**Characteristics of a Shakespearean Tragedy:**

The following fourteen points are a summary of a typical Shakespearean tragedy.

1. Tragedy is concerned primarily with one person – the tragic hero.
2. The story usually involves suffering and calamity leading to the death of the hero.  The suffering and calamity are, as a rule, unexpected and contrasted with previous happiness and glory.
3. The tragedy involves an important person in the society.  Therefore, his or her fate affects the welfare of the whole nation or empire.
4. The hero undergoes a sudden reversal of fortune.
5. This reversal excites and arouses emotions of pity and fear within the audience.  The reversal may frighten and awe, making viewers or readers of the play feel that mankind is blind and helpless.  The audience will regard the tragic hero as an individual who is up against an overwhelming power that may treat him well for a short period of time, but will eventually strike him down.
6. A flaw in the hero’s character often triggers the tragic fate of the hero.  The hero contributes in some way, shape, or form to the disaster in which he perishes.
7. Shakespeare often introduces abnormal conditions of the mind (such as insanity, somnambulism (sleep-walking), or hallucinations).
8. Supernatural elements are often included as well.
9. Much of the plot seems to hinge on “chance”, “fate” or “accident”.
10. Besides the outward conflict between individuals or groups of individuals, there is also an inner conflict(s) and torment(s) within the soul of the tragic hero.
11. The tragic hero doesn’t need to be an overwhelmingly “good” person. However, it is necessary that he/she should contain greatness so that the audience may be vividly conscious of the individual’s potential for further success as well as the temptation of human nature.
12. The central impression of the tragedy is one of waste.
13. The tragic world is one of action.  Action is created when thoughts turn into reality.  Unfortunately for the tragic hero, their plans do not materialize as they may have hoped and their actions ultimately lead to their own destruction.
14. The ultimate power in the tragic world is a moral order; more specifically, the struggle between good and evil. This evil is eventually destroyed and the moral order of the world is re-established.

***The cycle of a tragedy is as follows:***

**Good… Evil… Chaos… Death… Re-assertion of Good**