



**-Tikrit University\ College of Education for Women**

**-English Department**

**-Third Stage**

**- What Is a Tragedy?**

**- Dramatic Devices in Shakespeare's Theatre**

**-Prof. Dr. Lamiaa Ahmed Rasheed**

[Lamia.ahmed62@tu.edu.iq](mailto:Lamia.ahmed62@tu.edu.iq)

## What Is a Tragedy?

The word tragedy was derived from the Greek word tragoidia, which means 'the song of the goat.' It is called "the song of the goat" because in ancient Greece the theater performers used to wear goatskin costumes to represent satyrs.

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.”

— Webster Dictionary

A Shakespearean tragedy is a specific type of tragedy with a sad ending where the hero either dies or ends up mentally, emotionally, or spiritually devastated beyond recovery. It includes 9 elements or features of tragedy listed below.

## **The 9 Elements of Shakespearean Tragedy:**

**Tragic Hero:** A main character cursed by fate and possessed of a tragic flaw.

**A Struggle Between Good and Evil:** This struggle can take place as part of the plot or exist within the main character.

**Hamartia** The fatal character flaw of the tragic hero.

**Tragic Waste:** The good being destroyed along with the bad at the resolution of the play; often played out with the unnecessary loss of life, especially of "good guy" characters.

**External Conflict:** This can be a problem facing the hero as a result of the plot or a "bad guy" character.

**Internal Conflict:** The struggle the hero engages in with his/her fatal flaw.

**Catharsis:** The release of the audience's emotions through empathy with the characters.

Supernatural Elements: Magic, witchcraft, ghosts, etc.

Lack of Poetic Justice: Things end poorly for everyone, including the "good guys."

Comic Relief: One or more humorous characters who participate in scenes intended to lighten the mood.