task 2

1. In 'Hamlet', you have a king who has been killed by his brother.
2. The ghost says he cannot rest in peace until his death has been revenged.
3. The person who has made him die has to be punished.
4. Hamlet is viewed as someone who takes too long to do what he does.
5. Audiences were enchanted by the fact that we began the show with a funeral.
6. We started off with a very famous folk song which is sung at funerals.

Task 3

1. In 'Hamlet', you have a king who has been killed by his brother.
2. The ghost says he cannot rest in peace until his death has been revenged.
3. The person who has made him die has to be punished.
4. Hamlet is viewed as someone who takes too long to do what he does.
5. Audiences were enchanted by the fact that we began the show with a funeral.
6. We started off with a very famous folk song which is sung at funerals.