





THE MURDER MYSTERY WITH A HOLLYWOOD ENDING

The screenwriter behind the box office hit *So I Married My Husband's Murderer* died yesterday after killing his uncle at an office party.

T.E. Hamlet, 30, had been taking part in what seemed like a friendly fencing match when he was cut by a sword dipped in poison.

He then turned the weapon on his uncle and stabbed him to death.

The police are slowly piecing together what happened.

Friends of the family say it all started two years ago, when Hamlet's father died of unknown causes. Soon after, his mother Gertrude married Claudius, Hamlet's uncle, who replaced his father as head of the family business.

All this shocked Hamlet, who thought it was too soon for his mother to remarry.

"Women are so weak," colleagues remember him saying. He also began having dreams in which his father told him Claudius was the murderer, and asked his son to take revenge.

With this in mind, Hamlet decided to write a screenplay for a movie. It would be about a king who is poisoned to death by his brother, who then takes over the throne and marries the queen.

He told friends: "This movie will trap my uncle's conscience."

Working feverishly, he finished the screenplay in a week and sold it to a movie studio. Filming began a year ago with actors Lindsay Lohan, Orlando Bloom and Adam Brody in the lead roles.

Last month, the movie premiered in Los Angeles. Television interviews from the red-carpet show a very nervous Hamlet. Gertrude and Claudius were also there.

Halfway through the screening and just after the scene where Brody's character pours poison into the ear of his brother (played by Bloom), Claudius jumped out of his seat and left the theatre pale-faced, witnesses say.

Hamlet saw this guilty reaction as proof that his uncle had killed his father.

Claudius knew that he had been found out. To get rid of his nephew, he asked him to go and check on the company's London office.

But the plan to get Hamlet out of the country hit an unexpected obstacle when his flight to England was turned back because of some mechanical problems with the plane.

Claudius did not give up. He organised a company sports day and party at his home, and arranged for Hamlet and another employee to spar in a fencing match.

Forensic experts say the sword that Hamlet's opponent wounded him with was coated with a poison that kills in minutes. But the man also cut himself by accident. Realizing they would both die, he told Hamlet what his uncle had done.

As poison coursed through his blood, Hamlet picked up the sword and plunged it into Claudius' chest. By the time the ambulance arrived, they were both dead.

The studio that made the film is not commenting on the incident. But the news reports on the murders are pulling in thousands of moviegoers, who are dying to watch the scene that started it all.

BACKGROUND

Hamlet is one of the most famous plays ever written.

Penned in around 1600 by playwright William Shakespeare, it is based on a legend about a Danish prince.

It has been performed on stage countless times around the world. It has also been translated into every major language, and made into several movies.

Many of its lines are famous — for example, the phrase "to be or not to be". Hamlet says it during a soliloquy (when a character in a play talks out loud to himself). This is done so that the audience can understand what he is thinking — in this instance, Hamlet is wondering about the choice between life and death.

It is no surprise, then, that this play is a tragedy — which means many sad and terrible things happen and lots of people die, including Hamlet's mother and girlfriend Ophelia.

FAB VOCAB

SCREENWRITER

The person who writes the story and words in a movie

BOX OFFICE HIT

The box office is where you buy movie tickets, so a box office hit is a successful film

FENCING MATCH

A sport where two people play-fight with swords to score points, and wear protective clothing so they do not hurt each other

PIECING TOGETHER WHAT HAPPENED

Putting the clues together to find out what took place

CONSCIENCE

A person's understanding of what is right or wrong

FEVERISHLY

Excitedly and hurriedly

PREMIERED

Was shown for the first time

OBSTACLE

Barrier

FORENSIC EXPERTS

People who use scientific methods to solve or understand crimes, for example by gathering fingerprints or blood samples

COURSED

Moved swiftly and smoothly

IF YOU ENJOYED THIS, READ

Hamlet: For Kids (Shakespeare Can Be Fun)

By Lois Burdett

Dating Hamlet: Ophelia's Story

By Lisa Fiedler

Ophelia

By Lisa Klein