

## *ACT 4*

### **4.1**

1. Does Gertrude tell Claudius the truth about what happened between her and Hamlet (4.1.6-7)? Is she following Hamlet's advice at the end of 3.4?
2. How does Claudius respond to the death of Polonius? Does he understand the implications of what happened? What will he do now?

### **4.2**

What do Rosencrantz and Guildenstern learn from Hamlet?

### **4.3**

1. Why does Claudius believe he can't simply arrest Hamlet?
2. Is Hamlet going to England as a prisoner or in the guise of a royal representative?
3. What do Claudius' letters tell England (i.e., the king of England) to do with Hamlet?

### **4.4**

1. Why is Fortinbras' army passing through Denmark? (Remember 2.2.60-80.)
2. What sort of judgment does the Captain make about the place they are fighting for? How does Hamlet describe it (4.4.9.15-.19)?
3. Where is Hamlet going when he meets the Captain?
4. Read Hamlet's sixth soliloquy carefully (4.4.9.22-.56). What is unusual about it given its position in the play? Has Hamlet been delaying, as he says? What example does he compare himself to? (And what other soliloquy does this one remind you of?)

### **4.5**

1. What do we learn about the state of Gertrude's soul in her aside (4.5.17-20)? What does this say about how she has responded to Hamlet's accusations and recommendations in 3.4?
2. The court assumes Ophelia's madness is caused by her father's death. Judging from her songs, are they correct? Is that the only thing that has made her mad? What else is on her mind and coming to the surface in her madness?
3. What is Laertes' approach to revenging his father's death? How does it compare to Hamlet's? How much support does he have? Whom does he initially blame?

4. How does Laertes respond to mad Ophelia? What offer does Claudius make to get his discussion with Laertes back on track?

#### 4.6

Who brings Hamlet's letter to Horatio? What has happened to Hamlet?

#### 4.7

1. Claudius has obviously convinced Laertes of his innocence. What things of a personal nature do we learn about Gertrude and Claudius (4.7.11-16)? Laertes wants his revenge, but Claudius tells him "You shortly shall hear more." What does Claudius expect to be able to tell Laertes soon?
2. What does Hamlet's letter tell Claudius? Why does Hamlet want to see him "alone"? What seems to be Hamlet's plan?
3. What plan do Claudius and Laertes develop? What happened when Lamord came to Denmark two months ago? How will Claudius and Laertes use Laertes' reputation to get revenge?
4. What would Laertes do to get revenge (4.7.98)? How does this compare to Hamlet? How does Claudius respond?
5. How many tricks and poisons does it take (according to Claudius and Laertes) to kill a Hamlet?
6. What happened to Ophelia? Did she kill herself, or is her death accidental (based on this description; her death gets a different spin in 5.1)?
7. What is Laertes' response to her death? What does Claudius fear will happen?