

Hamlet Act IV

Scene i

1. How does Gertrude react to the interview?
2. What is ironic about Claudius' use of disease imagery?
3. Is Gertrude following Hamlet's advice? What proof do you have?

Scene ii

1. What does Hamlet mean when he accuses Rosencrantz of being a sponge?
2. Has your opinion of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern changed since the beginning of the play? How?

Scene iii

1. What attitude towards Polonius' death does Hamlet display? Is this surprising?
2. How is death "the great equalizer of men"?
3. What does Claudius reveal will happen to Hamlet in England?
4. Who has the upper hand at this point in the play? What proof do you have?

Scene iv

1. What is ironic about the battle over the piece of Polish land for which Fortinbras is fighting?
2. Examine Hamlet's soliloquy.
 - What does Hamlet accuse himself of? ll. 31-32
 - What differentiates man from beasts? ll. 32-37
 - How is Fortinbras an example of a good revenger? ll. 46-52
 - What makes a man great? ll. 52-55
 - What resolution does Hamlet make? ll. 64-65

Scene v

1. What does Gertrude reveal in her aside?
2. Read Ophelia's dialogue throughout this scene closely. What do you feel are the roots of her insanity?
3. What conclusion does Laertes make about his father's death? Why is this significant?
4. How does Laertes try to take revenge for his father's death? How does Claudius take control of the situation?
5. Considering the garden imagery used throughout the play, what does the use of flower imagery show about Ophelia's character?
6. How has the focus of the disease imagery changed in this scene? Why is this significant?

Scene vi

1. What does Hamlet's letter reveal?

Scene vii

1. What reasons does Claudius give for not having punished Hamlet for Polonius' death? Do you think these are the real reasons?
2. How does Claudius manipulate Laertes?
3. What is the plan to trap Hamlet? What condition does Laertes set for following the plan? What is ironic about line 127?
4. What news does Gertrude bring? How do the characters react?
5. How is Laertes a foil for Hamlet?