The Hamlet Thrill-ma-geddon (full-length) (1st ed. - 10.12.11) - hamletthrill_full9gm
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Cast of Characters

CHIP, the male narrator

JESSIE, the female narrator

ACTORS 1-6

BROOKS CHARLIE, the consultant

BERNARDO

MARCELLUS

HAMLET

GERTRUDE

CLAUDIUS

THE GHOST

GHOST 2-3

ROSENCRANTZ

GUILDENSTERN

VILLAGERS

HERALD

ACTOR

ESMERELDA

PLAYERS

POLONIUS

LAERTES

OPHELIA

SERVANTS 1-5

GRAVEDIGGER

HORATIO

LOUNGE SINGER

BACK-UP DANCERS 1-3

Feel free to double cast as many parts as necessary. Some of the roles may be cross-cast without losing anything. I could easily see Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Horatio, the Gravedigger, and the Lounge Singer being female.

Author Notes

On Appropriateness:

Hamlet is a spectacularly bloody and often sexually charged play. I have no doubt that if this play were written today and staged in high schools, it would bring about the condemnation of the "morals police." In any event, I have great love for *Hamlet:* I make lots of jokes about it, but I do consider it to be the greatest play written in English. In making this loony adaptation, I have found myself fighting between the desire to be true to the spirit of the original play, and the knowledge that some of the jokes are probably going to give administrators indigestion.

In the full-length version, I have erred on the side of fidelity to the original script. (In the one-act version, I've erred on the opposite side, so if you wish to see a cleaned-up version of this play, look there.) So there are some jokes with sexual innuendo, and there are heaps of dead bodies at the end. (Although, perversely, heaps of dead bodies are less likely to give administrators pause than sexual innuendo. Can someone explain this to me?) If you need to remove a joke here or there in order to make your production appropriate for your audience, do so with my blessing.

On Copyright:

This play is meant as parody.

Acknowledgments

The World Premiere production of "The Hamlet Thrill-ma-geddon" was presented at Palisade High School, in Palisade, Colorado, from October 5-7, 2011. The cast was as follows:

CHIP . . . . . Sean Johnson
JESSIE . . . . . .Gabby Billy
ACTOR 1 . . . . . Alexis Embry
ACTOR 2 . . . . . Matt Ober
ACTOR 3 . . . . . Mikki Blasdell
ACTOR 4 . . . . . .Brooke MacMillan
ACTOR 5 . . . . . Emily Cowan, Jaqlyn Monger
ACTOR 6 . . . . . .John Moss
BROOKES CHARLIE . . . . . .Jackson LaDuke
SERVER . . . . . Nicole Summy
BERNARDO . . . . . Matt Ober
MARCELLUS . . . . . .Zane Abeyta

Acknowledgments (continued)

HAMLET . . . . . Jaden Krueger
GERTRUDE . . . . . Gabby Arvayo
CLAUDIUS. . . . . .Cameron Waterhouse
THE GHOST . . . . . .Jackson LaDuke
GHOST 2. . . . . .Aaron Smith
GHOST 3. . . . . .Zane Abeyta
ROSENCRANTZ. . . . . .Chase Ledebur
GUILDENSTERN . . . . . .Jackson LaDuke
VILLAGER 1. . . . . .John Moss
FEMALE VILLAGER . . . . . .Brooke MacMillan
VILLAGER 2. . . . . .Ali Delacruz
VILLAGER 3. . . . . Emily Cowan
VILLAGER 4. . . . . .Mikayla Redd
VILLAGER 5. . . . . Alexis Embry
VILLAGER 6. . . . . Elizabeth Luna
VILLAGER . . . . . Janiesha Manzanares
MISC. VILLAGERS . . . . Brook MacMillan, Kaylyn Allen, Lauren Rogers, Tyler Parrott, Aaron Smith, Zane Abeyta, Mathew Carman, Aaron Jones
HERALD. . . . . .Mikayla Redd
HEAD PLAYER/PLAYER/PLAYER KING . . .Aaron Smith
ACTOR/PLAYER CLAUDIUS. . . . . .Chase Ledebur
ESMERELDA/PLAYER GERTRUDE . . . . . .John Moss
POLONIUS. . . . . Mathew Carman
LAERTES . . . . . Matt Ober
OPHELIA . . . . . .Mikayla Redd, Mikki Blasdell
SERVANT 1 . . . . . Tyler Parrott
SERVANT 2 . . . . . .Chase Ledebur
SERVANT 3 . . . . . Mathew Carman
SERVANT 4 . . . . . Ali Delacruz, Codi Meyer
SERVANT 5 . . . . . Kim Koenig, Elizabeth Luna
GRAVEDIGGER. . . . . .Aaron Smith
HORATIO. . . . . Aaron Jones
LOUNGE SINGER. . . . . Alexis Embry
BACK-UP DANCER 1 . . . . . Brooke MacMillan, Cheyanna Cruze
BACK-UP DANCER 2 . . . . . Janesha Manzanares, Lauren Rogers
BACK-UP DANCER 3 . . . . . Kaylyn Allen, Nicole Summy

THE HAMLET THRILL-MA-GEDDON
by Don Zolidis

ACT I

(A banner unfurls proclaiming the school musical, Little Shop of Horrors.*)**

**Feel free to make this specific to your school and your most recent or upcoming musical.*

(Lights up on CHIP *and* JESSIE, *the narrators.)*

CHIP. *(Talking to the audience:)* Are you ready to see the musical?!

(Audience gives muted and confused reaction.)

JESSIE. I don't think they're ready.

CHIP. I SAID: ARE YOU READY TO SEE THE MUSICAL?!

(Audience gives slightly less muted and slightly more confused reaction.)

JESSIE. Well—funny story, we were all set to bring you *Little Shop of Horrors.*

CHIP. Awesome, amazing show, so much better than the show we're actually going to show you.

JESSIE. Shut up, Chip. But…

CHIP. You would have loved it: There's this plant, and it's like evil, and it's eating people—aaaah! People die all over the place. Great for the kids.

JESSIE. Chip. Seriously. Stop it. We totally wanted to do that show—but it turns out—

CHIP. It's really expensive.

JESSIE. Right. Which is normally not a problem for the drama club, but…

CHIP. BIG BUT—

JESSIE. Was that directed at me, Chip?

CHIP. No! I meant big exception.

JESSIE. As some of you might know, we're a little financially strapped at the moment—

CHIP. A little—

JESSIE. A lot, actually. Let's call it a financial crisis.

CHIP. That's what your parents called it.

JESSIE. So the school has been forced to trim—

CHIP. Or hatchet—

JESSIE. The budget of various extracurricular groups.

CHIP. We now have a budget of eight dollars.

JESSIE. They were going to give us ten, but apparently one of us egged the superintendent's dog.

CHIP. Why are you looking at me? By the way, if you want to see a great YouTube video of a dog being egged, check out—

JESSIE. Keep digging that hole, Chip.

CHIP. Anyway, the plant for this show costs three thousand bucks to rent.

JESSIE. So we'll be saving our budget for the next four hundred years, and then we'll have enough to do that show. When the world is a steaming, blasted ruin.

CHIP. Yay!

JESSIE. But I don't want to sound like we're the only part of the school that's having a budget crisis.

CHIP. I've heard the offense and defense on the football team have to share pants. They switch them in between plays.

JESSIE. I can't even go to the games anymore. It's too sad to watch.

CHIP. And the building is doing cost-saving measures as well:

JESSIE. For instance, who needs heat when you can wear sweaters?

CHIP. And do we really need all those lightbulbs? Those just spoil the eyes.

JESSIE. And why splurge on all that fancy cafeteria food when there are mice readily available?

CHIP. Tastes like chicken! Mmm.

JESSIE. So we here at the drama club put our heads together to come up with a low-cost alternative to that big, expensive show. And what we came up with was:

> *(Two* ACTORS *run out, one carrying a cardboard box, and the other with a basket of sock puppets.)*

CHIP. The Tony-nominated Broadway Smash: WICKED!

(Short pause.)

As performed by sock puppets.

*(*ACTOR 1 *puts up a* GLINDA SOCK PUPPET.*)*

GLINDA SOCK PUPPET. *(Singing:)*
POPULAR
WE'RE GONNA MAKE YOU POPULAR
SO IT'S VERY VERY SHREWD TO BE
VERY VERY POP-U-LAR
LIKE ME!

*(*ACTOR 1 *puts up a second hand as the* ELPHABA SOCK PUPPET.*)*

ELPHABA SOCK PUPPET. You mean it?

GLINDA SOCK PUPPET. I do! Let's hug.

ELPHABA SOCK PUPPET. But I'm still green.

(Launches into song for no reason:)

I'LL TRY
DEFYING GRAVITY

*(*ACTOR 2 *produces two* FLYING MONKEY SOCK PUPPETS.*)*

FLYING MONKEY SOCK PUPPETS. Flying monkeys attack! Flying Monkeys attack!

(The FLYING MONKEYS *attack, rip the* GLINDA SOCK PUPPET *off* ACTOR 1's *hand and toss it over the wall.)*

JESSIE. But then we decided that idea was stupid.

*(*ACTOR 1 *and* 2 *run off with puppet theatre.)*

So we kept putting our heads together, which wasn't helpful. It went like this:

(Other ACTORS *emerge.)*

ACTOR 3. Let's do *Miss Saigon!*

CHIP. That show has a helicopter.

ACTOR 3. My uncle used to be in the air force and now he's a criminal. He could steal us a helicopter for free.

JESSIE. No.

ACTOR 4. *Peter Pan.*

CHIP. That involves people flying.

ACTOR 4. Oh but there's this horror version called *Peter Pain,* there's these spikes—

CHIP. Also no.

SUPER-ENTHUSIASTIC ACTOR 5. I know! We'll do the greatest play every written! HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL.

EVERYONE. NO.

SUPER-ENTHUSIASTIC ACTOR 5. YOU'LL REGRET THIS!

JESSIE. Guys, you don't understand the—

ACTOR 6. *The Lion King.*

JESSIE. We don't have any money to—

ACTOR 6. *The Little Mermaid.*

JESSIE. There's no money to—

ACTOR 6. *Spiderman!*

CHIP. All right you're all stupid! We have eight dollars. We need a play we can put on for eight dollars.

ACTOR 3. Wait! I have another uncle who's a criminal!

JESSIE. How many criminal uncles do you have?

ACTOR 3. Four. But I only talk to three of them. But this uncle—he's a white-collar criminal so he's okay—

JESSIE. *(Back to the audience:)* So, luckily for us, helping us counted as community service—

CHIP. So we used our eight dollars to hire…

JESSIE. A consultant!

*(*BROOKS CHARLIE, *wearing a suit and an ankle monitor, enters.)*

BROOKS. How ya doin? How ya doin? Brooks Charlie. Consultant. I hear you got a cash flow problem.

CHIP. We have no cash.

BROOKS. That's a problem.

JESSIE. So we were wondering if you could help us raise some money. Maybe organize a bake sale, or babysitting night—

CHIP. Car wash—

JESSIE. We could sell candy bars.

(Pause. BROOKS *looks at them with contempt.)*

BROOKS. What are you, children?

CHIP. …yes.

BROOKS. We ain't gonna do any of that namby-pamby hoo-ha. You are sitting on a gold mine here: It's called youth. You wanna do a show? We're gonna do the biggest money-maker this school's ever seen.

CHIP. Bigger than *Beauty and the Beast?*

JESSIE. Cause we made lots of money with that one.

BROOKS. With the amount of money I'm going to make you, you'll be able to buy nuclear material on the black market, lock a kid in a room with it, and mutate him into the beast. Then do the show again, and hire actual Swedish models to be the beauties.

JESSIE. There's only one.

BROOKS. In my version, there are five. Beauty, Beauty, Beauty, Beauty, Beauty, and the Beast. That's what the audience wants to see.

JESSIE. I don't know. There's something about your ankle bracelet that tells me you're untrustworthy.

BROOKS. Two things: Is Lindsay Lohan untrustworthy? And two: This school has been here for forty-seven* years and it has never turned a profit. If I ran a business that way, I would be in prison.

**Or however long your school has been around*

CHIP. He makes a good point about Lindsay Lohan.

JESSIE. Maybe we could just ask the school for more money.

BROOKS. The school doesn't have any money, all right? The taxpayers are saving it to pay for the prisons that they're going to need to build for all the kids that drop outta school. Priorities. No, you need me if you're gonna be rich.

JESSIE. That's not why I'm doing theatre.

CHIP. But that is why I'm doing theatre.

BROOKS. Do we have a deal?

JESSIE. I guess.

*(*BROOKS *steps back as* JESSIE *and* CHIP *talk to the audience.)*

Now some of his ideas took some getting used to:

BROOKS. What's the first word that comes into your mind when I say this:

(Pause.)

William.

(Pause.)

BROOKS. Shakespeare.

CHIP. Kill me.

JESSIE. Genius.

CHIP. Genius who kills me from boredom.

BROOKS. Nope, nope, and that was a lot more than one word. Here's the word you shoulda been thinking: Dead.

CHIP. I was gonna get to that.

BROOKS. Which means it's free, it's famous, and you can do anything you want to it and no one can sue you because he's dead. You want vampires in the show for the middle school chicks? Done. You want zombie battles? Done. You want dancing numbers with Lady Whats-Her-Face?

JESSIE. Gaga.

BROOKS. Is she like a baby or something?

JESSIE. *SHE IS A BEAUTIFUL ARTIST WHO IS MISUNDERSTOOD!*

BROOKS. Whatever. My point is: You will make money.

CHIP. Yeah, but the language is hard to understand.

BROOKS. Are you an idiot?

(Short pause.)

You didn't answer my question, are you an idiot?

CHIP. Do you seriously want me to answer that?

BROOKS. Yes.

CHIP. Sometimes.

BROOKS. Were you not listening when I said no one can sue? You don't like the language? Change it. Is it too tough to understand? How about this? Somebody gets hit in the groin. Babies laugh at that.

JESSIE. So which play should we do?

BROOKS. *Hamlet.* Go all in.

CHIP. I was supposed to read that in one of my classes but I didn't cause it was long and there was a movie with Mel Gibson.

JESSIE. But it's such a downer. Everyone dies in the end.

CHIP. That's what happens? I didn't watch the whole movie cause I got bored.

BROOKS. You don't like the ending? Change it. Hamlet gets the girl.

JESSIE. The girl kills herself halfway through.

CHIP. Really?

BROOKS. She was just pretending. Tack on a happy ending. Boom.

JESSIE. I'm sorry, this was a bad idea, I'm all for doing a cheap show, but we're not going to pervert the greatest play in the history of the English language just to make a little money.

CHIP. Yeah. And no one's going to come any way.

JESSIE. We have standards.

CHIP. When it comes to theatre. Not when it comes to girls.

JESSIE. I have standards when it comes to boys too.

CHIP. Dang it.

BROOKS. All right, go back to sock puppets.

CHIP. We will! And they will be awesome! But can we have that eight bucks back so we can buy socks?

BROOKS. Nope.

(He starts to leave.)

JESSIE. Can you believe that guy? Thinking we had no standards?

CHIP. Thinking we'd do Shakespeare?

BROOKS. Hey um… I've been running the numbers for a bit here—You wanna know how much profit we can make on *Hamlet?*

JESSIE. No.

CHIP. Double no.

BROOKS. All right. Fair enough.

CHIP. How much?

BROOKS. Four hundred thousand dollars.

CHIP. Let's do it!

JESSIE. Wait a minute, what? Are you kidding? What are we going to charge for tickets, a thousand dollars? We don't have that many seats! We can't possibly make that much.

*(*BROOKS *saunters back over.)*

BROOKS. You—have the brain of a child.

CHIP. Ha!

BROOKS. You have the brain of a monkey child.

CHIP. Dang it!

BROOKS. Who cares about tickets? We'll charge 'em five bucks,* somebody's grandma will show up and we'll still ride home in gold-plated Hummers.

**Or whatever your tickets cost*

CHIP. I like the way you think. But can I have a Monster Truck instead?

BROOKS. Yes.

CHIP. Awesome.

BROOKS. Two words: Corporate Sponsorship.

JESSIE. Okay, all right, that might bring in a little bit of money, but even if one company sponsors us, there's still no way—

BROOKS. *One* company? No, my friend, not one company.

JESSIE. How many companies are you talking about?

BROOKS. You ever watch NASCAR?

(They step out again.)

JESSIE. So…

BROOKS. I'm talking product placement, I'm talking commercials in the show, I'm talking different sponsors for each act—sell, sell, sell. Of course, the sponsors are going to want to change the play to fit their product, but who cares as long as they're paying?

JESSIE. Well, we'll think about it—

*(*BROOKS *exits.)*

So we spent some time searching our souls—do we sell out, or do we not sell out? Do we take our beautiful high school theatre program and subvert its ideals?

(Short pause.)

*(*CHIP *and* JESSIE *put on expensive sunglasses and jewelry.)*

CHIP. Of course we do!

(He claps his hands, and banners unfurl around the theatre proclaiming various ridiculous corporate sponsors.)

(Lights down as the set is rolled out.)

JESSIE. And now…

CHIP. THE MOMENT YOU HAVE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR!

JESSIE. Dr. Pepper presents Disney's Hamlet!

CHIP. Live from the Gatorade Theatre!

JESSIE. Sponsored by the good people at Tucks Medicated Pads!

(Lights up on the stage. A vague representation of a castle, perhaps with a few advertisements prominently displayed.)

CHIP. Hamlet, Act One—

JESSIE. Brought to you by GlaxoSmithKline, improving your life through pharmaceuticals since 1954.

CHIP. It was a dark and stormy night, and the guards patrolling Dr. Pepper castle were worried.

*(*BERNARDO *enters, holding a spear and a can of Dr. Pepper.)*

BERNARDO. Who goes there?

*(*MARCELLUS *enters from the opposite side of the stage, holding a spear and a 2-liter bottle of Dr. Pepper.)*

MARCELLUS. It is I, Marcellus. And who are you?

BERNARDO. Bernardo. It's a dark and stormy night tonight, isn't it?

MARCELLUS. Indeed.

*(*MARCELLUS *takes a long swig from his bottle.)*

Ahhhhhh. It is a cold night here in Denmark, but these twenty-three flavors keep me warm.

BERNARDO. As they do me.

(He takes a drink.)

I've also noticed myself growing more attractive to women since I started drinking this.

MARCELLUS. Yes. I've also discovered that. It truly is the Lord's drink.

BERNARDO. Last night I filled my bathtub with it. My skin is as supple as a baby's rear end. Go ahead touch my face.

MARCELLUS. That's just weird.

(He touches BERNARDO's *face.)*

That is nice, though.

(There's a creepy sound from off-stage.)

BERNARDO. Aaaaaaaaaah!

MARCELLUS. Calm yourself, man!

*(*BERNARDO *calms himself by taking another drink from his Dr. Pepper.)*

(The GHOST *appears.)*

MARCELLUS. IT'S A GHOST!!!!

BERNARDO. AAAAAAAAAAAH!

(They freeze and CHIP *and* JESSIE *stop the action mid-scream.)*

CHIP. Let's stop this for a second, shall we? I think this is a moment that some great pharmaceutical products could help.

JESSIE. You see—let's say you've encountered something that, for lack of a better word, blows your mind.

CHIP. Maybe it's a meteor about to hit the earth—

JESSIE. Or Angelina Jolie has rescued another child from a third world country—

CHIP. Or you've just seen the walking corpse of the former king of your country.

JESSIE. Well, we've got something for you to keep you functional—Shlizzbot.

CHIP. Oh yeah—Shlizzbot is the shlizzbot. Take it and you won't care what happens. Let's watch what happens if these guards were psychologically adjusted with Shlizzbot.

(The GHOST *exits.)*

BERNARDO. Go ahead touch my face.

MARCELLUS. That's weird.

(He touches BERNARDO's *face.)*

That is nice, though.

(The GHOST *enters.)*

Hey check it out: there's a ghost.

BERNARDO. Nice. You know what's really supernatural, though? I used to have back acne, but with my Dr. Pepper bath, it cleared up.

MARCELLUS. Niiiice.

(The GHOST *points at them.)*

Hey you know what? That looks like the visage of our recently dead king.

BERNARDO. Yeah. Looks like his spirit is doomed to walk amongst the living.

MARCELLUS. Maybe we should tell somebody.

BERNARDO. Maybe we should.

(They slowly saunter off-stage.)

CHIP. And scene! Much better!

JESSIE. Meanwhile, inside the Throne Room of Dr. Pepper castle, the new king addresses his subjects.

(Enter CLAUDIUS *and* GERTRUDE, *the king and queen.* CLAUDIUS *speaks like a politician.)*

CLAUDIUS. My royal subjects! I know that there have been some difficult times out there lately—we're all hurting right now after my brother's death, but this is a time for this nation to come together. Let's be honest: we all liked him. He had a great beard. I was always envious of that beard. Not so envious that I would kill, let's put that rumor to bed. My opponents out there always want to turn this into a political issue—and I think it's become a distraction for us. Read my lips: I did not have murderous relations with my brother. I'm glad we can put that issue to rest, and I hope that the people who were saying those things enjoy their time being tortured.

(Far-off scream.)

Now, I'm not here to talk about my personal wife, I mean life, but—again—people have been talking, so yes, I have married Gertrude. She's a stone cold fox and once she was back on the market I knew I was going to have to act fast. And some of you sickos out there think it's a little weird that I married my brother's wife two days after he died, but you should be ashamed of yourselves and you will also be tortured.

(Far-off scream.)

So to sum up: Time of a great personal tragedy, Gertrude is a stone cold fox, if you don't like it I hope you enjoy spikes. And I'm lowering taxes which will exempt me from any of your moral concerns forever. Now my new wife would like to say a few words.

*(*GERTRUDE *steps forward.)*

GERTRUDE. My people. I loved my dead husband very much which is why I married his brother. They kind of look similar. I know there's an ewww factor out there—but we'll all get over it—and now to take your mind off of that…bunnies. Thank you.

*(*HAMLET *enters, with a slow clap.)*

HAMLET. Bravo, mother. Bravo.

GERTRUDE. Hamlet. How good to see you out of your room.

CLAUDIUS. What's the good news, son?

HAMLET. *(In whiny, Luke Skywalker voice:) You'll never be my father!*

CLAUDIUS. Whoah, chill out.

HAMLET. Never!

GERTRUDE. Don't talk to your new Dad that way! And stop all this moping around.

HAMLET. You don't understand me.

GERTRUDE. Why are you wearing black? Don't you have other colors in your wardrobe? It's springtime, you would look great in blue.

HAMLET. *I'm never wearing blue! I hate blue! I hate it I hate it I hate it!*

CLAUDIUS. You're such a whiner. Geez. Suck it up.

HAMLET. Dad died last week.

GERTRUDE. This is Denmark. People die all the time.

CLAUDIUS. We have terrible health care.

GERTRUDE. And most of the people don't even have insurance. But if they had a choice in health care, I think they should choose TIAA-CREF, which provides an excellent low-cost option.

HAMLET. I hate you and I hate my family! I hope you all die!

*(*JESSIE *stops in.)*

JESSIE. Whoah! Let's put the brakes on this. I think I smell the need for more pharmacological adjustment!

CHIP. Oops. That was me.

JESSIE. What I'm saying is, this is some pretty rough stuff.

CHIP. You can say that again Jessie!

JESSIE. *(Annoyed:)* This is some pretty rough stuff.

CHIP. Ha ha ha. You're clever. And lovely to look at.

JESSIE. What are you doing?

CHIP. We're supposed to banter. The drug companies like it when we banter. It's in the agreement.

(He takes out a contract and shows it to her.)

JESSIE. Fine.

CHIP. You're clever. And lovely to look at.

JESSIE. Thank you Chip. You're not so bad yourself.

CHIP. I've had a lot of work done.

JESSIE. Good thinking! Now, I know what you parents out there are thinking—my teenager is out of control. I know that's what Claudius is thinking.

CHIP. Ha ha ha.

JESSIE. That wasn't a joke.

CHIP. Whoops.

JESSIE. The fact is, Hamlet is suffering from teenage rebellion syndrome. Some symptoms include:

CHIP. Wearing black clothing.

JESSIE. Clever wordplay.

CHIP. Long soliloquies.

JESSIE. Tendency to make death threats.

CHIP. And sleeping.

JESSIE. It's more common than you might think.

CHIP. Especially if your father is murdered, and then the murderer remarries your mother, and then your father's ghost comes back from the underworld and enlists you to get revenge.

JESSIE. Especially then.

CHIP. But just because you have a teenager in a difficult emotional state, that doesn't mean that you have to endure these outbursts.

JESSIE. Because the good people at GlaxoSmithKline have just developed a new drug that will help in situations like this. It's called Refixor.

CHIP. Refixor.

JESSIE. That's right.

CHIP. Now don't start believing the rumors that the only way it passed FDA approval is because they paid them a lot of money—that's ridiculous.

JESSIE. Ridiculous.

CHIP. It depends on how you define a lot of money.

JESSIE. Was it a lot of money in comparison to the national debt?

CHIP. Nope.

JESSIE. I'd say it was a little bit of money then.

CHIP. I would too!

JESSIE. What does Refixor do? Well—

CHIP. It fixes everything! That's why it's called Refixor!

JESSIE. But to be more specific about it, Refixor enters the bloodstream and attacks the parts of the brain that cause suspicion, anger, and whininess. Refixor attaches itself to those emotions and savagely eliminates them. Like a big dog chewing on the carcass of a dead squirrel.

CHIP. Sweet!

JESSIE. Your teenager will no longer be the out-of-control, black-clothing-wearing drain on your resources that they've been since the age of thirteen. Instead—well—maybe it's better just to show you. Let's watch this scene again, but this time—Hamlet has taken a double dose of Refixor.

CHIP. Not recommended.

JESSIE. Well, in cases of severe depression, you can take two or three times the recommended dosage.

CHIP. You may experience side effects.

JESSIE. We'll get to those later. All right, let's back this up, shall we!

CHIP. Ha ha ha! I love watching you back things up.

JESSIE. I thought you weren't going to say things like that anymore, Chip.

CHIP. I'm sorry. I get lonely.

JESSIE. That's not the kind of banter I'd like to have with you.

CHIP. Maybe after all this is over—

JESSIE. No.

CHIP. *(Back to the audience:)* All right! Good thing they make drugs for rejection too!

JESSIE. So let's rewind to be kind!

*(*HAMLET *exits.* CLAUDIUS *and* GERTRUDE *go back to their opening positions.)*

GERTRUDE. My people. I loved my dead husband very much which is why I married his brother. They kind of look similar. I know there's an ewww factor out there—but we'll all get over it—and now to take your mind off of that…bunnies. Thank you.

*(*HAMLET *enters, wearing something much sunnier.)*

HAMLET. Good job, Mom!

GERTRUDE. Thanks, son.

HAMLET. High five new Dad!

*(*HAMLET *high fives* CLAUDIUS.*)*

CLAUDIUS. Oh Hamlet, you're such a boon to me in my old age.

HAMLET. You're not that old!

CLAUDIUS. I know, I know.

(He puts his hand on GERTRUDE's *thigh [or around her shoulder].)*

HAMLET. Wow! You two are really in love!

GERTRUDE. I'll say!

HAMLET. Well I think that's great. It's just wonderful that my Mom is able to move on with her life after Dad died so mysteriously from that poison. It's a good thing I don't have any suspicions!

CLAUDIUS. Hamlet have I ever told you that your Mom is a stone cold fox?

HAMLET. That doesn't bother me at all!

CLAUDIUS. She is.

GERTRUDE. Stop it, Claudius. Not in front of the boy.

HAMLET. I'm glad this doesn't cause me any psychological harm!

CLAUDIUS. Hey son—tell you what? There are some people spreading nasty rumors about me—can you please arrest them and kill them?

HAMLET. Sure thing new Dad! I'll get right on that! It's a good thing my moral center has been erased!

CLAUDIUS. All right then.

JESSIE. And scene.

CHIP. That was sweet.

JESSIE. Indeed it was. Now your teenager will no longer question your indiscretions or moral failings!

CHIP. Wow!

JESSIE. Refixor.

CHIP. You should know that Refixor does include certain side effects:

JESSIE. *(Quickly:)* Weight gain, depression, insanity, numbness in fingers and toes, a tendency to soliloquize, and in rare cases, seeing ghosts.

CHIP. And remember to ask your doctor!

JESSIE. Let's check in on another scene, shall we?

CHIP. It was a dark and stormy night. And the King's advisor, Polonius, was having a little chat with his children.

(Thunder. Enter POLONIUS, LAERTES, *and* OPHELIA.*)*

POLONIUS. My children, come to me.

LAERTES. Yes, Dad?

OPHELIA. What is it, father?

POLONIUS. First let us drink some Dr. Pepper.

(He hands out cans.)

LAERTES. I shall treasure this.

OPHELIA. I'm feeling adventurous and carefree.

POLONIUS. Let's have a fatherly chat. See, I'm about to give you some great advice: Laertes, my son, I'm sending you away to school in France because our educational system in Denmark is terrible. I've also heard that France is nice.

LAERTES. I'll write to you.

POLONIUS. Whatever. And Ophelia—my daughter—are you still going out with Hamlet?

OPHELIA. I guess so. He doesn't like talk to me much anymore.

POLONIUS. Well, he's going through a rough patch what with his father dying and his mother marrying his uncle. But he still likes you right?

OPHELIA. I guess. I think he doesn't like me as much as he used to.

POLONIUS. Why is that?

OPHELIA. I don't know! He's so hard to read sometimes.

POLONIUS. What did you say to him last time you spoke?

OPHELIA. Can I show you in flashback?

POLONIUS. Please.

*(*HAMLET *enters, wearing black again*. OPHELIA *runs up to him.)*

CHIP. *(Quickly:)* Flashback sponsored by McDonald's!

JESSIE. Ba-dum-bum-bum-bum.

OPHELIA. There you are!

HAMLET. Hey Ophelia.

OPHELIA. I was looking everywhere for you! I'm so worried about you when I can't see you! I think, what is he doing, who is he talking to, is he talking to another girl, cause I mean like you're the prince and you're so amazing, I can't believe you liked me—do you think I'm gaining weight? What are you thinking right now? Tell me tell me I want to know what's going on in your head at all times I wrote you a letter last night—

(Takes out twenty-page letter.)

And I'm thinking that we'll have three kids and we'll name one of them Hamlophilia, because that's like both of our names together and it's pretty and I love you please don't leave me! You don't like it? What about Omlet, then? Why don't you ever tell me what you're thinking? I want to know what you're feeling right now! Please when you don't talk to me it makes me crazy I love you please—there isn't another girl is there, there's another girl, who is she *I'll kill her!* Don't think I'm crazy it's just because I love you so much you're the prince and you're awesome—is the reason you don't talk to me because I gained weight? It was just a little bit of weight you don't think I'm fat do you? Am I fat? Am I getting too fat for you! I knew it! I bet that other girl is skinny isn't she *I'll snap her like a TWIG!*

(Short pause.)

Why won't you talk to me?

(She returns back to her father.)

I don't know what's wrong. He just seems distant lately.

*(*POLONIUS *considers this as* CHIP *and* JESSIE *pop in.)*

JESSIE. Whoah there little horsey!

CHIP. How many of you out there have girlfriends who behave the exact same way? I know I do!

JESSIE. You've never had a girlfriend.

CHIP. But in my imagination she acts just like that.

JESSIE. It's called Clingy Girlfriend Anxiety Disorder. Or C-Gad for short.

CHIP. C-Gad!

JESSIE. It's a real problem. I remember one time when I was dating a football player who's going to be a doctor and make lots of money—much more money that you will ever make Chip—I was a total wreck. I called him six times a day. And that's not even counting the thousands of texts.

CHIP. I would love to talk to you six times a day.

JESSIE. He didn't! And he dumped me. But never fear ladies—GlaxoSmithKline has a new product on the market—Relaxafem! You can take it and it will make all the difference!

CHIP. And fellas—if you fear your lady friend is suffering from C-Gad, you can just slip a little Relaxafem in her drink, and bingo! She'll be right back to the way you want her to be!

JESSIE. Let's watch this little scene again, but this time let's give Ophelia a pharmacological adjustment!

*(*OPHELIA *and* HAMLET *rewind.)*

CHIP. And go!

*(*HAMLET *enters.* OPHELIA *approaches.)*

OPHELIA. Hey!

HAMLET. Hey.

(Pause.)

So have you been thinking about our relationship?

OPHELIA. Nope.

CHIP. And Bingo! Perfect girlfriend.

JESSIE. Some side effects include uncontrollable weight gain and suicidal tendencies.

CHIP. But tests are inconclusive!

JESSIE. And finally—we do have one more scene to show you.

CHIP. It was a dark and stormy night.

(Thunder. HAMLET *enters in black, outside.)*

JESSIE. And Hamlet wasn't taking any pills.

HAMLET. All right—I'm starting to get depressed again, and that's when I start talking to myself, which is a problem, but I'm not going crazy—I'm not—

(The GHOST *enters.)*

What the heck is that?!

(The GHOST *holds up a hand.)*

What are you?!

GHOST. *(Ghostly:)* **Ham-letttt…**

HAMLET. How do you know my name?!

GHOST. *(Ghostly:)* **Ham-lettt…**

HAMLET. That's my name again! Are you some kind of ghost?

GHOST. Follllow Meeee…

(The GHOST *walks a little ways.)*

HAMLET. Do I follow? He knows my name. What could this be? Is it a trick?

(The GHOST *beckons.)*

It's doing it again. But what could it mean?

GHOST. Just shut up and get over here.

HAMLET. Dad?

GHOST. Yes.

HAMLET. But…you're dead!

GHOST. Yeah, I know. Bummer. **But…I have come back to tell you…I was murdered!**

HAMLET. No way!

GHOST. Yes!

HAMLET. Are you serious?

GHOST. Yes I am very serious I was murdered.

HAMLET. Who could have done this?

GHOST. Is it really so hard to figure out? Let's see—who had a motive to kill me? Who could it have been? Who could possibly have had a motive to murder me?

HAMLET. I don't know.

GHOST. Seriously, you don't know?

HAMLET. No.

GHOST. Claudius.

HAMLET. It was Claudius?!

GHOST. Yes!

HAMLET. I never would have suspected him!

GHOST. You are the dumbest person ever to live! All right look—it was him—

HAMLET. How did he do it?

GHOST. You want all the gory details?

HAMLET. I'm just curious.

GHOST. I was sleeping and he poured poison into my ear—and then my blood turned into cement and I died and went to the bad place.

HAMLET. The bad place?

GHOST. You know, with the fire, and the pitchforks, and the screaming torture for eternity. We're not allowed to the say the word anymore because it frightens the children. But just imagine my stomach being sliced open and my entrails being pulled out and made into a jump rope for demons. And they don't even let me play.

HAMLET. Oh.

GHOST. Yeah. It's not fun. Unlike the products of Fisher-Price, which are a lot of fun: I highly recommend the Fisher Price Farm Playset for all the youngsters out there.

(Produces Fisher Price playset.)

'Baa. Baa.' I'm a sheep. 'And I'm a cow.' 'And I'm a sheep that was murdered by the pig so the pig could steal the sheep's wife.'

(Pig murders sheep and cozies up to another sheep.)

HAMLET. Dad. That was a good playset. But how can I help you?

GHOST. *(As the sheep:)* 'Avenge meeeeee… Kill the pig.'

HAMLET. Who's the pig?

GHOST. Claudius! Claudius is the pig! Kill him.

HAMLET. Well—

GHOST. Kill him kill him kill him kill him!

HAMLET. You're right.

GHOST. Kill him!

HAMLET. Yes! I will! I will avenge you, father! Claudius must die! And Mom too!

GHOST. Eh—I'm on the fence about killing your mother.

HAMLET. No! Everyone associated with this dies! From now on, no more Mr. Nice Hamlet! I'll pretend to be insane, and then spend a lot of time worrying about this, and then I'll kill them all! All of them! Moo ah ha ha ha ha!

*(*CHIP *and* JESSIE *pop in as* HAMLET *freezes in maniacal laughing position.)*

CHIP. This is what we like to refer to as:

JESSIE. A psychotic break with reality.

CHIP. How do you know you've had a psychotic break with reality?

JESSIE. The first clue might be when the voices in your head tell you to kill.

CHIP. The second clue might be when you think the voices in your head make a lot of sense.

JESSIE. The third clue might be when you start pretending to be insane, just to see if that will work.

CHIP. News flash: if you pretend to be insane, you're probably insane.

JESSIE. But luckily for you and all the psychotics in the audience, GlaxoSmithKline have a new drug that can prevent episodes just like this: Moop.

CHIP. It's called Moop?

JESSIE. They found that if they made the name too long, the psychotics started killing people.

CHIP. Moop it is. How does it work?

JESSIE. Well—whenever you're about to have a psychotic break, Moop summons other voices in your head to tell you nice things. Let's watch with Hamlet!

*(*HAMLET *backs up.)*

CHIP. It was a dark and stormy night. Again. It rains a lot in Denmark.

(Thunder. HAMLET *enters.)*

HAMLET. All right—I'm starting to get depressed again, and that's when I start talking to myself, which is a problem, but I'm not going crazy—I'm not—

(The GHOST *enters.)*

What the heck is that?!

(The GHOST *holds up a hand.)*

What are you?!

GHOST. *(Ghostly:)* **Ham-letttt…**

HAMLET. How do you know my name?!

GHOST. *(Ghostly:)* **Ham-lettt…**

(A second GHOST *appears on the opposite side of the stage. He seems a lot happier.)*

GHOST 2. Hey Hamlet!

HAMLET. Whoah! Two ghosts?

*(*GHOST 3 *appears next to* GHOST 2.*)*

GHOST 3. Hey Hamlet! Over here! Come here! We've got something to say to you!

GHOST. *(Ghostly:)* **Ham-lettt…**

GHOST 2. Booo.

GHOST 3. Boooooo.

GHOST. *(Ghostly:)* I am your father…

GHOST 2. Boooobs.

HAMLET. What?

GHOST 3. Boooobs.

*(*HAMLET *is distracted by* GHOSTS 2 *and* 3. *He starts walking towards them.)*

GHOST. Avenge me…

GHOST 2. Booooobs.

GHOST 3. Booooobs.

HAMLET. What about boobs?

GHOST. Dang it…

*(*GHOST *gives up and leaves.)*

JESSIE. And there you have it folks! Psychotic break averted!

CHIP. But what happens if there's a female psychotic?

JESSIE. Easy.

*(*OPHELIA *enters, with three ghosts again.)*

GHOST. Ophelia—avenge me—

GHOST 2. Shoooooooes.

GHOST 3. Shoooooooes.

*(*OPHELIA *turns toward* GHOSTS 2 *and* 3.*)*

JESSIE. See? Easy.

CHIP. All right! Well I feel better about everything. It's nice to know there's a pill for just about every problem I could have. If only they made something that made me more attractive to women.

JESSIE. Ha ha ha! There's no hope for that, Chip!

CHIP. Well thanks folks, you've been a great audience out there and remember—

JESSIE. Most of these drugs are perfectly safe!

(The lights go down. Stirring music plays. Perhaps a rainbow flies across the stage. CHIP *and* JESSIE's *personalities change.)*

CHIP. *(In the dark:)* Once upon a time, there was a young man.

JESSIE. *(In the dark:)* A prince.

CHIP. *(In the dark:)* Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.

JESSIE. *(In the dark:)* Oh how I've waited for a prince!

CHIP. *(In the dark:)* Hamlet, Act Two.

JESSIE. *(In the dark:)* Brought to you by Disney.

(Lights up on the courtyard of the castle. Everything is bright and slightly cartoony. Perhaps music plays in the background.)

(Note: All of the singing in this section may be done a capella. You are welcome to create your own tunes. It doesn't have to be especially great. In my mind, this resembles the music in 'Beauty and the Beast.')

(Clean and happy VILLAGERS *enter, carrying baskets of foodstuffs. They are very, very cheerful people.)*

VILLAGER 1. Good morning to you!

FEMALE VILLAGER. And good morning to you, sir!

VILLAGER 3. It's another beautiful day in Denmark!

VILLAGER 4. Every day is another beautiful day in Denmark! Except when it rains!

(The VILLAGERS *laugh.)*

FEMALE VILLAGER. And that only happens at night!

*(*HAMLET *enters, wandering, his head in a book.)*

VILLAGER 1. Good Morning, Prince Hamlet!

*(*HAMLET *doesn't really notice* VILLAGER 1.*)*

FEMALE VILLAGER. What a fine Prince he is!

(More VILLAGERS *enter.)*

VILLAGER 5. Good morning, Prince Hamlet!

VILLAGER 6. Always have your head in a book.

(The VILLAGERS *gather on the side of the stage. They begin to sing their lines now.)*

FEMALE VILLAGER. *(Singing:)*
LOOK AT HIM THERE
A PRINCE A PRINCE

VILLAGER 6. *(Talking:)* A Prince with his head too much in the books if you ask me.

FEMALE VILLAGER. *(Singing:)*
LOOK AT HIM THERE
MY PRINCE MY PRINCE

VILLAGERS. *(Singing:)*
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIM
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE PRINCE THERE IS
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE PRINCE

VILLAGER 2. *(Talking:)* They say he eats bacon all day!

VILLAGER 3. *(Talking:)* And he's independent-minded!

VILLAGER 5. *(Talking:)* That'll get you into trouble every time!

VILLAGER 6. *(Talking:)* It's the books I tell you!

FEMALE VILLAGER. *(Singing:)*
LOOK AT HIM THERE
MY PRINCE MY PRINCE

VILLAGERS. *(Singing:)*
HE'S BEEN ACTING FUNNY
HE'S BEEN ACTING STRANGE

VILLAGER 3. *(Singing:)* HE OFTEN SAYS IT'S SUNNY

VILLAGER 4. *(Singing:)* EVEN WHEN IT RAINS

FEMALE VILLAGER. *(Singing:)* MY PRINCE MY PRINCE

VILLAGERS. *(Singing:)*
HE'S ACTING KIND OF LOONY
IN A CRAZY SORT OF WAY

VILLAGER 3. *(Singing:)* HE SAYS HE SEES THE MOON-Y

VILLAGER 4. *(Singing:)* EVEN WHEN IT'S DAY

VILLAGER 5. *(Talking:)* I hear it's because his father was murdered and now his mother has married the new king!

VILLAGER 6. *(Talking:)* Ah come on now!

FEMALE VILLAGER. *(Singing:)*
SOME DAY HE'LL FIND ME

MY PRINCE MY PRINCE—

VILLAGER 1. *(Talking:)* Hey! You're not the star of the show.

FEMALE VILLAGER. Oh. Sorry.

VILLAGERS. *(Singing:)*
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIM
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE PRINCE THERE IS
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE PRINCE
IF ONLY WE KNEW WHAT IT WAS

(They all stop and stare at him for a second. Then go back to their business as if nothing had happened. HAMLET *sighs and talks to himself.)*

HAMLET. They all think I'm crazy, don't they? Just because I like to read. And also because I'm acting crazy. Oh Denmark. There has to be something more to life than this.

(He begins a song:)

LOOK AT THIS PLACE—A CASTLE
I SHOULD BE HAPPY I SHOULD BE GAY
I SHOULD BE CHARMING AND HANDSOME
BUT INSTEAD I FEEL GREY

(He begins to move about the courtyard, arms outstretched.)

I WANT
I WANT
THERE'S A LIFE FOR ME SOMEWHERE
THERE'S A LIFE OUT THERE
IF I CAN ONLY REACH UP AND SEIZE IT
GRAB LIFE BY THE HAIR!

(Grabs somebody by the hair.)

VILLAGER. Ow!

*(*HAMLET *ignores the* VILLAGER *and spins some more.)*

HAMLET. *(Singing:)*
I WANT
I WANT
A LIFE WHERE I'M HAPPY
A LIFE WHERE I'M GOOD
A PLACE TO BE DASHING
NOT MISUNDERSTOOD

(He takes out his sword and swings it willy-nilly.)

I WANT

I WANT
TO BE JUST LIKE THE OTHERS
A PLAIN COMMON MAN

(He accentuates the point by stabbing with the sword, accidentally killing VILLAGER 4*.)*

VILLAGER 4. *(Dying:)* It's an honor to be stabbed by you sir.

HAMLET. *(Unaware, continuing to sing:)*
NOT A PRINCE ANYMORE
NOT HAMLET, JUST HAM.

(He stops singing for a moment, then starts up again suddenly.)

OH ONE MORE THING
I ALSO HAVE TO KILL MY UNCLE

(He stops singing. The VILLAGERS *drag off* VILLAGER 4*.)*

VILLAGERS. *(Singing:)*
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE PRINCE THERE IS.
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE PRINCE.

(The VILLAGERS *exit as* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN, *two buffoons, enter. In proper Disney tradition, one should be very big and tall, and one very small. They could also be talking animals.)*

ROSENCRANTZ. There he is!

GUILDENSTERN. Indeed there he is!

HAMLET. Excuse me, I have a book to read. And I'm also quite crazy right now.

ROSENCRANTZ. I know—I saw you stab that man!

HAMLET. What man?

ROSENCRANTZ. Never mind.

GUILDENSTERN. But don't you remember us, Prince Hamlet?

HAMLET. Do I know you?

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN. *(In unison:)* We're Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!

(Doesn't ring a bell.)

Your childhood friends!

ROSENCRANTZ. Actually, I was your childhood friend, he was your childhood enemy.

GUILDENSTERN. But I was a very friendly enemy! And he was a very enemious friend!

ROSENCRANTZ. There's no such word as enemious.

GUILDENSTERN. There is now. I just said it. Huzzah.

HAMLET. I do remember you. You were the annoying ones.

ROSENCRANTZ. That's us!

GUILDENSTERN. See? He remembers!

HAMLET. Well—what do you want with me?

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN. *(In unison:)* We want to make you happy!

ROSENCRANTZ. Do a dance for him, Guildenstern.

GUILDENSTERN. No you do a dance for him, Rosencrantz.

ROSENCRANTZ. I'll bash you in the head.

GUILDENSTERN. And I will kick you in the shins.

ROSENCRANTZ. I always liked your mother.

*(*GUILDENSTERN *attacks him.)*

Stop! This is madness.

HAMLET. Really? I'm afraid I don't have time for you right now.

(They're suddenly right next to him, on either shoulder.)

GUILDENSTERN. Really? What are you up to?

ROSENCRANTZ. Schemes?

GUILDENSTERN. Plans?

ROSENCRANTZ. Scheming plans?

GUILDENSTERN. Planning schemes?

ROSENCRANTZ. Planning scheming plans?

GUILDENSTERN. Scheming planning schemes?

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN. *(In unison:)* Scheming planning scheming plans?
Planning scheming planning scheming plans?

HAMLET. Shut up!

(They put their hands over their mouths.)

Who sent you?

GUILDENSTERN. The king. Whoops. I didn't mean to say that. I mean no one.

HAMLET. Well tell the king that I'm insane now. And he's no king. My father was the king. Until he was run over by a stampede of wildebeests.

ROSENCRANTZ. This sounds familiar, my lord.

GUILDENSTERN. Indeed it does.

HAMLET. Or poisoned. I can't remember which. If there was only some dramatic way to confront him.

ROSENCRANTZ. You see, that's your problem, Hamlet, right there:

GUILDENSTERN. Confrontation. We have a saying:

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN. *(In unison:)* Who cares?

(They launch into a song:)

ROSENCRANTZ. *(Singing:)*
YOUR FATHER'S DEAD AND YOUR MOM'S A FOX

GUILDENSTERN. *(Singing:)* Who cares?

ROSENCRANTZ. *(Singing:)*
YOUR GIRLFRIEND'S DUMB AS A BOX OF ROCKS

GUILDENSTERN. *(Singing:)* WHO CARES?

HAMLET. I don't know, guys. It just doesn't seem—

(They intercept him trying to walk away.)

GUILDENSTERN. *(Singing:)*
YOUR UNCLE'S KING AND HE'S NOT TOO NICE

ROSENCRANTZ. *(Singing:)* WHO CARES?

GUILDENSTERN. *(Singing:)*
YOUR DINNER CONSISTS OF A BUNCH OF MICE

*(*GUILDENSTERN *grabs a mouse and takes a bite.)*

ROSENCRANTZ. *(Singing:)* WHO CARES?

HAMLET. You are making a good point.

ROSENCRANTZ. *(Singing:)*
YOU BURNED YOUR FACE AND YOUR FRIEND'S TO BLAME

GUILDENSTERN. *(Singing:)* WHO CARES?

HAMLET. *(Singing:)* THE PRINCE HAS FINALLY GONE INSANE

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN. *(Singing:)*
WHO CARES?

ALL THREE.
WHO CARES?
WHO CARES?
WHO-OOO—OO CARES!

*(*ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN *bow.)*

ROSENCRANTZ. Listen—let's go off someplace nice, like…

GUILDENSTERN. England.

ROSENCRANTZ. They have muffins!

HAMLET. You know what? Let me just take care of something around here and then I'll want to leave the country.

GUILDENSTERN. We are all ears!

ROSENCRANTZ. And noses!

GUILDENSTERN. I'm sorry. He's stupid.

ROSENCRANTZ. You're stupid.

HAMLET. I'll catch up with you later. Get out of here.

GUILDENSTERN. We can't wait, and remember:

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN. Who cares?

(They scamper off.)

HAMLET. If only I had some kind of dramatic inspiration right now.

(A HERALD *blows a trumpet.)*

HERALD. Make way! Make way! The dramatically inspiring Players are here!

(The PLAYERS *enter. They are quite silly and probably should have at least one hippo amongst them.)*

HEAD PLAYER. Citizens of Denmark! I am here to present to you the most brilliantest, most amazingacious, most stupendously incredible group of actors your puny nation has ever seen!

(An ACTOR *runs up and bows. He's quite silly. If he were an animal, he would be a bird.)*

Behold the actor Crookinghall. The finest dramatic actor the world has ever seen. Watch! Watch as he performs the role of Priam from Euripides' smash hit, "Hecuba!"

ACTOR. Hecuba! Hecuuuubaaaa! Hecuba Hecuba Hecuba Hecuba! Oh oh oh oh oh oh! Aaaaaaaaaggrhghgghg!

(He stabs himself.)

Acccck! I'm killing myself! I'm killing myself now! It hurts a lot!

(He stabs himself again.)

Oh so much! Why do I keep on stabbing myself!? Why?!

(Stab stab stab.)

Hecuuuuu-baaa!

(He gets up, spins around, then dies again.)

Now I'm dead.

POLONIUS. *(Entering:)* That was quite wonderful.

HEAD PLAYER. Thank you my lord. Perhaps we could perform a play for the new king?

POLONIUS. Great idea. We could use some entertainment around here. Things have been awfully dreary since the last king died mysteriously and the new king was crowned and then took the last king's wife in a suspicious manner.

HEAD PLAYER. Behold! Esmerelda! The most comically gifted actress ever to perform!

*(*ESMERELDA *[played by a boy] enters.)*

By the way, I should mention that she's actually a boy because we have a lot of issues regarding women on the stage, but no problems whatsoever with cross-dressing.

ESMERELDA. Oh! Oh! I am in love with a knight!

POLONIUS. Yes yes that was very funny stop that. Get out of here. We'll employ you later.

HEAD PLAYER. Wonderful! Come Dramatically Inspiring Players!

(The PLAYERS *gather their things and exit quickly.)*

POLONIUS. Ah, Hamlet, it's good to see you up and moving around again.

HAMLET. *(Aside to the audience:)* This devil serves my uncle. I'll pretend to be crazy just to throw him off.

*(*HAMLET *puts on a silly face.)*

Do I know you?

POLONIUS. Know me? Why, I'm Polonius!

HAMLET. Bolognius?

POLONIUS. No. Polonius. With a P.

HAMLET. My name is Ham. And you are Bologna.

POLONIUS. *(Aside, to the audience:)* He's gone mad!

*(*HAMLET *launches into the "I Am Crazy" song.)*

HAMLET. *(Singing:)*
MAD SIR MAD SIR YOU THINK ME MAD SIR?
NO SIR NO SIR JUST KIND OF BAD SIR?
YOU THINK I AM CRAAA-ZEE?
YOU'RE RIGHT I AM CRAAA-ZEEE

POLONIUS. It cannot be true!

HAMLET. *(Singing:)*
UP IS DOWN AND LEFT IS RIGHT
FISH IS FOWL AND BLACK IS WHITE
BUT THERE'S ONE THING I KNOW MORE THAN YOU
WATERMELON POP TARTS MUFFIN SHOE!

(A bunch of VILLAGERS *pop up.)*

VILLAGERS. *(Singing:)*
WATERMELON POP TARTS MUFFIN SHOE!

*(*HAMLET *grabs* POLONIUS *and begins dancing with him aggressively.)*

HAMLET. *(Singing:)*
OHHHHHHHH
THERE'S A FROG IN THE AIR THERE'S A SONG IN MY HAIR
AND I'M CRAZY CRAZY CRAZY CRAZY!
YES I'M CRAZY CRAZY CRAZY CRAZY!

POLONIUS. *(Talking:)* The man's crazy!

HAMLET.
YOU SELL FISH AND I SELL BLUE
WATERMELON POP TARTS MUFFIN SHOE!

VILLAGERS. *(Singing:)*
WATERMELON POP TARTS MUFFIN SHOE!

(They all bow and clap for HAMLET.*)*

POLONIUS. Are you done, my prince?

HAMLET. Done? No, sir, my father is done. My mother is well-done. Ba-doom ching.

VILLAGER 2. That was clever!

HAMLET. Don't you have something to do?

VILLAGER 2. I do!

HAMLET. So get to it.

VILLAGER 2. Okay!

(The VILLAGERS *scamper off.)*

POLONIUS. Perhaps I could be of some assistance.

HAMLET. Oh you just might. I could use some fish.

POLONIUS. Some fish?

HAMLET. They have scales. They live in water. I'm not sure if they ever sleep.

POLONIUS. I believe they do sleep.

HAMLET. Well this fish never sleeps, old man. This fish never sleeps. Got it?

POLONIUS. Um… The reason I wanted to talk to you is I was wondering about your intentions towards my daughter.

HAMLET. And which daughter would that be?

POLONIUS. Ophelia.

HAMLET. Is she the pig?

POLONIUS. No she's a girl.

HAMLET. I could have sworn she was a pig. With a bonnet or something. Maybe a bow in her hair. Pigs don't have hair.

POLONIUS. She's not a pig.

HAMLET. There's a lot of pigs talking these days. Strange days.

POLONIUS. But do you still like her?

HAMLET. If she were a side of bacon, I would love her very much. If she were a ham steak, she would please my middle, and if she was just hooves and snouts, I would have to spit her out.

POLONIUS. Are you saying she's fat?

HAMLET. My dear man, I never say anything twice. It makes people wonder. Now get out of here and leave me to my musings.

POLONIUS. I will, my prince.

HAMLET. Good. Get. Go. Come on now. Move it. Go.

*(*POLONIUS *scampers off.)*

If only there was someone I could confide in.

*(*HORATIO, *dressed as a large, talking sword, enters. [Think Mrs. Potts if Mrs. Potts were a sword instead of a pot.] He also has a British accent.)*

HORATIO. Does someone need a friend?

HAMLET. What kind of strange creature are you?

HORATIO. Allow me to introduce myself.

HAMLET. No.

(Pause.)

HORATIO. Well I can't even tell you my name if I can't introduce myself.

HAMLET. Fine, I'll allow you to introduce yourself.

HORATIO. I am Horatio, the blade. I used to be a man, sir, but an evil witch cursed me, and now, I walk the earth as a talking sword. I fear no man except the rain. May I be of assistance?

HAMLET. You're a talking sword?

HORATIO. It appears so.

HAMLET. I may have need of you.

*(*HAMLET *puts his arm around* HORATIO *and is cut.)*

HAMLET. Ow.

HORATIO. I am sharp, sir.

HAMLET. You must have a difficult time on dates.

HORATIO. Most end in tragedy. Well, the good ones.

HAMLET. Very well, Horatio, I will call upon you when I need you.

HORATIO. Don't you need me now, sir?

HAMLET. Can't think of why.

HORATIO. Aren't we planning on killing the king? I'm very good at killing. Even though I should be a poet instead of a soldier, oh the irony of that witches' curse, if only—

HAMLET. I'll call you when I need you. Get out.

HORATIO. Very well.

(He bows, hitting HAMLET *with the point of his blade.)*

HAMLET. Ow!

HORATIO. Sorry about that.

(He scampers off.)

HAMLET. Finally some alone time so I can talk to myself.

*(*VILLAGER 5 *comes back.)*

VILLAGER 5. Prince Hamlet, may I—

HAMLET. *(Sticking out his tongue:)* Aaaaah I'm crazy!

VILLAGER 5. Help!

*(*VILLAGER 5 *runs.)*

HAMLET. Well. All this pretending to be crazy is getting on my nerves. I must have the truth of it. Did my Uncle really set up that wildebeest stampede? How can I be sure? If only there was some way to know it for certain.

(The GHOST *enters, to stirring music. The* GHOST *is now blue and has more than a passing resemblance to the genie from* Aladdin.*)*

GHOST. Hamm—letttt.

HAMLET. Father?

GHOST. What do you need a road map?

(The GHOST *produces a road map and assumes the role of a tourist, probably with a Minnesotan accent.)*

'Um…yeah could you tell me the best way to revenge?'
'Oh yeah sure—you take a right over there at the castle and a left at the hot dog stand and go straight to STABBING THE GUY.'

(Back to normal voice:)

Wattarya stoopid?

HAMLET. Well, no I just—

GHOST. *(Three Stooges:)* 'Wise guy, eh? Wise guy.'

(He tries to poke HAMLET *in the eyes.)*

Come here, you. Come here. I got something to say to you.

HAMLET. Maybe you're just a spirit sent to confuse me.

GHOST. Are you calling me a liar? Youuuuuu dirty rat. I oughta waste you right here and now.

HAMLET. But how can I be sure?

GHOST. *(Singing a deodorant jingle:)* Confident, dry, and secure! When you're Sure!

HAMLET. What?

GHOST. Okay, let me recreate the scene for you—I'm walking along minding my own business when I heard it—my brother

(Becomes CLAUDIUS, *who now sounds a lot like an evil lion:)*

'Kill him, my wildebeests.'

(Back to himself:)

Stroll stroll stroll—and the wildebeests go

(Funny wildebeest voice:)

'There's a sale at Macy's! Seventy percent off! Seventy percent off!' 'This is gonna be a STAMPEDE!'

(Acts this out with his hands:)

Here comes the king—stroll stroll—wildebeests coming—Macy's Macy's Macy's—the king—stroll stroll—AAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!

(Suddenly serious:)

Son, do you know what it feels like to have a hundred and one wildebeests step on your head?

HAMLET. No.

GHOST. It feels like this!

(The GHOST *starts bopping him on the head.)*

HAMLET. Ow ow ow ow!

GHOST. I didn't want to have to do that. But it was for your own good.

HAMLET. But for a second there I thought that Claudius poured poison in your ear?

GHOST. Yeah, he did that too.

HAMLET. Before or after the stampede?

GHOST. About the same time. He's very thorough, my brother. He gets that from our Dad, who once hunted down a gazelle until it died of old age. Ba-doom ching! Thank you, thank you, I'll be here all week! Catch me June 23rd at Caesar's Palace! I'll be the one eating the Christians they throw in the Coliseum! Was that joke too soon? Too soon.

HAMLET. I have a lot to think about.

GHOST. Think about this: Kill.

(Somewhere a bell chimes.)

Ack! Gotta go! I'm late for a massage.

HAMLET. I thought you were in the bad place?

GHOST. It's shiatsu. Ha! Hurts like the bejeesus. And the masseuse is a real crab. Seriously, an actual crab. Ouch ouch ouch. Remember what I said Hamlet.

(The GHOST *leaves.)*

HAMLET. I never liked my Dad.

GHOST. *(Off-stage:)* I heard that!

HAMLET. Well—what to do now? I suppose I could talk to myself some more. That could help. If only there was some way to be more certain than just having my father's spirit walk the earth and tell me flat-out that my uncle did it.

(One of the PLAYERS *enters.)*

Wait a minute.

PLAYER. Hey I left a prop here somewhere? I'm supposed to keep track of props. I always lose them.

HAMLET. You've just given me an idea.

PLAYER. It is about props? Cause that's what I'm looking for.

HAMLET. No—my friend—no— Would you do me the honor of rounding up your compatriots? I have a show for the king in mind.

PLAYER. Um…hey aren't you crazy Prince Hamlet?

HAMLET. Yes I am.

PLAYER. You're kind of insane, right?

HAMLET. That makes me perfect for the theatre.

PLAYER. You're right. I'll go get my friends.

(He dashes off. Music begins. HAMLET *launches into an act-ending number, "The Play's the Thing.")*

HAMLET. *(Singing, slow and powerful at first:)*
I ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A PLAYWRIGHT
TO WRITE THE PLAYS AND SOME FANS
AND NOW IT'S TIME TO BE A PLAYWRIGHT
TO MAKE MY UNCLE WET HIS PANTS

(He turns it into a soft shoe number:)

THE PLAY'S THE THING!
DA DA DA DA DA DA DA DA!
THE PLAYS' THE THING!
DA DA DA DA DA DA DA DA!

TO CATCH THE KING!
DA DA DA DA DA DA DA DA!
AND NOW I SING
DA DA DA DA DA DA DA DA!
THE PLAY'S THE THIIIIIIIING!

(He bows.)

(Lights down.)

End of Act I

ACT II

(Perhaps some booming music. CHIP *and* JESSIE *are now dressed like sports coaches. Perhaps they speak into echoing microphones.)*

CHIP. *(In the dark:)* Are you ready for Act Three?

JESSIE. *(Overlapping, in the dark:)* Are you ready for Act Three?

CHIP. *(In the dark:)* In life there are no second acts!

JESSIE. *(In the dark:)* Or third acts!

CHIP. *(In the dark:)* So you need to be prepared—

JESSIE. *(In the dark:)* And hydrated!

CHIP. *(In the dark:)* Witness: Hamlet Act Three!

JESSIE. *(In the dark:)* Brought to you by Gatorade.

CHIP. *(In the dark:)* And also Nike because they're kind of the same company.

(Lights up. HAMLET *enters, perhaps wearing underarmour, holding a tennis racket.* CLAUDIUS *is opposite him, also with tennis racket. They play in slow motion as* JESSIE *and* CHIP *narrate.)*

CHIP. In the stone age, men drank water. During physical exertion the body loses electrolytes—

JESSIE. Carbohydrates—

CHIP. Vitamins—

JESSIE. Nutrients.

CHIP. These need to be replaced to maintain maximum performance.

*(*HAMLET *grunts and smashes a "winner" past* CLAUDIUS.*)*

CLAUDIUS. That was a crazy shot.

HAMLET. Was it, Uncle? Or was it just pretending to be a crazy shot?

CLAUDIUS. You think you can beat me, boy?

(He drinks a bottle of water.)

HAMLET. It's not about winning or losing. It's about the climb.

(He takes a bottle of Gatorade and drinks some of it, then pours some of it on his head.)

Yeah.

CLAUDIUS. What?

HAMLET. My serve. Forty. Love. Match. Point.

(Stirring music. He goes into slow motion again. CHIP *and* JESSIE *narrate.)*

CHIP. The strain of battle.

JESSIE. Muscles pumping.

CHIP. Lactic acid build-up.

JESSIE. It is your time.

CHIP. Your time.

JESSIE. To act.

*(*HAMLET *serves the ball—the forces of it knocks* CLAUDIUS *down.* HAMLET *points up to God, to acknowledge that all his awesomeness comes from the clouds, and strides in slow motion to* CLAUDIUS, *holding his tennis racket like a sword. He's about to chop him down, when* CLAUDIUS *also points up.* HAMLET *stops, then turns away.)*

HAMLET. *(Aside:)* Not when he's acknowledging that all his power comes from above. Not now. Not now.

CLAUDIUS. Good match, Hamlet. I have to say, drinking only water, I found myself growing weaker towards the end of the match—perhaps I didn't have enough electrolytes and was building up lactic acid.

HAMLET. Water is stupid, Claudius. Just like you. And I'm also kind of crazy. Just so you know.

CLAUDIUS. I'm a little intimidated by you, I have to admit.

HAMLET. I won this match before it even started. With my impressive stretching. You want to watch?

CLAUDIUS. I have to go.

*(*CLAUDIUS *exits.)*

*(*HAMLET *goes back to his room.)*

CHIP. Just remember—

JESSIE. There is someone out there outworking you right now—

CHIP. Getting stronger—

JESSIE. Getting better—

CHIP. So that when you match up again—they'll beat you.

JESSIE. And also, after a match, you can replace lost hydration with Gatorade finisher.

CHIP. It's blue. Which means it's awesome.

*(*HAMLET *takes a drink. Then is about to pour some on his head again.)*

JESSIE. Don't pour it on your head, though.

CHIP. That would be a waste of Gatorade finisher. Although you may sweat it out later.

(The PLAYERS *enter, in some combination of athletic gear and costumes.)*

JESSIE. Before the game—

CHIP. Before the performance—

JESSIE. Prepare—

CHIP. For domination.

*(*HAMLET *talks to his actors.)*

HAMLET. All right men. Let's take a moment before the performance. You might get nervous out there. You might tremble and think, 'can I do it?' And my answer to you, friends, is yes, you can—

(He stops. Then walks towards one of his players.)

What is this?

(He rips a water bottle from the PLAYER's *hand.)*

PLAYER. Water?

HAMLET. Water? You're drinking water?

PLAYER. Well I just…I just…I get thirsty…and then I need—

HAMLET. This is disgusting!

(He furiously tosses the water bottle away.)

When you're in a pressure situation, do you want water running through your veins? Do you want water, with its measly zero calories, with its complete lack of sugar and artificial coloring? I say no! I say no more water! Ever! We must be at the peak of performance, men! We must stand upon the stage and shout out truth to the world, and not, I repeat, NOT, get dehydrated! Your voices must be as supple as soft leather, your muscles must be lithe and ready—to PERFORM—to hold the mirror up to nature and show just how awesome you are! No, men, no water on this day. Today we drink: Gatorade Prepare.

(He lifts a bottle of Gatorade Prepare.)

HAMLET. With its artful combination of subtle fruit flavors and bone-crushing electrolytes, Gatorade Prepare is the prince of energy drinks, just as I am price of the Danes.

PLAYER. But I also heard that Powerade is a good choice—

HAMLET. How dare you, sir? How *dare* you speak of Powerade at a time like this? No! If any man here drinks Powerade, I will have them whipped! Let us drink our Gatorade Prepare—let us raise our bottles—and go forth—GO FORTH!

ALL PLAYERS. *(Raising bottles:)* GATORADE PREPARE!

(They drink as one and surge off the stage.)

(Lights change to the play-within-a-play. CHIP *and* JESSIE *have microphones.)*

CHIP. Crunch time.

JESSIE. The time Gatorade was born for.

HAMLET. Your Majesty. Mom. I have prepared a play for you today.

GERTRUDE. That's great, Hamlet. It's nice to see you applying yourself.

CLAUDIUS. Bah. There's no future in the theatre.

HAMLET. Be that as it may—I think you will like this play a lot, your Majesty. A whole lot. In fact, you might see something of yourself in it. A whole lot of something of yourself.

CLAUDIUS. Our young Hamlet speaks in riddles.

HAMLET. No. I speak in plays. And in actions. And in kicking butt. With Gatorade Performance.

GERTRUDE. I never could stomach those sport drinks.

HAMLET. Well, you always had a weak stomach, mother. Behold: My play is called: The Mousetrap, with the subtitle, the Play that Will Make You Exclaim and Therefore Confirm Your Guilt. Or just plain Mousetrap.

CLAUDIUS. An odd title. Let us have this play!

HAMLET. Bring it!

(The PLAYERS *enter. One is dressed exactly like Claudius. One is cross-dressed exactly like Gertrude. A third is dressed like the King.)*

PLAYER KING. Oh my dearest wife. I love you so much my heart is about to burst. It's a good thing I am a perfect husband.

PLAYER GERTRUDE. You are indeed a perfect husband, my lord. And I like to appear to be a perfect wife.

(Aside to the audience:)

However, I am a heartless and lusty wench.

PLAYER KING. What was that?

PLAYER GERTRUDE. Nothing.

*(*PLAYER KING *yawns.)*

PLAYER KING. Well I'm going to go sleep in our unprotected bed. Goodnight, darling.

PLAYER GERTRUDE. Goodnight.

(Aside the audience:)

And may you never wake up. Moo ah ha ha ha!

*(*PLAYER CLAUDIUS *swoops in. He puts on a black cape.)*

PLAYER CLAUDIUS. There you are, honey bunny.

PLAYER GERTRUDE. Don't call me that.

PLAYER CLAUDIUS. Well, I'm back from my trip clubbing baby seals. Look, I've made you a necklace out of their cute little noses. Also, have I mentioned that I am afraid of the dark, that dogs hate me, and that I pushed a little old lady down while she tried to cross the street? In addition, a six-year old girl beat me at armwrestling earlier. Truly, I am beneath scum. I am less than a man, more like an ant in man's clothing.

HAMLET. Ha ha ha! This is good writing!

PLAYER GERTRUDE. Well, I love you because I am stupid and frail and a woman.

HAMLET. True! That's true!

PLAYER CLAUDIUS. Give me some sugar.

PLAYER GERTRUDE. Ooh! Claudius! Not here! Not with my husband in the next room.

PLAYER CLAUDIUS. Ooh, I think I have a little something something for your husband. Moo ah ha ha ha! I can't challenge him in physical combat since I am pathetic and weak, but I have the next best thing:

(He takes a Powerade bottle labeled "POISON XXXX".)

HAMLET. Oh this is getting good! I wonder what's going to happen!

CLAUDIUS. This play is pretty awful.

HAMLET. Let's watch!

(The PLAYER CLAUDIUS *sneaks up to the sleeping* PLAYER KING *and pours the poison into his ear.* PLAYER KING *dies horribly.)*

PLAYER KING. Aarrhgghghgghghghghg!

CLAUDIUS. You know, that's just gross.

(He storms out.)

GERTRUDE. Hamlet. That was a terrible play.

(She leaves.)

HAMLET. You just didn't understand the symbolism!

(He turns to the actors.)

High fives everyone.

(The lights change. CLAUDIUS *and* GERTRUDE *are in a room alone.)*

CLAUDIUS. I'm going to be sick.

GERTRUDE. Have you tried Gatorade Tyrant? It's for when you need extra carbohydrates to—

CLAUDIUS. Don't speak to me of sports drinks, woman! Can't you see that he's on to us?

GERTRUDE. It could have been a coincidence?

CLAUDIUS. A coincidence?! On the very day the king died, I lost an armwrestling match to a six year-old girl, and he just *happens* to write that into the play? No! That girl talked! I'm going to pour boiling oil on her. And how did he know about the baby seal nose necklace?

GERTRUDE. I might have mentioned it.

CLAUDIUS. We've got to kill him. Polonius, get in here!

*(*POLONIUS *is there in a heartbeat.)*

POLONIUS. Yes, your evilness?

CLAUDIUS. Only call me that in private.

GERTRUDE. Don't worry, darling. Your evilness turns me on.

CLAUDIUS. Really?

POLONIUS. Is there something you want, your Majesty?

CLAUDIUS. My nephew Hamlet is dangerously insane. I want you to watch him, then kill him. Or kill him, then watch him. Whichever. Use your best judgment.

POLONIUS. Got it, your vileness.

(He exits.)

GERTRUDE. He's coming! Get out of here Claudius!

CLAUDIUS. Done.

(He flees.)

GERTRUDE. Maybe I can do some quick aerobic exercise to improve my conditioning. Perhaps water will be sufficient for my rehydration needs.

(She begins to exercise as HAMLET *enters.)*

HAMLET. Mother.

GERTRUDE. Hamlet.

HAMLET. Didn't you like my play?

GERTRUDE. I'm not going to lie to you: That play was terrible.

HAMLET. Too close to home?

GERTRUDE. You presume too much. Your new father wishes to play you in a game of tennis.

HAMLET. I have already defeated Claudius in tennis. A winner doesn't fear the rematch. Not when I have Gatorade drinks to increase my power level.

GERTRUDE. Your new father enjoys Powerade. He thinks it gives him a special boost.

HAMLET. Ha! I say ha again! Mom. How can you be with him? Don't you remember Dad?

(The GHOST *enters, opposite, dressed for basketball. He is defended by two other basketball playing* GHOSTS [2 *and* 3]. *The* GHOST *is pure awesomeness.)*

Last season he averaged twenty-nine points per game.

*(*GHOST *dunks on* GHOSTS 2 *and* 3.*)*

Eleven point six rebounds. I remember watching him. The grace. The beauty. The power. Also his ability to flop and draw bogus charging calls on his opponents.

(A bogus charging foul is called on GHOST 2. *He protests in slow motion.)*

HAMLET. And then there is Claudius. Your new husband. The Jeremy to his Jason Giambi. The Taylor to his Blake Griffin.

*(*CLAUDIUS *enters, completely inept. Also in slow motion. He is posterized by* GHOST 2. *Perhaps someone runs out a tiny stepladder to help with the slow-motion posterizing.)*

Sad. So so sad.

(Lights down on the basketball game.)

GERTRUDE. What did you want me to do, son?

HAMLET. Maybe not marry my uncle two days after my father died?

GERTRUDE. I saw a chance. I took it. Maybe you should do the same.

HAMLET. Maybe I should.

(Dramatic pause.)

GERTRUDE. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go back to blasting my abs. Just because I'm an older woman doesn't mean I don't like exercise, and as a result I choose new Gatorade Cougar*, which rehydrates and rejuvenates.

**This can be called Gatorade Mature, if necessary.*

HAMLET. Does that come in Mountain Ice flavor?

GERTRUDE. It does. And I like it that way.

HAMLET. Just like a chick.

*(*HAMLET *leaves. Lights down on* GERTRUDE.*)*

(Lights up on CLAUDIUS, *practicing his free throws in pantomime. After each "made" basket, he points up to the sky to give thanks.)*

*(*HAMLET *watches.)*

HAMLET. I should do it now. I know the truth. He reacted badly to my play. But then again, maybe the play was just bad. No, it was him, he saw the truth, and then he left. Time to die, uncle. Oh wait, what's he doing? He's giving props to God? Again? It can't be! If I kill him while he's giving props, then he'll go straight up to heaven. I know that doesn't make a lot of sense, considering that he murdered his own brother, but giving props is weird like that. I'll wait. Soon, my uncle. Soon, and when you least expect it, I will be slowly, slowly gaining on you.

*(*CLAUDIUS *finishes his last shot.)*

CLAUDIUS. Time to hit the showers.

HAMLET. Except I'm not going in there.

*(*POLONIUS *is sneaking in.)*

POLONIUS. *(Talking to himself:)* It's a good thing Hamlet won't notice me talking to myself over here. I used to think he might be a good match for my daughter, but after that play, I don't think he's got a lot of earning potential. And also the king wants him dead. So that's probably not a good sign either. I'll just hide over here.

(He hides.)

HAMLET. I should have finished him, just like my Gatorade finisher which replenishes lost electrolytes and tastes great. It comes in several flavors: berry blast, mountain ice, and cherry swamp. I prefer—wait? I hear something.

(He stabs backward his tennis racket [or perhaps knocks POLONIUS *on the head with it].)*

POLONIUS. Aaaacck! I'm slain!

(He dies.)

HAMLET. Polonius? Hey. Are you all right?

*(*POLONIUS *is dead.)*

Dead? Whoops.

CHIP. In the heat of battle you don't have time for second thoughts.

JESSIE. You act. React.

CHIP. Primal.

HAMLET. Well— You shouldn't have been in my room. The room of a champion. Because if you can't be a champion, you should probably just be killed.

*(*HAMLET *throws the curtain over* POLONIUS. *He exits to Gertrude's room.)*

*(*HAMLET *has a moment alone.)*

HAMLET. To do it…or not to do it…that is the question.

(Dramatic pause.)

Just. Do it.

(Lights down on him.)

CHIP. *(In a hip, cool voice:)* And now…Hamlet, Act Four.

JESSIE. *(In a flirty voice:)* Brought to you…by MTV.

(Lights up on JESSIE, *looking fantastic.)*

JESSIE. Hey everyone! How's it going out there!?

CHIP. Awesome!

JESSIE. We got a show for you—you thought Teen Mom was crazy—

CHIP. Cra-zeee!

JESSIE. Hamlet Act Four is even more off the hook, yo.

CHIP. Indeed.

(Short pause.)

I mean, word. So check this: Hamlet and his bud, Horatio—

JESSIE. Who's Horatio?

CHIP. We haven't seen him much yet cause he's not really all that important. But Hamlet and his bud Horatio are like, so bummed his Dad died and his Uncle married his Mom—

JESSIE. Sick!

CHIP. I know! Messed up, yo. So his ladyfriend, Ophelia, she's like, oh no, does my baby love me, blah blah blah you know how the ladies is—

JESSIE. Word!

CHIP. So Hamlet's like, get yo'self to a nunnery—bam!

JESSIE. Oh no he didn't!

CHIP. And so anyway, the ghost comes down, yo, I was murdered, kill that goon, and Hamlet's like, heck yes, son, and then he doesn't do anything for a while, and then, bam, he kills Ophelia's Dad. For no reason.

JESSIE. Cause that's how Hamlet rolls.

CHIP. You best check yourself! Or Hamlet's gonna go medieval on ya!

JESSIE. Unless he's actually supposed to kill you, in which case, he'll probably equivocate for a while.

CHIP. What?

JESSIE. Equivocate.

CHIP. What?

JESSIE. It's a word. It means to delay. Kind of like temporize.

CHIP. Are you studying for the SAT again?

JESSIE. I'm thirty-two years old.

(Snaps back into it:)

But I act like a teenager, woo! All right, let's get this party started!

(Lights up on HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN *on a boat.)*

ROSENCRANTZ. Wooooo!

GUILDENSTERN. Boat party!

ROSENCRANTZ. Boat party!

GUILDENSTERN. Woooo!

*(*HAMLET *talks to the audience, reality show confessional-style.)*

HAMLET. So I'm stuck on a boat to England with these two morons. I didn't even want to go. But now my uncle is like, you killed Polonius, go to London. So like, whatever, fine, I'll go. And he's like, by the way, take these guys with you. Fine. No prob.

ROSENCRANTZ. Hamlet!!!

GUILDENSTERN. Party time party time party time!

(He falls over.)

ROSENCRANTZ. Dude!

(Tries to lift GUILDENSTERN *up.)*

GUILDENSTERN. Don't touch me, dude!

ROSENCRANTZ. You just totally wiped out!

GUILDENSTERN. What did you just say to me? I will knock you out, son!

ROSENCRANTZ. Bring it!

(They start fighting, then both pass out. HAMLET *speaks to the camera again.)*

HAMLET. So then I checked this letter they were sending to the King of England. It says, "Yo King of England—Hamlet is crazy. Kill him. XX. King Claud." So that's not cool. These are my buds—sending my buds to have me axed. They prolly didn't know what was in the letter I guess. Not their fault. So I'm just gonna change this to "Yo King of England—Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is crazy. Kill them. XX. King Claud." Moral of the story: Don't mess with Hamlet. Boo-ya.

*(*HAMLET *exits as the lights change to* OPHELIA.*)*

OPHELIA. *(In the confessional:)* So it's been kind of a tough week. My boyfriend went totally nuts and started thinking he was a playwright, which was lame. And then he stopped showering. Which was a real problem. And then I had a break-out. Luckily, I've got new extra-strength Clearasil, which opens my pores and helps clean my skin

at the same time. In just two days time, no new breakouts. Awesome. Thanks, Clearasil! Oh yeah, and then my boyfriend stabbed and killed my Dad. Not cool. So now what am I gonna do?

*(*CLAUDIUS *enters.)*

CLAUDIUS. What's up?

OPHELIA. Your majesty.

CLAUDIUS. No don't play me like that. You can just call me your highness.

OPHELIA. Sorry, your highness. I'm actually having some alone time.

CLAUDIUS. Cool. Cool.

OPHELIA. So can I please keep going?

CLAUDIUS. I ain't stopping ya.

OPHELIA. You're kinda like right there.

CLAUDIUS. So? I'm the king. I be where I be. That's how things get done in Denmark.

OPHELIA. All right um…so I'm sad now.

CLAUDIUS. You know what I do when I'm sad, yo?

OPHELIA. What?

CLAUDIUS. I think really hard about throwing myself into a river. Just a suggestion.

OPHELIA. But I can't swim.

CLAUDIUS. Exactly.

OPHELIA. But I'd probably drown.

CLAUDIUS. Yup.

OPHELIA. So you want me to kill myself?

CLAUDIUS. What? Don't be tripping. Just go jump in a river. And see if you float. If you float, come on back, we'll talk. If you drown, then, you know—what are you really missing out on? Your father got axed, your boyfriend's dead—

OPHELIA. Hamlet? He's dead?

CLAUDIUS. Oh yeah. He be serious dead. I'm big on justice. But hey—I wanted to tell you—your skin looks awesome.

OPHELIA. Thanks.

CLAUDIUS. What's your secret?

OPHELIA. Clearasil Ultra. It's gentle and powerful.

CLAUDIUS. Maybe I could use some.

OPHELIA. You know what—you can try new Clearasil Old Man Cleanser—it really helps to rub out liver spots, dark circles, and evil old man smell. Try it today.

CLAUDIUS. Thanks, I will. And remember what I said about killing yourself: no shame in it. Prolly a good idea. Nobody likes you. Sweet, sweet arms of death. Do it. All right I'm gonna peace out.

(He leaves. OPHELIA *looks at the camera.)*

OPHELIA. He thinks he's all that cause he's king and all. I'll show him.

(She exits.)

CHIP. All right: awesome!

JESSIE. Remember: depression hurts.

CHIP. And check out Jersey Shore, airing Sunday nights at ten p.m. MTV: Profiting from other people's misery. And remember: if you're loud and stupid, we have a show for you. And now a word from some of the sponsors that make our network great.

(Lights up on the graveyard. HAMLET *enters in disguise, with the* GRAVEDIGGER, *who sounds suspiciously like a pirate.)*

(Somewhere, a bell tolls.)

HAMLET. What are you doing there?

GRAVEDIGGER. What does it look like I'm doing?

HAMLET. Digging a grave.

GRAVEDIGGER. That's what I'm doing then.

HAMLET. What time is it?

GRAVEDIGGER. Late. Nearly two in the morning.

HAMLET. Why are you digging a grave at two in the morning?

GRAVEDIGGER. Creepier this way.

HAMLET. You know of any place around here a guy can get a bite to eat at this hour?

GRAVEDIGGER. At two in the morning? Try Taco Bell. I hear they're open late and most of their meat is fresh.

HAMLET. I do have a powerful hunger.

GRAVEDIGGER. Trust me, when it's late, and when you're hopped up on caffeine and are about to make a lot of poor choices, Taco Bell is the place to go. Not only is it cheap, but it's also warm, and you can get a soft taco for a really low price.

HAMLET. Taco Bell sounds awesome.

GRAVEDIGGER. Indeed. And very late at night you can get in fights in the parking lot. No one will care.

HAMLET. Awesome. Care to accompany me?

GRAVEDIGGER. Nope. Gotta dig this grave. My Mom said I'd never grow up to be anything after I blew off school.

HAMLET. Huh.

GRAVEDIGGER. And now look at me.

HAMLET. She must be proud.

GRAVEDIGGER. She's dead.

HAMLET. Oh. Sorry.

GRAVEDIGGER. She got me my first job actually. This one.

HAMLET. Wow.

GRAVEDIGGER. Do you have a moment? I'm feeling emotionally vulnerable right now and I'd like to open up to you. You have a kind face.

HAMLET. Thanks. Although I did just send two of my oldest friends to their deaths.

GRAVEDIGGER. If I had a gold coin for every time I did that…I'd have three gold coins. Anyway, sit, and let me tell you my life story. You see—I have dreams. Big dreams. Big, sweaty dreams. It's the future, and I'm about to—hey look a skull! Want it?

(He tosses the skull to Hamlet.)

HAMLET. Dude.

(He looks at the skull.)

I recognize this skull. It belonged to the court jester, Yorick. Alas, poor Yorick. He used to ride his bike into railings just to rack himself in front of me. It was so funny. He'd writhe in pain on the floor, holding himself. We all laughed so much. He had this one trick where he'd hit himself with a taser. All his little arms and legs would spasm and then he'd collapse on the floor and go unconscious. Really great, original intelligent stuff. He made a couple of movies. One of them was in 3-D. Made a lot of money getting himself hurt. I wonder how he died. Probably like this.

(He pokes his fingers into the eye-sockets.)

Hey check this out.

(He puts the skull on his hand like a finger puppet and moves the jaw to speak.)

'Hey I'm Yorick. Somebody hit me in the face with a bat!'

GRAVEDIGGER. You're a funny one.

HAMLET. No, this guy—this guy right here—he's still smiling. Ha!

(He tosses the skull.)

CHIP. And thus begins the promo for…

JESSIE. Ultra-violent video game Three! Bloodbath Massacre Storm of the Future!

CHIP. The legions of the dead will rise—

(Several POST-APOCALYPTIC ZOMBIES *enter, holding skulls.)*

JESSIE. You are a space marine in the year 2610.

(The GRAVEDIGGER *takes out a pulse rifle and hands it to* HAMLET. *They both put on helmets and move in slow motion, firing at the zombies.)*

CHIP. The game *The New York Times* labeled, "sick, disgusting, and damaging to the adolescent mind."

JESSIE. From the *Los Angeles Times:* "We have gone too far. We have gone too far."

CHIP. And from *Gamemaster Online:* "Awesome."

JESSIE. The world has crumbled. The dead have risen. Sea levels have risen nineteen inches. And you and your team of genetically engineered space marines are the only thing standing between civilization and—

CHIP. And the Bloodbath Massacre Storm of the Future!

GRAVEDIGGER. There's too many of them!

HAMLET. Cover me!

GRAVEDIGGER. I can't!

HAMLET. Cover me, fool!

*(*HAMLET *charges the zombies, perhaps doing a somersault and screaming at the same time. The zombies catch him and eat his brain.)*

CHIP. And most awesome—when you die—

JESSIE. Because you will die—

CHIP. You get to become a space zombie and kill your friends.

JESSIE. Yes!

CHIP. Bloodbath Massacre Storm of the Future is not intended for children and may cause unpleasant side effects, we are not responsible for seizures, mental conditions, or physical deterioration.

JESSIE. Coming soon!

(The lights change back to the graveyard scene.)

GRAVEDIGGER. You know, you shouldn't play with skulls, it's disrespectful.

HAMLET. Sor-ree.

*(*HAMLET *steps into the confessional.)*

I felt pretty bad about playing with the dead guy's skull. But I mean, come on, he's dead. Who cares? And who is the gravedigger guy to tell me what to do? I'm the prince. Plus, I'm insane now, so I'm not legally responsible for any of my actions, which rocks. And okay, I guess I should have killed Claudius like two acts ago, but I'm having too much fun. Being crazy is awesome, yo. Don't mess with me.

*(*HAMLET *walks back into the scene.)*

So who's the grave for, anyway?

GRAVEDIGGER. Some girlfriend of Prince Hamlet's. Apparently she threw herself into the river after he went crazy and killed her Dad.

*(*HAMLET *pauses for a moment, then steps back into the confessional.)*

HAMLET. *(Dissolving in tears:)* Aasshgghghgghghgh…why?! Why?!

(He starts coughing and sniffling and cannot continue.)

Life isn't fair, man!

(He walks back to the GRAVEDIGGER.*)*

Dude.

GRAVEDIGGER. Here they come now.

*(*CLAUDIUS *and* GERTRUDE *enter. Two* SERVANTS *carry a coffin.)*

CLAUDIUS. Put it down over there.

SERVANT 1. You're not the boss of me.

CLAUDIUS. Servant 2, kill Servant 1.

SERVANT 2. Yes sir. Thank you sir.

*(*SERVANT 2 *smacks* SERVANT 1 *in the head and he dies.)*

*(*SERVANT 2 *steps into the confessional.)*

SERVANT 2. At first I was like, what? Kill Servant 1? But he's my best friend. Me and Servant 1 are tight, you know? But then I was like, pshh, whatever. So I killed him. What? Don't judge me.

(He steps out as CLAUDIUS *steps in.)*

CLAUDIUS. Look, I'm paid to make quick decisions, right? I mean, frankly, this guy's name was Servant 1. And he's gonna talk back to me? No sir. No sir. That ain't gonna happen in my kingdom, know what I'm saying? I can't have that. Plus, I hadn't killed anybody for a while, so I was getting rusty.

(He steps out as GERTRUDE *steps in.)*

GERTRUDE. What was that about? If he thinks that just killing random people is going to make me fall in love with him again, he's only a little bit right about that.

(She steps back into the scene.)

CLAUDIUS. It's a sad day here today. This young lady was the daughter of my dear friend, Polonius, and…

*(*SERVANT 1 *gets up.)*

SERVANT 1. Man that hurt. Why you gotta hit me in the head like that?

CLAUDIUS. We're in the middle of something.

SERVANT 1. So?

CLAUDIUS. Servant 2?

SERVANT 2. Yes sir, thank you sir.

*(*SERVANT 2 *smacks* SERVANT 1 *again, who dies again.)*

CLAUDIUS. Is he dead this time?

SERVANT 2. I got him good, your majesty.

CLAUDIUS. But like, check, okay?

*(*SERVANT 2 *checks.)*

SERVANT 2. He's totally dead.

CLAUDIUS. If he's not dead, I'm gonna have him kill you next time.

*(*SERVANT 2 *smacks* SERVANT 1 *in the head again, just to make sure.)*

Gertrude, kill Servant 2.

SERVANT 2. Oh come on!

GERTRUDE. I'm the queen!

CLAUDIUS. *(Taking* GERTRUDE *aside:)* Can I talk to you a second?

GERTRUDE. What?

CLAUDIUS. What was that about?

GERTRUDE. I'm not killing Servant 2.

CLAUDIUS. If you disrespect me in front of the servants, pretty soon no one is going to listen to me.

GERTRUDE. I don't happen to think we should just kill servants just because they're slow about killing other servants.

CLAUDIUS. It doesn't matter what you think—we have to present a united front on this –

GERTRUDE. I don't agree with your kingly methods.

CLAUDIUS. I'm the villain, okay? Can you understand that? That means I need to kill random people for no reason whatsoever. That's what villains do. Hamlet has been out-villaining me for at least three acts now. He's killed like three random people and I haven't killed anyone.

GERTRUDE. I see your point.

CLAUDIUS. And as soon as you don't agree with me, whenever I order to have a servant killed, they're just going to run to you and ask you not to kill them. Then they get two messages. And that's not fair to our subjects.

GERTRUDE. You're right.

CLAUDIUS. I love you.

GERTRUDE. I love you too.

(They return to SERVANT 2.*)*

Servant 2, the King and I talked it over and—

(She smacks SERVANT 2 *in the head and he dies.)*

CLAUDIUS. Okay, then. Let's bury the chick.

*(*LAERTES *enters.)*

LAERTES. Yo, I'm back from Spring Break, what's goin' on?

CLAUDIUS. Um… Hamlet killed your Dad and then your sister killed herself because Hamlet killed your Dad.

LAERTES. Duuuuuuuude. Can I step into the confessional for a minute?

*(*LAERTES *steps into the confessional and talks to the audience.)*

Not. Cool.

(He steps back to CLAUDIUS.*)*

CLAUDIUS. Have no fear, though, because I have meted out justice upon Hamlet. I have had him killed off-stage.

*(*SERVANT 3 *rushes in.)*

SERVANT 3. Your majesty!

CLAUDIUS. Not now.

SERVANT 3. I have some news regarding Prince Hamlet!

CLAUDIUS. Did you hear me when I said not now?

SERVANT 3. But your majesty—

CLAUDIUS. What's your name?

SERVANT 3. Servant 3?

CLAUDIUS. Gertrude, kill Servant 3.

GERTRUDE. Gladly.

(She smacks SERVANT 3 *in the head and he dies.)*

CLAUDIUS. Now, as I was saying, it was so important to me that Hamlet was killed, that I made sure to entrust it to two incompetent followers, and had them do the killing off-stage. That way, I could be sure that he was dead and not have to go through all the tedium of confirming it with my own eyes. I mean, what could possibly go wrong with my plans?

LAERTES. Sounds good.

*(*SERVANT 4 *runs in, yells out his line, and runs away without stopping.)*

SERVANT 4. Hamlet killed Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and he's coming here right now!

CLAUDIUS. Wait, come back here!

(But SERVANT 4 *is already gone.)*

*(*SERVANT 4 *steps into the confessional.)*

SERVANT 4. I was in track in high school. No way I'm slowing down long enough for that fool to kill me. No way. Servant 4 forever.

(He leaves.)

LAERTES. This was your plan? This?! Hamlet lives and my sister and father are dead!

CLAUDIUS. We're trying to kill him.

LAERTES. Try harder!

CLAUDIUS. Look, you're upset right now, and I get that, but maybe there's a way you can get over your grief. How about this? Kill Hamlet.

GERTRUDE. Sweetheart, can I talk to you for a second?

CLAUDIUS. Challenge him to a duel, and kill him.

GERTRUDE. Darling.

CLAUDIUS. Hold on.

(They step away.)

What?

GERTRUDE. I'm not really comfortable with you killing my son.

CLAUDIUS. Okay.

GERTRUDE. So maybe you could not do that?

CLAUDIUS. Um…or maybe I could do that and you could shut up. How about that? Love you.

(He walks into the confessional.)

Women, man. Women. That's all I gotta say. Dang.

(He walks back to LAERTES.*)*

So?

LAERTES. All right.

(They shake hands.)

CLAUDIUS. Moo ah ha ha ha!

(No one else laughs evilly with him.)

CLAUDIUS. Laertes. Come on.

LAERTES. I'm not really an evil character, I'm really just trying to get revenge for my Dad.

CLAUDIUS. Yeah, but…you're on the dark side now. You're expected to do the laugh.

LAERTES. Fine.

CLAUDIUS AND LAERTES. Moo ah ha ha! Mooo ah ha ha ha ha!

(Lights down on them.)

CHIP. And that brings us to…

JESSIE. The stunning conclusion—

CHIP. Hamlet, Act Five!

JESSIE. Act Five!

CHIP. The Bloodbath! Everybody dies!

JESSIE. Brought to you by…

(She looks at a sheet of paper.)

Um…

CHIP. What?

JESSIE. Ooh. Umm…maybe we should have checked this one out first.

(He looks at the sheet.)

CHIP. Brought to you by Carnival Cruise Lines…and Beaches Family Resort. Hmmm. Well…let's um…let's try it.

JESSIE. Okay. Hamlet Act Five, brought to you by Carnival Cruise Lines and Beaches Family Resort!

(Seagulls squawking. LAERTES, CLAUDIUS, *and* GERTRUDE *enter, in beach attire.)*

CLAUDIUS. It sure is nice to get away from Denmark.

GERTRUDE. You're telling me. That weather is terrible for my skin. Here, in the sun, the world looks a lot better.

CLAUDIUS. And so do you.

GERTRUDE. Oh Claudius. This second honeymoon has rekindled my love for you. Let's laugh.

CLAUDIUS. Wonderful. Simply wonderful.

(They laugh.)

GERTRUDE. You know what I enjoy about this place? You can't see any of the native poverty.

CLAUDIUS. I like how they built that wall. Reminds me of home. What say you, Laertes?

LAERTES. Well, I guess I'll check out the singles mixer later. The resort's not just for families—

CLAUDIUS. Ha ha. But it is acceptable for families.

GERTRUDE. Which is why we've been vacationing here for years. Oh I remember when we brought young prince Hamlet—

CLAUDIUS. I don't remember that—

GERTRUDE. That's because I was here with your brother, my first husband, who you killed and then replaced—but I think one way to heal old wounds is to come to a nice family resort and spend time on the beach.

LAERTES. Ding ding ding! Time out. It says here that Beaches Family Resort would prefer it if there were no mention of the word death in this act.

JESSIE. That's gonna be tough.

LAERTES. They're paying the bills.

GERTRUDE. That's because I was here with your brother, my first husband, who you encouraged to pass away, and then replaced—but I think the way to heal old wounds is to come to a nice family resort and spend time on the beach.

CLAUDIUS. Right. And then kill someone.

CHIP. Ding!

CLAUDIUS. And then move someone from this life into the next. Just like I always say: The best way to heal old wounds is to kill—remove—the person with the old wound. That way, it doesn't hurt any more.

GERTRUDE. So true.

CLAUDIUS. I'm just glad I've made the right financial decisions to be able to afford this vacation. Thanks, Charles Schwab.

LAERTES. And they've helped me make the right investments after my family passed away. The financial waters can get pretty choppy out there, and it's nice to have a financial advisor there to help. Thanks, Charles Schwab.

GERTRUDE. I love Charles Schwab.

CLAUDIUS. What do you mean by that?

GERTRUDE. He's been a lot of help with my…money.

CLAUDIUS. I don't want you talking to Charles Schwab.

GERTRUDE. I wasn't. It was just one time. Maybe two times.

*(*CLAUDIUS *glares at her.)*

What? My husband expired. It was a difficult time! I needed advice!

CLAUDIUS. I want him dead.

CHIP. Ding!

CLAUDIUS. Someone bring me the head of Charles Schwab! I want his head on a pike on top of the Beaches Family Resort! Let the children look upon it and wail in terror and despair as his blood drips upon their suntanned faces!

CHIP. Ding ding ding ding ding!

CLAUDIUS. *(To* CHIP*:)* What?

*(*SERVANT 4 *sprints in.)*

SERVANT 4. As you wish, sire.

(He sprints off.)

CHIP. Just to jump in here—

(Heavy thud from off-stage.)

Beaches Family Resort does not condone murder—

JESSIE. But they do condone a good time!

GERTRUDE. Darling—please. I am one hundred percent faithful. I have never been unfaithful to anyone in my entire life—

LAERTES. Except your last husband—

GERTRUDE. Okay, all right, one time, I had my last husband shepherded into the great hereafter, that's it—but otherwise, one hundred percent faithful. Do you believe me? My financial advisor helped me with my investment portfolio, that's all.

CLAUDIUS. All right, I believe you.

(They hug. SERVANT 4 *runs in with the severed head of Charles Schwab tied up in a bundle.)*

SERVANT 4. Here it is!

CLAUDIUS. Oh there you are! Listen: Don't kill Charles Schwab. He's a trusted financial advisor. Really helpful. Stand-up guy.

SERVANT 4. *(Looking at the bundle in his hands:)* Um…

CLAUDIUS. Now what is that you have there?

SERVANT 4. It's a new uh…soccer ball…I guess…for the fun.

LAERTES. Is there no end to the fun at Beaches Family Resort?

SERVANT 4. Nope. No end to the fun. I'm gonna go kick this somewhere else then.

(He runs off.)

CLAUDIUS. I like that Servant 4.

GERTRUDE. Really the best of the first five or so. The others keep getting…their souls freed to join their Creator in the blessed abundance of heaven. Which is not unlike Beaches Family Resort.

CLAUDIUS. And now we wait… Our cruise takes off this evening and we shall meet Hamlet at the All-you-can-eat Buffet and Hawaiian-style Luau, which is surprisingly affordable and has options for the kids.

LAERTES. I like the macaroni and cheese buffet.

CLAUDIUS. After you have eaten your fill, we shall each order Mai Tais, which are made by the inestimable Chef Teodoro—they're really, really, wonderful— They've got those little umbrellas in them in case it rains a tiny amount in a very localized spot.

LAERTES. Is that when I challenge him to the shuffleboard duel?

CLAUDIUS. Indeed.

GERTRUDE. They have shuffleboard here too? I was hoping to listen to some of the entertaining singers. I've heard that some of them tried out for Broadway shows and almost got parts!

CLAUDIUS. Don't worry, my sweet. The moderately talented singers and dancers are also a part of my plan.

CHIP. Whoah whoah whoah! First of all—Carnival Cruise Lines hires the best singers and dancers out there.

JESSIE. They sure do! And people who have really great hearts!

CHIP. And second, they only hire the top chefs—

JESSIE. You would be amazed at how good the food is!

CHIP. People gain like twenty pounds on each trip.

JESSIE. But you can always work it off in one of three fully equipped fitness centers! That way you're bikini-ready in no time!

CHIP. And since a lot of the people are Europeans, that means the guys can be bikini-ready too!

JESSIE. Ewww.

CHIP. It's cool in Europe to wear a speedo. Especially if you're like sixty.

JESSIE. Double ewww.

CHIP. And hairy. And overweight.

JESSIE. Okay stop.

CHIP. *(Wistfully:)* Someday, that will be me.

JESSIE. Any-way—

LAERTES. What if Hamlet defeats me at Shuffleboard?

CLAUDIUS. Well, then we shake hands and then we put this whole thing behind us. I've got a happy kingdom to run. And if you defeat Hamlet at Shuffleboard, I have no doubt that your honor will be restored, Hamlet will feel bad about his…encouraging of other people to ascend to the Holy Kingdom, and we'll all buy time shares down here.

GERTRUDE. I like this plan a lot.

*(*JESSIE *stops the action.)*

JESSIE. I'm sorry I can't do this. No death in Act Five of Hamlet? Are you kidding me?

CHIP. These guys are paying good money to have their product pitched.

JESSIE. Hamlet ends with a pile of corpses on the stage! There is no one left alive by the time it's over! You can't just make a happy ending out of that.

CHIP. That's what the people want.

JESSIE. Oh please! Look at this audience! These people are hungry for killing! We should give them Hamlet as Hamlet was meant to be done!

CHIP. Look, I'm not returning my mink coat.

JESSIE. You bought a mink coat?

CHIP. I'm trying to live like a professional football player. I've heard that half of their salaries go to manly fur coats and sunglasses.

JESSIE. Too bad! From now on—no more pandering to our corporate masters! I want extra death in Act Five! Let's end this play with the bloodbath it deserves!

CHIP. Can we still have a happy ending?

JESSIE. Let's get it on!

CLAUDIUS. Here's the plan: We poison everything. That way, if Hamlet touches anything, he'll die within seconds. We wipe poison on the shuffleboard stick, and since we're at sea, we're technically not under Federal Guidelines for Food Preparation, so it's probably likely the pulled pork will kill him. If that doesn't work, we poison the Mai Tais.

JESSIE. Time for the showdown!

(The LOUNGE SINGER *enters for the climactic showdown.)*

LOUNGE SINGER. *(Singing:)*
IT'S TIME FOR A SHOW-DOWN
TIME FOR A SHOW-DOWN!

CLAUDIUS. Enough! I thought I hired back-up dancers.

LOUNGE SINGER. They're coming.

CLAUDIUS. Good. I'd like this to be as dramatic as possible.

(Three BACK-UP DANCERS *enter.)*

BACK-UP DANCER 1. Hiii!

BACK-UP DANCER 2. I'm Keri from California! Yay!

BACK-UP DANCER 3. We're ready for the show!

CLAUDIUS. Okay, back-up dancers. Stay still while I coat you with poison. That way, if Hamlet defeats Laertes in the Shuffleboard duel, you can hug him—the result will be death.

BACK-UP DANCER 1. Um… Is the poison going to hurt me?

CLAUDIUS. It's SPF 50, don't worry.

BACK-UP DANCER 2. I'm Keri from California!

CLAUDIUS. Silence.

(He hands them sunscreen.)

LOUNGE SINGER. So I can really do any kind of singing you want. I can do standards from Broadway, I can do singer-songwriter stuff, I can even do Lady Gaga. I'm actually a Lady Gaga impersonator in my spare time.

(Singing:)

MY POKER-FACE
MY MY POKER-FACE

CLAUDIUS. Shut up.

LOUNGE SINGER. Yes sire.

CLAUDIUS. But I do love me some Gaga.

LOUNGE SINGER. Your wish is my command.

*(*HAMLET *enters in beach attire.)*

CLAUDIUS. Here he is! Prince Hamlet!

HAMLET. I don't know why you've invited me on this family cruise, uncle, but I'll let you know that my dark mood has been somewhat improved by the great friendly atmosphere and wonderful food. I give Carnival Cruise Lines two thumbs up!

(He gives two thumbs up.)

But I still hate you.

CLAUDIUS. Oh come now—let's be friends, shall we. Let us partake of the all-you can eat buffet!

GERTRUDE. Ooh I'll have some!

CLAUDIUS. No Gertrude!

GERTRUDE. Oh. Whoops. Sorry.

HAMLET. I'm not eating that garbage.

CHIP. Let me interject here to remind everyone that the food on Carnival Cruise Lines is—

JESSIE. We got it, Chip.

HAMLET. I bought potato chips at the last island we were at. I only eat those now.

GERTRUDE. Hamlet—

HAMLET. *(Turning to the audience:)* Did you know that Pringles come in twenty-nine flavors? I didn't! I've been trying a new one each day and boy are they delicious! My favorites so far are soft-shelled crab and blueberry!

JESSIE. Side note: Actual Pringles flavors. Check it out on the internet.

*(*HAMLET *is back in character.)*

LAERTES. *(Entering:)* Hamlet!

HAMLET. Laertes, my good friend!

LAERTES. Good friend? You killed my father and drove my sister to suicide!

HAMLET. Yeah…but if it makes you feel any better, killing your Dad was totally an accident.

LAERTES. It doesn't.

HAMLET. Then…um…would you like some potato chips?

LAERTES. I would!

*(*LAERTES *takes the potato chips from* HAMLET *and eats one.)*

Wow… These are tangy and delicious!

HAMLET. And only twenty calories.

LAERTES. Incredible. But these incredibly good potato chips aren't going to keep me from exacting my revenge!

HAMLET. Bring it on.

LOUNGE SINGER. All right—that's a challenge if I ever heard one! And here on Carnival Cruise Lines, we love a good challenge, don't we?

BACK-UP DANCERS. Yay!

LOUNGE SINGER. Oh come on, that's not good enough! I said, we like a challenge, don't we?

EVERYONE. YAY!

LOUNGE SINGER. All right, challenge number 1! Shuffleboard!

LAERTES. If I win, you throw yourself off the boat, okay?

HAMLET. Fine. And if I win, we're still friends.

LAERTES. Agreed. But I must warn you I have my fingers crossed.

HAMLET. Very well!

*(*LAERTES *produces two shuffleboard cues.)*

LAERTES. Here's yours.

HAMLET. No thanks.

LAERTES. I'm sorry?

HAMLET. I never go anywhere without my own stick.

*(*HAMLET *produces his own shuffleboard stick.)*

LAERTES. Have it your way. Now we begin the overly-dramatic shuffleboard match!

CLAUDIUS. BEGIN!

LAERTES. I just said that.

CLAUDIUS. Oh. Well. Carry on then.

(The LOUNGE SINGER *and the* BACK-UP DANCERS *launch into it.*)*

**Be very judicious about the time you spend on musical numbers here in act Five. They shouldn't last more than twenty or thirty seconds.*

LOUNGE SINGER. *(Singing:)*
P-P-P-POKER FACE P-P-P-POKER FACE

MMM MMUH MMUH MUHH MMMUH
P-P-P-POKER FACE P-P-P-POKER FACE
MMM MMUH MMUH MUHH MMMUH

(They stop.)

And it's Laertes with the first biscuit. He's ready. He's ready. He's waiting to send the biscuit. The drama is intense. Sweat beads upon his forehead—it's as if life and death were in the balance.

LAERTES. Do you mind?

LOUNGE SINGER. This is twice as exciting as watching fishing. There he goes.

*(*LAERTES *pushes the "biscuit.")*

WOW!

(The BACK-UP DANCERS *scream and cheer.)*

AMAZING! SIMPLY AMAZING!

*(*HAMLET *stretches, perhaps does some knee-bends and hops, then gets in position.)*

And now it is Prince Hamlet's turn to send the biscuit. The tension is staggering.

*(*HAMLET *measures it like he's lining up a golf putt.)*

Laertes is clearly within the 7 point line, Hamlet has to knock him out in order to keep the score at zero-zero. Can he do it?

*(*HAMLET *pushes the "biscuit." Ad lib overly-dramatic reaction from* LAERTES, HAMLET, *and* BACK-UP DANCERS *depending on the result. Example below if* HAMLET *misses.)*

LAERTES. HA! HA! IN YOUR FACE! IN YOUR WEASELY WEASEL FACE!

*(*LAERTES *steps up for his second shot.)*

LOUNGE SINGER. The all-important second shot. Impossibly, the tension has risen even more to a degree that was inconceivable for the previous shot. I am about to faint. In fact, I am going to faint. I am shocked that I did not faint just then.

*(*LAERTES *pushes the "biscuit." Big reaction. Here's an example if he makes the shot.)*

LAERTES. BOO YA! BOO YA! BOO BOO BOO YA YA YA! WHO'S THE PRINCE NOW? HUH? WHO'S THE PRINCE NOW?! I AM! I AM THE PRINCE OF SHUFFLEBOARD!

LOUNGE SINGER. And now, a musical number.

*(*LOUNGE SINGER *and* BACK-UP DANCERS *launch into a song not unlike "Telephone.")*

HAMLET. Stop it!

(With a dramatic flourish, HAMLET *approaches the shuffleboard again.)*

LOUNGE SINGER. And now…Hamlet's second shot. The sweat drips down his forehead. His fingers are growing tense. Will he miss? Will he fail? At this point it would be nice to have complete confidence in yourself and no ambiguity whatsoever. Perhaps he would be better off dead. Perhaps he should avoid the awful and incredible tension by ending it all, then this nightmare would be over—but what would happen after death then? Would he be cursed for all eternity to relive these moments on the shuffleboard court, watching the highlights over and over again and thinking about his wasted, miserable life? Would he pray for the darkness that—

HAMLET. Stop it.

*(*HAMLET *pushes the puck. If he succeeds…)*

AH HA! VICTORY IS MINE!

LOUNGE SINGER. And that will do it for the first frame. Only nineteen more to go.

JESSIE. ARE YOU KIDDING ME? I'm going to swallow my eyeballs just to avoid dying of boredom!

CHIP. Hey—do you want a true-to-life shuffleboard match or not?

JESSIE. I WANT BLOOD! Come on, somebody hit somebody with something!

HAMLET. I have had enough of this charade.

LAERTES. As have I, Hamlet. You die now!

(He brandishes his shuffleboard cue like a sword and swings it around.)

CHIP. Again, might I point out that on Carnival Cruise Lines—

*(*LAERTES *takes a swing at him.)*

LAERTES. Out of my way, worm!

*(*HAMLET *wields his shuffleboard cue like a sword.)*

HAMLET. You want some of this?

(He swings it around.)

LAERTES. Have at thee!

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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