

FOR GROUP 1

Here is an edited scene from *Hamlet* – perhaps Shakespeare’s most famous play. This is a busy scene at the court of the King and Queen of Denmark so there are lots of actors on stage. The king is **Claudius** he has just married Hamlet’s mother the **Queen Gertrude**. **Hamlet** the prince does not like his new stepfather and is still mourning the death of his real father. **Laertes** the son of the court advisor **Polonius** asks permission to go to France. He is granted this permission by the king and by Polonius his father. Then Claudius asks why Hamlet is so sad. When Hamlet replies cheekily his mother asks him to cheer up, but Hamlet says he is too sad to simply ‘cheer up’ his sadness runs deeper than all his expressions of it.

Read the scene and then write out cue scripts for all the actors involved – that is Laertes, Claudius, Polonius, Gertrude and Hamlet.

LAERTES

My dread lord,
Your leave and favour to return to France;
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,
To show my duty in your coronation,
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

KING CLAUDIUS

Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

LORD POLONIUS

He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laboursome petition, and at last
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

KING CLAUDIUS

Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will!
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,--

HAMLET

(Aside) A little more than kin, and less than kind.

KING CLAUDIUS

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?



HAMLET

Not so, my lord; I am too much in the sun.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy veiled lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET

Ay, madam, it is common.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET

Seems, madam! nay it is; I know not 'seems.'
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passeth show;
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING CLAUDIUS

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father.



Richard Burbage