

TALK BACK!

1. Do you think it's good to try to be invisible like Charlie?
2. What do you think of Charlie's advice to Tami and Fred? Is it good or bad? Why?
3. Why do some people act like bullies?
4. What's the best way to deal with a bully?
5. What makes someone a target for a bully?
6. Why is one smart person labeled "popular" and another labeled a "nerd"?
7. Does it feel good or bad to go unnoticed?
8. Is it possible to make your parents happy *and* fit in at school at the same time? What's the trick?

THE ICE PALACE

5F, 5M

WHO

FEMALES


Aneesa
Giddy
Lucy
Ping
Queen


MALES

Flick
Orlando
Pull
Shane
Tip

WHERE Scene 1: The surface of a planet; Scene 2: The ice palace.

WHEN The future.

 **Explorers:** Make your acting as real and natural as possible. **Aliens:** Feel free to be as unusual as you wish, as long as you're true to your character and your character's purpose in the play or scene. If the Explorers are realistic, then the otherworldly people will be more believable, too.

 Write a piece of science fiction. What is your new world like? How is it the same from Earth? How is it different? All plays need conflict. An easy way to include conflict is to put "normal" people in a strange, new situation.

Scene 1: Landing

LUCY: Quiet, everyone. We don't know what we're going to see here. Be prepared for anything. Ready to walk the surface?

SHANE: Check. Let's go, people.

ANEESA: Is anyone else nervous?

ORLANDO: There's no need to be nervous. We've detected no signs of life here.

ANEESA: Are you sure the heat sensor is working?

ORLANDO: Absolutely.

SHANE: Enough talking. Let's go complete the mission.

LUCY: I give the orders here. No more talking. We have a mission to complete.

SHANE: That's what I—

LUCY/ANEESA/ORLANDO: Shhh!

(LUCY, ANEESA, SHANE, and ORLANDO climb onto the surface of the planet.)

LUCY: *(Speaking quietly into a recording device.)* On the surface. Observe ice. No signs of life. Very quiet.

(Quiet beat while LUCY, ANEESA, SHANE, and ORLANDO look around.)

SHANE: I think I see something!

LUCY/ANEESA/ORLANDO: Shhh!

SHANE: *(Quieter.)* I think I see something!

ANEESA: What is it?

SHANE: I think it's—

ORLANDO: A palace! Made of ice!

LUCY: *(Speaking into her recording device.)* Correction. Potential signs of life. A palace in the distance.

ANEESA: Do you detect any signs of life on the sensor?

ORLANDO: None at all! Maybe it is broken.

LUCY: Perhaps everyone who lived in that palace has died.

SHANE: Maybe whatever killed them is still here somewhere.

ANEESA: I think I left something in the ship. Yeah. My, uh, lucky shrimp.

SHANE: You have a lucky shrimp?

ANEESA: Um, oh yeah. Definitely. I don't go anywhere without my lucky shrimp.

ORLANDO: Doesn't it smell bad? Seafood doesn't stay good for long.

ANEESA: Well, this is a very special shrimp, so if you'll excuse me—

LUCY: No one is going anywhere. We must stick together.

ANEESA: Must we?

LUCY: Of course we must.

ANEESA: Oh.

ORLANDO: Should we move closer?

SHANE: Let's storm the castle!

ORLANDO/LUCY/ANEESA: Shhh!

SHANE: *(In a tiny, high voice.)* Let's storm the castle!

LUCY: Let's take things one step at a time. We still don't know what we're dealing with here.

(TIP, PULL, PING, FLICK, and GIDDY enter quietly. They stand silently, observing the strangers.)

LUCY: If there's one thing I've learned in my years of space travel, it's caution. Respect. Close observation of the environment.

SHANE: That's three things!

LUCY: OK, so I've learned three things. Before we leap into anything, we must get an idea of what's on this planet now and, perhaps, what used to be here. Get a sense of what's occurred in the past. If there has been some kind of war or extinction of life here, we need to know that. Otherwise, we could find ourselves dead as well. We must be smart about this. We must use all the science at our disposal.

SHANE: You say the word "must" a lot.

LUCY: Sometimes you must use the word "must." For example, you must not interrupt me when I'm speaking, Shane. Let's gather some samples from the environment—dirt, leaves—anything we can find. The fate of the world could rest in our hands. Be prepared for danger, excitement, adventure, and perhaps . . . soil samples.

ORLANDO: There's no dirt.

ANEESA: There're no leaves.

SHANE: Just ice.

LUCY: Ice, then! Get samples of the ice!

ORLANDO: It will melt.

LUCY: Do it anyway!

SHANE: How come when she screams no one tells her to shhh?

ANEESA/ORLANDO/LUCY: Shhh!

(LUCY, ANEESA, and ORLANDO collect samples of ice while SHANE wanders off, sulking.)

SHANE: *(Muttering to himself.)* "Shhh, Shane. You're too loud, Shane. Shane, stop eating all the potato chips, we have only one bag left for the next five million light years." Everyone's bossy. Think they're the boss of me. They're not! I'm the boss of me. I know as much as them. I don't need them. Maybe

I'll just live here on my own. Seems nice enough. I can live in that palace. It would be cool living in an ice palace. And it would be all mine. I wouldn't let them visit. I can hear them begging, "Oh, Shane, your ice palace is so cool, can't we please visit?" And I'll be like, "No, this is my ice palace, losers! Get your own!" And they'll cry like babies 'cause that's what they are. "Shane, we miss you on board the ship. Come back with us, please? No one else can burp the alphabet. It's so boring without you!" I'm the real leader around here, and they'll be sorry when I go!

(SHANE bumps into TIP.)

TIP: Leader?

SHANE: Yes.

(TIP, PULL, PING, FLICK, and GIDDY gather around SHANE.)

SHANE: I mean no! I'm not the leader. Who are you? Go away! I'm just—I just burp a lot! You don't want me.

PULL: Leader! You come with us.

SHANE: You've got this all wrong.

PING: Leader, you come with us.

SHANE: This is all a big misunderstanding.

FLICK: Come with us, Leader.

SHANE: See that girl over there? The bossy one? She's the one you want.

GIDDY: Come to the palace with us, Leader.

SHANE: The palace?

TIP: The Queen will want to see you.

SHANE: Queen?

PULL: Do you always repeat?

SHANE: Repeat? Repeat what?

FLICK: This way, Leader.

SHANE: Wait. Hey, you guys!

ORLANDO/LUCY/ANEESA: Shhh!

SHANE: OK, fine. Let's go to the palace. That'll show them.

Scene 2: The Teen Queen

SHANE: So, you've got a Queen, huh? Is she bossy?

PING: What is "bossy"?

SHANE: Bossy is when you get told what to do all the time. I get told what to do *all* the time. I mean, even though I'm the leader! Can you believe it? I don't get any respect. There is a lot I know. You have no idea. And I do all the really hard work, really scientific stuff, you wouldn't even understand it, I swear, but still I don't get respect. It's wrong. It's outrageous! I bet your Queen doesn't get any of that stuff from you guys. You seem properly respectful. I mean, look at you, all shuffling along together, working as a team . . . that's what a leader wants! People who just do their job and don't whine about it. I mean . . . um . . . This isn't whining! I don't whine. I'm a leader! I *discuss*. This doesn't count as whining. I'm totally not a whiner. I hate whining. I just have a lot of complaints, that's all. It's totally different. You see what I mean, right? *(Beat.)* Anyway, your Queen, is she old?

GIDDY: Older than Giddy.

SHANE: What's Giddy?

(TIP, PULL, PING, and FLICK point to GIDDY.)

SHANE: Oh. Is the Queen pretty?

FLICK: The Queen is the Queen.

TIP: You talk too much, Leader.

PULL: You must be respectful of the Queen.

SHANE: Oh, yeah. I've got loads of respect. But I'm a leader, too, you know. I hope your Queen has some respect for me.

GIDDY: The Queen is always respectful.

FLICK: She is the Queen!

SHANE: How come you can't be picked up on our sensors?

TIP: Your sensors?

SHANE: Yeah. Our heat sensors.

(At the word "heat," TIP, PULL, PING, FLICK, and GIDDY flinch and shudder.)

PING: We do not like your "heat."

PULL: We have no need for it!

TIP: We live in ice.

FLICK: Duh.

GIDDY: Do you see now?

SHANE: Sure, sure. That makes sense.

TIP: Now, the Queen will arrive any moment.

SHANE: Excellent.

(SHANE, TIP, PULL, PING, FLICK, and GIDDY wait.)

SHANE: So, your Queen, is she going to be happy to see me?

GIDDY: Oh, yes!

SHANE: OK. Good.

(After another beat, the QUEEN enters.)

QUEEN: What is it? I was sleeping!

TIP: Queen, we bring you an alien!

SHANE: I'm not an alien. You're the alien!

PULL: Respect, human!

SHANE: I'm just saying . . .

QUEEN: Shut up already. Come here.

SHANE: You can't boss me around. They didn't tell you yet, but I'm a leader.

QUEEN: Uh-huh. Come here already.

(SHANE obeys. The QUEEN walks a big, slow circle around him, observing him.)

GIDDY: We have done well?

(Beat.)

QUEEN: You have done well.

PING: Take him to the kitchen?

SHANE: I am so hungry. That would be great. What do you eat around here anyway?

QUEEN: Leader.

SHANE: Yes?

QUEEN: Leader.

SHANE: Yes?

QUEEN: Leader.

SHANE: Ye—

FLICK: That's what we eat.

SHANE: Huh? Oh. My. God! But—but—I'm not really the leader! I was pretending! The girl, that bossy girl who's always like, "Shane, you do this! Shane, you do that! Shane, be quiet!"

PULL: Be quiet.

SHANE: She's the leader! She's the one you want!

QUEEN: You will do very well. Take him away.

SHANE: What are you going to do to me? Don't I at least deserve to know that?

QUEEN: Very well. **My chefs will prepare you as our**

main course at our feast tonight. First, you will be tenderized with a mallet. You appear already to be somewhat tenderized as your flesh is soft and flabby—

SHANE: It is not! I just like potato chips!

TIP: Silence!

QUEEN: —but I like my meat tender so the chefs will beat you anyway. Once that process is done, the chefs will marinade you in a sauce. A spicy sauce for you. It goes with your personality. A mild sauce wouldn't suit you.

SHANE: Thank you.

QUEEN: Lastly, the chefs will separate the various delicacies from your body—heart, eyes, and so on. You will be served on various silver platters and passed out to my guests and me. I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't be bitter about all this because it ruins the meal. I don't like bitter meat. You understand, don't you? It would ruin a perfectly nice meal.

SHANE: Of course. Makes perfect sense.

QUEEN: You are very agreeable. I respect that in a leader.

SHANE: Thank you.

QUEEN: I think I will very much like you.

SHANE: Queen, you're making me blush.

QUEEN: Then I will let you go to the kitchen now.

SHANE: I appreciate that. See you later, then.

QUEEN: Yes. Later.

(SHANE begins to exit with TIP, PULL, PING, FLICK, and GIDDY.)

QUEEN: Oh, Tip?

TIP: Yes, Queen?

QUEEN: A spicy sauce. Be sure to tell the chefs.

TIP: Very well.

(SHANE, TIP, PULL, PING, FLICK, and GIDDY exit. There's a long beat while the QUEEN sits on her throne and pulls out a knife and fork. SHANE enters suddenly in a panic.)

SHANE: Wait just one minute! You're going to eat me?

QUEEN: I believe I made that clear.

SHANE: But you never mentioned any cooking of the meat.

QUEEN: We like our meat raw. It's a cultural thing. Is that a problem?

SHANE: No, no. To each her own, I guess. OK.

(SHANE exits. Another long beat as the QUEEN looks at her reflection in the knife. SHANE reenters suddenly.)

SHANE: Wait! You're going to eat me?

QUEEN: Which part of this don't you understand? We'll tenderize you, marinade you, pull you apart, and serve you to my guests as the main course at a feast.

SHANE: I don't think I like that.

QUEEN: Well, too bad. I'm the Queen.

SHANE: And I'm a Leader!

QUEEN: I thought you weren't.

SHANE: Well, maybe I am!

QUEEN: Mmm, Leader.

SHANE: No, no! I'm not a leader.

QUEEN: Are you or aren't you?

SHANE: I'm not!

(The QUEEN considers this information for a moment.)

QUEEN: You're not just saying that so you can live, are you?

SHANE: Well, that's not the only reason I'm saying it. It's true!

QUEEN: Hmmm. Well, you still look juicy and fit for a meal.

SHANE: There's nothing fit about me! You were right! I'm lazy and disgusting and have terrible hygiene.

QUEEN: Hmmm. Tip!

(TIP enters.)

TIP: Yes, Queen?

QUEEN: Be sure to scrub him thoroughly clean before tenderizing him.

TIP: Yes, Queen.

QUEEN: Take him away.

SHANE: Wait!

(LUCY, ANEESA, and ORLANDO enter.)

LUCY: Wait!

(PULL, PING, FLICK, and GIDDY enter to guard the QUEEN.)

QUEEN: Who are these aliens?

LUCY: We came on your planet to observe its life forms. We mean no harm. However, we'd like to get our comrade back. Have you seen him? Big mouth, difficult, a little bit dim . . .

QUEEN: I have seen him, but he is mine now.

ORLANDO: Let him go!

FLICK: Are you threatening the Queen?

ORLANDO: No, we just want Shane back.

QUEEN: But why? He is difficult, as you say.

ANEESA: But he's one of us, so we have a duty—

QUEEN: He is lazy and stupid, yes?

ANEESA: Well . . . yes.

QUEEN: Why don't you stay for our feast and we can talk it over.

ORLANDO: We are pretty hungry.

ANEESA: What do you think, Lucy?

QUEEN: Lucy? You are the leader then?

LUCY: Yes. I am the leader.

PING: Mmm.

LUCY: What was that?

QUEEN: What Ping means to say is mmmarvelous! A leader in our midst!

LUCY: Thank you.

QUEEN: Let the feast begin!

TALK BACK!

1. Do you prefer to be a leader or a follower?
2. What are the qualities needed to be a leader?
3. Do you know of any cultures that have very different and interesting customs from ours?
4. What do you think might happen next in the story (if there was a Scene 3)?
5. What qualities do explorers and pioneers need to have?
6. Are there advantages to pretending you're something you're not?