


Investigate!

Hamlet: Act IV

 refers to links on www.crossref-it.info

❖ **Act IV, Scene i-iii:**

- Look back at the first three scenes of Act IV.
 - What impression do we have here of Claudius?
 - Does he still seem to feel any of the guilt that led him to pray in Act III scene iii?


❖ **Act IV, Scene iv:**

- What do you think are Shakespeare's possible purposes in:
 - Removing the setting of the play from the palace?
 - Reminding us of Fortinbras and his army at this point in the play?

❖ **Act IV, Scene v:**

- Look at the language of Laertes' speeches throughout this scene:
 - How does Shakespeare suggest his passionate violence?
- Consider the various ways in which, through Laertes and Ophelia, Shakespeare has

introduced parallels to Hamlet's situation

- How do these parallels add to and enrich the play? (See  Texts in detail > *Hamlet* > Structure)

❖ **Act IV, Scene vi-vii:**

- What is the audience likely to feel about the plot to kill Hamlet?
 - Do we approve of Laertes as fulfilling his debt of honour as a son and brother?
 - Or does his desire for vengeance lead him into dishonour and corruption?
- Read through, preferably out loud, Gertrude's speech describing Ophelia's drowning
 - Look at the poetry of the language
- Why do you think Shakespeare elevates the event into something beautiful and full of pathos, so that Ophelia's death does not seem at this moment to be part of the general corruption?