

HAMLET, RESURRECTED

... conceit makes fools of conquerors and of kings, /And thus
the residential view of Hell /Is marked with sad betrayals...

Abel Prudhomme

Editor's Note: To learn about Abel Prudhomme, the poet, writer and performance artists, see the Interview section.

Actors

HAMLET, *former Prince of Denmark*

FORTINBRAS, *newly crowned king of Denmark (former Prince of Norway)*

LAETRES, *son of deceased royal advisor*

GRAVEDIGGER

GRAVEROBBER/MOUNTEBANK #1

GRAVEROBBER/MOUNTEBANK #2

OPHELIA, *Hamlet's deceased lover, and sister of Laetres*

GERTRUDE, *Hamlet's deceased mother, the former Queen of Denmark*

REBECCA, *queen of the gypsies, and mother of Guildenstern & Rosencrantz*

VIVALDE, *Rebecca's daughter, and thus the sister of Guildenstern & Rosencrantz*

BALDHILD, }
BATHILDA, } *members of a roadside band of gypsies*
HERMANN, }
TILLO }

URBAN }
NORBERT } *students at Wittenberg, Hamlet's former classmates*
LEOPOLD }

MARTIN LUTHER, *Dean of Studies at Wittenberg, Protestant Reformation founder*

KATHERINE VON BORA LUTHER, *Martin Luther's wife*

JOHANNES (HANS)
MAGDALENA
MARTIN
PAUL
MARGARETHE

children of Dr. & Mrs. Martin Luther

HORATIO, *former best friend of Hamlet, and sworn oracle of Hamlet's life*

Mourners, Courtiers, Students, Nannies and Maids

SCENE: Denmark; Wittenberg; and the countryside of Germany

Proto Prologue

Hamlet's tale, a popular one and very old,
Triangle of revenge and twin-like death,
Disrupted by a charlatan who sold
Ineffectual poison merely masking breath.
Prince Hamlet and noble Laertes buried alive,
And thus the story here must further end;
One ever more restrained and one to rise,
While Fortinbras a throne with ease ascends.
Hamlet the risen fugitive must flee,
With bounty placed upon his long lost head;
He who pondered once, "To be or not to be,"
Back to Wittenberg to be is quickly sped.
Thus the Renaissance and Reformation now are due
To finally meet when Prince Hamlet and Martin Luther interview.

Prologue

SCENE *Wittenberg's Castle Church, within the chapel.*

Luther stands within a raised enclosing medieval pulpit, with the congregation listening below.

MARTIN LUTHER And so...

It is a great heart
That loves the little things;
That bends from height
And beholds the humble face;
That perceives the world in unison,
And sympathizes with the ant;
It is a great heart

That beholds the little things.

It is a great heart
That loves the little things;
That holds the future
And an infant with one hand;
That sees the ruler as a broken child,
And war through a mother's eyes;
It is a great heart
That understands the little things.

It is a great heart
That loves the little things;
Who in that love for little things
Has found that love for everything;
Who in that Greatest Love of All,
From all that's great to all that's small,
Has found themselves the greatest loved of all.

It is a Great Heart
That loves the little things.

And now, as you all know, the chief reason for this assembly is to hear from Horatio. He, who in his many travels to oracle the events he shall now relay, has briefly returned to visit us here, at Wittenberg. Horatio, please come honor us with your famed memorial of Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark.

HORATIO Friends and much missed classmates, I both greet thee and thank thee for attendance upon a tale that I am sworn to give. Yea, my life is bound up within the declaration; and so I beseech thee, hearken unto this.

Ere the royal soul of Hamlet could reach its kingly height was it cast down to where it now remains, within the dust-filled earth; where now both he and noble Laetres still lay.

...

Act 1

SCENE 1 *Inside the coffin of Laetres.*

The scene opens with Laetres lying on a wooden board that is lifted slightly from a flat position into an angled one, slanted just enough for the audience to see him. There is a faint rhythmic sound in the distance.

NARATOR [Speaking from somewhere behind the curtain.] Music in the distance, but it wasn't this. No, nor the stillness of everything else; just that one thing, that thing so gradual, that inability to shift.

It was obviously a carryover from the womb. A comfort enjoyed each night, as he lay upon his bed; now withheld! He could not turn to the side, he could not cup his head in hands, he could not bring his knees gently to his chest, and so he could not descend back into restful sleep and solid slumber.

The rhythmic sound grows slightly louder and faster.

LAETRES [A recorded voice, portrayed as his thoughts.] Were there players in the village? Their revelry increased?

NARATOR And what was that pressing against his knee? And that dream, fading away as all dreams do; hard to remember, like something so very long ago.

The rhythmic sound continues to gradually become louder.

LAETRES They love their rhythm, don't they? They must be shuffling, keeping time.

The perimeter of a coffin begins to slowly rise up around him from the board that he has been lying upon.

NARATOR Yet, he is more concerned with what he feels against his back, against his arms, against his side; and his eyes opening to touch the utter dark!

The rhythmic sound is now loud and clearly mimicking the sound of a heartbeat.

LAETRES [Recorded voice ends. He is now speaking audibly.] Those drums! Damn the revelers; those drums! What is this? What?

He is now fully surrounded by the perimeter of a coffin.

NARATOR And then he remembers: prince, poison, sword; something wrong!

The top of the coffin (covering him from chest to foot) is lowered down.

LAETRES Something! The dream; it was –

The sound has now escalated into a very distinct loud heartbeat.

NARATOR The beating, the beating, now pounding from his chest! Yet, he can almost, almost... There! His hands next to his head, pressing up with all his strength. Nothing! Nothing! Smashing with his elbows, pressing with his knees, but nothing, nothing yields!

LAETRES [*Commences and then continues to pound and scratch at the top of the coffin; and simultaneously releases a volley of screams.*]

He can no longer hear his own heart; silenced by the scratching, and then the screams! His voice, his pain, his fingernails torn to shreds!

The lights shut completely off for a prolonged period of 15 seconds; with nothing occurring other than the loud sounds of Laetres scratching and screaming to get out of his coffin. Then, with the scratching and screaming continuing, the lights begin to fade in and out, at approximate intervals of 1 second on, and 2 seconds off – thus signifying the passage of time. Then, suddenly, the noises cease and the lights remain on. A long silence then prevails, interrupted only by...

LAETRES [*Whimpers and snuffles quietly without stopping.*]

NARATOR Now, he is transformed again; whimpering, the immobile, the undead! The sound of his beating heart returns; overwhelming all but this...

The loud sound of a beating heart recommences.

Laetres, if this be you, then the Prince of Denmark, Hamlet is also...

LAETRES ...buried alive!"

The top missing portion of the coffin is now lowered into place, with a loud thudding sound.

NARATOR And he wonders, will the noise ever end!

SCENE 2 *Inside the throne room of King Fortinbras.*

The scene opens with Fortinbras seated on his throne, in the dark, with the spotlight revealing only his eyes. This light will gradually increase during this scene, hiding his crown as much as possible until the word "crown" is mentioned, and until the entire throne room is fully lit up as his audible voice commences with the words, "Bring the executioner!"

FORTINBRAS [*A recorded voice, portrayed as his thoughts.*] I would scream, but none would hear me. My day is as my night. My mind explores the infinite, but I - a mortal still!

Oh, to rise; to be free! Constrained! I did not build this thing!
This thing was not built for me! Constrained!! And this metal
pressed upon my head that stiffens mind, and heart, and will,
and...

Oh, for counsel from the Klenjdal Mountains; the sun that would
not set; and the breeze of Loen Lake which calls me home. Mock
me not, mock me not all thee who warned me then!

Vengeance! Coward!! Thou art nothing more than me! Fie!
False fallen god! Thou art but echo of the laughter none can hear.

It was not enough! Why was it not enough? I, Prince of Norway,
nevermore to be! I, Fortinbras, victor of no battle; conqueror of
the kingless crown! Trapped within a foreign throne! Imprisoned
by this gold upon my head!

Surrounded by my court, my hypocrites; am I not chief of thee?
Truth buried in the ground; I weep for thee, my darling; myself
whom now none shall ever know. Tears that are not falling are
choking me, choking me!

All is gone! All is nothing; and I shall be here another day! And
so...

FORTINBRAS

[Recorded voice ends. He is now speaking audibly.] Bring the
executioner! Bring the House of Hamlet; and as I sign this new
decree, let all whose breath could threaten me, with bloody blade
and muscled swing, from newest babe to oldest thing, before my
eyes and in this place, put everyone to death!

SCENE 3 *At the recently reopened grave of Laetres.*

*The scene begins with a poorly dressed gravedigger facing the audience, and two even lesser dressed
graverobbers facing him. One or two fresh bodies are slightly sticking out of the nearby open grave.*

GRAVEDIGGER

[Cackles wildly without stopping.]

GRAVEDIGGER

[Stops cackling abruptly.] Hamlet is alive! These words, I know, confuse more
than tell; yet burdened heart from me to thee must spill. Yea, 'though this
madness follows hard from depths of inky grave. Oh, ho, usurping heart,
behave, behave! 'Tis so! 'Tis so! He lives!! Hamlet lives!!

Oh, I tell it! I tell it!

'Twas twice a morn beyond invaded shores. Bodies filled the
streets! Stench of death possessed the wind, and sailed 'pon pools

of blood. Ah, the royal nose was filled! King of Denmark, Prince of Norway - Fortinbras! Conqueror of the kingless crown!

Swift was decree, so nimbly borne, so well directed, so frighteningly phrased that e'er the sun did fall, the still and rotting flesh lay deep within the ground, save corpses three - king, queen, and...

The rigid regal sent elsewhere to oily hands, princely pride joined to mine; and I went 'round to digging, digging, digging, digging, like an earthworm in the Rhine; until the thing and I combined, guest and guide fetching down. Until the moon turned me around and

I saw death looking back at me!

'Twas but a variant of movement, like painted eyes not as they seem. And then it blinked, and then it twitched, and then it spoke... and then it screamed! And up the ladder for the living, the thing... escaped into the dark!

Next day, when they found me, and my fellows pulled me out, we gained permission to unearth this other tomb, and the body of friend Laertes was exhumed.

His eyes horrid, frozen, opened; his lips twisted in a shout; his bloody fingers, nails newly ripped, with those splinters sticking out. Ah... oh, a vision then I saw, a vision I shall ever see, words gory gouged *inside* the coffin, "Remember me! Remember me!!"

GRAVEDIGGER [Cackles wildly without stopping.]
GRAVEROBBER #1 Cut his throat!
GRAVEROBBER #2 But that *name*!
GRAVEROBBER #1 Cut his throat!
GRAVEROBBER #2 Look! The tombstone – It's 'im! It's 'im!!
GRAVEROBBER #1 Cut his throat, before he tells it *again*...
GRAVEDIGGER [Stops cackling abruptly.] Hamlet is alive! These words, I know, confuse more than tell; yet...
GRAVEROBBER #1 Enough!!
Grabs the knife from graverobber #2, and slits the gravedigger's throat.
GRAVEROBBER #1 There! Now throw 'im in the ditch with the other two!
GRAVEROBBER #2 You mean the other three! It's 'im in that coffin! It's 'im!!
Graverobber #1 slaps the other graverobber, and grabs him by the collar.
GRAVEROBBER #1 "It's 'im; it's 'im!" I know it's 'im; the dandy what bought sleeper juice for poison! It means both he and Hamlet was buried alive, they was... and *nobody else knows*! It means the bounty is all ours, ye fool! See?

GRAVEROBBER #2 But... but he's the Prince of Denmark!
 GRAVEROBBER #1 Hah, hah! He's the *hunted* of Denmark; and now we's the only hunters... eh!

GRAVEROBBER #2 But a prince!
 GRAVEROBBER #1 A prince? What is a prince, but a devil in a costume; a hag perfumed with youth; who plucks the head off of his people, like a baby plucks his dolls!

GRAVEROBBER #2 But it's Prince *Hamlet*!
 GRAVEROBBER #1 Aye, the very one indeed! The madman who drove Ophelia to drown in a shallow pond. The murderer that stabbed her father from behind a curtain drawn. The unmerciful that sent his playmates to the executioner's axe at dawn. The prince who'll soon make me a prince, as I slit his quivering throat; and send the murderer to the murdered, the ghost maker to his ghosts.

GRAVEROBBER #2 Ah, I get it; so *we'll* be the royal ones, eh?
 GRAVEROBBER #1 Yeah! You the Prince of Mountebanks; me the King of Graverobbers! And now, your highness, uh – please roll yer loyal subject in to, er – yer royal courtroom. *And cover 'em up* so no one'll ever find 'em again!

GRAVEROBBER #1 and #2 [*Begin deviously laughing together, as they shovel dirt back into the open grave.*]

Act 2

SCENE 1 *Somewhere else in the graveyard, below a dead yellowed leafless elm tree.*

HAMLET If I sold my soul to a demon once, did I sell it to the Devil forever?
 Oh, thing, false ghost, mask fallen off, thy lies have all come out. My father would have never let it come to this! The drawbridge lifted; the gates in chains; the hallways barred and locked; and all the dogs are dead.
 Reconstructed by the hordes of Hell; the streets, the walls anew with blood; the air perfumed with death... and all the dogs are dead!
 Tie up the boundaries of my heart; my all in all is fallen out; and all the pieces lost! The clock of reason, the clicking sand, the torrent of the wind! Am I a man? Am I a man or myth? A vapor still!
 People and things; touched, untouched - neither of them real. Corporeal is excrement, ethereal a wisp - neither of them real! 'Tis twain, 'tis gone; I and they - neither of us real!
 Anon and non - nothing stuff! Felt, unfelt - nothing stuff! All collected, all outpoured, this and that, and nothing more; all I hated and adored... oh horrid heart you pulled it down, oh horrid hands you plucked it out, oh perverse mouth you ate it all and now it all is gone! Denmark fallen, the madness departs, and I the villain still; who like a baby the nipple on, clings to this while all is gone, this nectar from the grave is sucked. I the risen am not dead!
 Can I with stolen breath discern? I died! I cry! I died! And yet I walk the earth. Almost entombed, I walk the earth, but why, but why, but why?

A figure appears in the near distance; shrouded in a black hooded floor length cloak, and moving silently in Hamlet's direction through the low-hanging fog.

HAMLET Soft you now! What visage...? Spectre of Death through burial fog floats this way to
me!

What then? Tour of castle and city streets; yet here return my wandering feet. Pursued
escape; yet here compelled to be.

O' mortal breath, fetch me away! O' all that lives, come hide me! Oh, God; who I now
know must be – be saving me! [*Weeps!*] Be saving me!!

HAMLET [*Continues weeping.*]

HAMLET It... turns away; and moves towards [*whispers*]... *Ophelia's tomb!* ... Removes its hood
and [*gasps*] ... Ophelia! What is this world, and what is she and I and all who live
within? Damned to return to our own graves each night?

But yet... the hair is grayed, the features altering, and - now I see. This must be...*her
mother!*

She speaks as if entranced o'er her presumed daughter's grave. What words? I would
know. So stealthily I go...

OPHELIA'S MOTHER

A shadow,

Loathe to touch thy feet,

Hung o'er thy head instead,

Combined with thy mind,

And filled the rest with dread.

Monarchy of the will,

Usurper of the secret.

For in each darkened corner bound,

Tied with lies and muffled sounds,

The kidnapped captive truth was found

Writhing on the floor.

Imprisoned evermore?

Sanity,

Turned and spurned conformity,

Inexplicably explained

Vanity,

And admitted death.

So who was mad?

She who bore her end close in a dance,

Or *he* who at the party *sat*,

A *jester* in a trance.

OPHELIA'S MOTHER Polonius, my other – murdered by him. Laertes, our only – murdered by him! But thee, o' infant of my heart; 'though birthed, forever attached... He drowned my baby. He drove it mad! He left it in a shallow pool, face down to die the death of fools!

Unavenged! Unavenged!! Let this then be for him! Upon thy soul, foul prince be this! Upon thy soul... be *this!!*

She lifts a gleaming blade high, with both hands, above her head and, quickly plunging it into her chest, falls dead, outstretched over Ophelia's grave.

SCENE 2 *Begins elsewhere in the graveyard and concludes at Ophelia's grave.*

The scene opens with Graverobber #2 diligently searching for... someone!

HAMLET [*Heard screaming from a distance*] Nooooooooooooo!!!!

GRAVEROBBER #2 [*Suddenly halts his search, looks in the direction of the scream, and then starts running towards it.*]

Upon arrival at Ophelia's grave, the Graverobber discovers Hamlet on his knees, weeping, and rocking back and forth, while holding Ophelia's dead mother's body to his chest. The Graverobber stands in silence for an extended period of time, while staring down in amazement at Hamlet. Then finally he speaks.

GRAVEROBBER #2 Ye best be leavin' now, sir!

HAMLET She cursed me.

GRAVEROBBER #2 Beggin' ye pardon...

HAMLET She hath cursed me! [*Looking up into the eyes of the Graverobber.*] I am cursed!

GRAVEROBBER #2 Ye best come 'way with me, now.

HAMLET [*Looking back down at the dead body of Ophelia's mother, which he is still holding in his arms.*] She lists my sins, she writes my curse, and I... cannot climb within to pull it out! She stabbed me through her own heart, and fastened me in place!

GRAVEROBBER #2 Sir...

HAMLET Whither can I flee? Heaven denies me; the Earth would eat me up; and I a fugitive from Hell am left to be. Brimstone in my coat - hounds of darkness sniff for me! Mark of Cain, and yet there is no Land of Nod! Fallen off the world and transformed into a bird of... darkness!

GRAVEROBBER #2 [*Reaches down and attempts to help Hamlet up.*] Young Prince, I think ye'd better –

HAMLET [*Rising and drawing his sword from his side.*] How know ye me?

GRAVEROBBER #2 I am more ye subject than ye shall ever know, and seen ye oft since ye were just a babe. Now, let us go! Norwegians in the walls, and Danes at empty tables turn to spies! Come away! If I'd have served ye ill, I'd be done with it by now! I'm tryin' t' help ye, sire! Please now, come away!

HAMLET But... [*Turns to look towards Ophelia's dead mother.*]

GRAVEROBBER #2 They're buryin' bodies faster 'an they kin kill 'em, now! She'll be safe in Mother Dirt this time tomorrow. Come away!

HAMLET [*Sheathes his sword, and with one last sorrowful look upon Ophelia's mother, turns and departs with the Graverobber.*]

SCENE 3 *Inside a large one room hut, sometime during the early morning.*

The scene opens in the dark, with the loud sound of a crackling fire. An image then fades onto a screen of a medieval pot hooked and suspended over a chimney (hearth) flame. - It is important that this image include as much of the flame as possible, with the all of the pot still showing at the very top of the screen. - Just as the pot begins to boil/steam, the lights fade on as the image fades away; and we see the Graverobber pulling the pot off its hook and out of the fire, as Hamlet sits close to the fire, staring into the flames, with a blanket wrapped over his shoulders. - The sound of the fire continues in the background at a reduced volume.

The Graverobber takes the pot to a table and begins preparing a bowl of broth, as Hamlet continues staring into the flames.

GRAVEROBBER #2 This be the same broth me mum made for me, when I was ill. Took the swell off me every time, it did. *God bless her!* [Pause.] What she would o' given to see you! Here, drinkin' from this bowl, and sittin' in that chair just like she use to. Aye, just *like* ye! Starin' into the fire and thinkin' all the time! Thinkin'... thinkin' 'bout 'im! [Pause.]

The Graverobber continues talking as he walks over to Hamlet, with the bowl of broth.

GRAVEROBBER #2 Ye'll be fine *now*, sir! This'll fix ye right up. Then we kin work on gettin' ye out of the city. I knows a passage, hidden at the base of the wall where...

HAMLET [Continues staring into the fire, without replying.]

The chattering voice of the Graverobber fades to mute, as both the loud volume of the crackling fire, and its projected image on a nearby screen returns, as it had at the beginning of this scene, except this time the image shows the flames only. Hamlet continues staring into the actual chimney fire before him.

- The screen should be situated, as much as possible, with Hamlet in front of it, portraying an image that depicts him sitting in Hell!

Voices begin to arise out of the flame! Each is spoken through an echo chamber, with a haunting quality. Actors mime the words as they are spoken – these actors should either be located 1) in front of the screen, while wearing all white bodysuits from head to toe, so that the flames reflect on to them; or 2) behind the screen, with their shadow faintly projected; or 3) both - In either case, the appearance is to be a portrayal of images moving in the flames.

HAMLET [A recorded voice, reflecting his remembered words, echoed as the other voices, and rising out of the flames.] “Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned? Bring with thee airs from Heaven or blasts from Hell? Be thy intents wicked or charitable? Thou com'st in such a questionable shape

that I *will* speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet, King, father, royal Dane.
O, answer me!"

GHOST "If thou didst ever thy dear father love – Revenge..." "Revenge..."
"Remember me!"

HAMLET "My excellent good friends. How doest thou, Guildenstern? Ah,
Rosencrantz. Good lads, how do you both?"

GHOST "Remember me!"

HAMLET "... Those bearers put to sudden death."

HORATIO "So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't."

HAMLET "They are not near my conscience. 'Tis dangerous when the baser nature
comes between... mighty opposites."

GHOST "Remember me!"

POLONIUS "What ho! Help!"

HAMLET "How now? A rat! Dead for a ducat, dead." [*The sound of one man
stabbing another, and of the dying man's gurgling death rattle.*]

POLONIUS "Oh, I am slain."

HAMLET "I'll lug the guts into the neighboring room... This counselor... was in
life a foolish prating knave."

GHOST "Remember me!"

HAMLET "Soft you now, the fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins
remembered."

HAMLET "I did love you once."

OPHELIA "Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so."

HAMLET "You should not have believed me... I loved you not."

OPHELIA "I was the more deceived."

HAMLET "... To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell."

GHOST "Remember me!"

PRIEST “... Her death was doubtful; and but that great command o’ersways the order, she should in ground unsanctified have lodged... Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her.”

HAMLET “What, the fair Ophelia!”

LAETRES “Hold off the earth awhile, till I have caught her once more in mine arms... Now pile your dirt upon the quick and dead...”

HAMLET “...Dost come here to whine, to outface me with leaping in her grave? Be buried quick with her, and so will I. And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw millions of acres on us...”

GHOST “Remember me!”

HAMLET “Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong...”

LAETRES “... I do receive your offered love...”

GHOST “Remember me!”

HAMLET “Come for the third, Laetres. You do but dally. I pray you pass with your best violence.”

LAETRES “Say you so? Come on. [*The sound of fencing (sword fighting) commences.*]

HAMLET “Nay, come again.” [*The sound of a sword slashing through the air, followed by a moan from mortally wounded Laetres.*]

HORATIO “They bleed on both sides.”

LAETRES “I am justly killed... Lo, here I lie, never to rise again.”

GHOST “Remember me!”

HAMLET’S MOTHER “Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet. I pray thee stay...”

GHOST “Remember me!”

HAMLET’S MOTHER “What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?”

GHOST “Remember me!”

HAMLET’S MOTHER “The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.”

GHOST **“Remember me!”**

KING “Gertrude, do not drink.”

GHOST **“Remember me!”**

HAMLET’S MOTHER “Oh, my dear Hamlet! The drink, the drink! I am poisoned.” [*Sounds of both a fallen metal cup clinking on the ground, and a body falling and turning a chair over.*]

GHOST **“Remember me!”**

HAMLET “O, I die, Horatio... th’ election lights on Fortinbras. He has my dying voice...”

GHOST **“Remember... Remember... Remember... Remembahhhh, Hah, hahhhhhhhh! Hah, hah, hah, hah, hah, hah, hah, haieeeeeee, heh, hee, heh, heeeeeeeeeee!”**

The voices and the loud volume of the fire abruptly cease, as Hamlet, with his eyes opened wildly, suddenly rises – with his broth still untouched and sitting on the small table beside him – steps to the window, looks out and says emphatically,

HAMLET Visions, visions, visions! Good man, good man, friend knave! Where be thy jibes and bits. Tell me something, anything. Tell me...

GRAVEROBBER #2 Whitsun Day.

HAMLET Eh?

GRAVEROBBER #2 ‘Tis Whitsun Day, sir! The seven weeks of feasting’s over; Easter’s at an end; and were it not for them murderin’ troops of Norway killin’ as they will, there’d be picnics aplenty in every part of Frederiksdal forest!

HAMLET Whitsun Day?

GRAVEROBBER #2 Aye, the day His Almighty Presence fills the Earth. *There* be somethin’ Fortinbras can’t take away!

Now, if you’ll pardon me, sir; we’ll be needin’ more wood. Let me fetch us some and I’ll be back in a pip. Pardon. Pardon. [*Exits the room.*]

HAMLET Whitsun Day? Whitsun Day? Shall all the world go free while I remain enchained on Whitsun Day? The beggar and thief, the harlot and the

murderer; the dregs of Earth shall have the ear of God? Outcast? Outcast into this corner with this flame? Eternal solitude unwanted and begun?

Hope conceived but I am barren, floods appear but I am dry. Love is felt but I am hated, hounded, barred in prison fields to fly away from... me.

Whitsun Day. O' why must it be Whitsun Day? O' I could wipe away my birth, and once ignored my destined death. I could hide within the bowels of Grindel's cave, but not from thee. Not... from thee!

My illusion is that I am mortal, my delusion is my tears, my paradox is that I live to die and then to rise and meet my fears. I breathe but I am choking, I gasp for air but there is none. I seek for pity but in the heart of man and God and demons there is none. None!

Whitsun Day, which nobles disregard; while peasants ride its wings beyond. Whitsun Day, how oft I flung away thy offered joys; when Heaven touched my soul, and I... I pulled away the shoulder.

Whitsun Day, o' Whitsun Day. Treasure stolen from the hangman; trophies snatched from demon hands; King Vengeance writ in weakness as the blessed rise from the damned; all and all on this one day, and yet not I. Fitted and fettered before the light of darkness; I am bound unto this flame!

The axe falls, the noose recoils, the villain wins, and I am spoiled. I the most abhorred, abhorred, abhorred on... Whitsun Day!

Hamlet should now be standing a few feet away from the chimney fire, at a 90 degree angle to it, staring directly in front of himself at either the wall or out the window. Incoherent muffled voices now rise out from the flames, with occasional snatches of recognizable phrases (all taken, as the others, from applicable phrases in the original play by Shakespeare). Hamlet should, while still remaining in the same standing position, dart his eyes towards the chimney fire, and then gradually turn his head (only) until it is at an approximate 15 degree angle to it, and he is paused in this position, looking askance into this flame. The earlier projected image of Hell then returns, with all the lighting dimmed further to present an even clearer image of him sitting in Hell. Once both the image is fully redisplayed and the lighting has been completely readjusted, Hamlet then slowly walks over, sits back in the chair in front of the flame, and after another very brief pause, buries his face in his hands and weeps.

The scene then fades away to prolonged darkness, with the sound of transitional music (such as should be played in between every scene) beginning to rise; thus signifying the passage of time.

Act 3

SCENE 1 *At night, somewhere inside the wall of the city.*

The scene opens with the Graverobber searching for...

GRAVEROBBER #2 Somewhere behind one of these bushes. It usually takes a bit o' lookin'. 'Don't use it that often, ya know. But I'll find it. I always do.

The graverobber continues searching, and digging again and again behind each of the many bushes against the wall.

HAMLET Lost. Lost. Nothing more and lost. Here through twig and leaf to slither through a hole. Like a serpent, on a belly full of prey. All of Denmark bitten; all I loved swallowed whole; all that's pure like a skin shed long ago.

Less than a monster - I cannot threaten. Less than an insect - I cannot bite. Even amidst the dung of earth there is no use for me. Yet this knave earnestly struggles to preserve this wasted life and forestall the pain that is my destiny.

Every chain I wear I fashioned, all the molten lead I poured, all the horror I have given I have stored.

I am a curse to all who aid me. I am a scourge to all who love. I am a plague to everything I touch; and so I must... I must!

[Hamlet turns to the graverobber, who is now walking back towards him from a segment of the wall.] Friend knave, after you find this passage, leave me. Flee quickly and be thou stealthy in thy return.

GRAVEROBBER #2 No, sir! I just came to tell ye that I found the hole, and I'm goin' with ye. There's nothin' here for me, and I kin help ye. Ye'll see!

HAMLET No! My ruination at an end, yet like a vortex I'll pull one more down? No, you must flee. You must escape. You must live!

Suddenly, from a behind a crevice/corner column in the wall, the second graverobber steps up behind Hamlet and shoves the tip of his sword up against Hamlet's spine,

GRAVEROBBER #1 *That's enough!* *[Hamlet starts to reach for his sword.]*
Touch that blade and I'll run ye through!

Take 'is blade, ye fool; and throw it down... There... that's it. Now take these shackles and place 'em on 'is hands n' feet. Told ye when we dug up old Mikey we'd find a use for 'em one day. Everything in its good time, I always says.

Now, yer highness, have ye anythin' ye wish to say?

HAMLET Who art thou, v---

As soon as Hamlet opens his mouth to speak, the second graverobber shoves all of a large cloth into it.

GRAVEROBBER #1 Hah, hah, hah, hah! The gentry, they never knows when to shut up! And always askin' who's they's talkin' to. I got no name! Names are for givin' yeself away.

What's that, sir? I cain't hear ye. Awaitin' yer good pleasure, sire? Shall I bow here and scrape me nose before ye? Just tell me how *low*, so I kin drip some blood out o' me nostril in yer royal honor.

Hah! I suppose now's a good a time as any to thank ye for always givin' *me nothin'*, while takin' *all ye kin!*

[He now turns to the second graverobber, and says...] Pick up his sword, ye fool; and step over here with me!

The second graverobber picks up Hamlet's sword and begins to walk over towards the first graverobber.

GRAVEROBBER #1 Ye did well, ye fool! I think me favorite was the part about 'im *needin'* ye. Hah, hah, hah! 'Im needin' *ye*? Once we get im' to Fortinbras, he'll see how much he *needs* ye! Actually, ye'll be the one needin' then... needin' to find us a couple o' ripe strumpets, and a keg o' ale to help spend all that gold we'll be collectin'. Hah, hah, hah, hah, hah, hah...

The first graverobber now steps in front of the second, and just as he seems to be about to turn and stand next to him, facing Hamlet, he suddenly thrusts the sword into the first graverobber, just below the right shoulder, and then knocks the first graverobber's fallen sword away.

GRAVEROBBER #1 *[In shock.]* Are ye mad, ye fool?

GRAVEROBBER #2 I have a name! [*He thrust the sword into the first graverobber again, this time into his belly.*] A golden name, and its not, “Ye Fool!” [*He pulls the sword back out.*]

The first graverobber falls to the ground, holding his bleeding stomach, while still in shock and staring up at the second graverobber. The second graverobber then stands over the first, still holding Hamlet’s sword, while glaring down at him.

GRAVEROBBER #2 I have a need; and it ain’t traitor’s gold. I have a need. A need to *be* for others; a need to do *something great*, like me mum said me father told her I was meant to!

[*He yells...*] All I ever wanted was to help people! And since the day me mother died, the only thing that ever stopped me was you! [*he hacks down into the fallen graverobber now, and continues to hack down at him again and again, with downward blows, alternating from left to right each time he says, “was you!”*] Was you! Was you! Was you! Was you!

He now continues uncontrollably slashing down into the other graverobber’s now dead body, with a repeating motion now from the right only; until Hamlet, who has been struggling to do so, finally spits the cloth out of his mouth, and shouts...

HAMLET Stop! Stop! Stop! More than this and thou fallest to the pit with me!

GRAVEROBBER I... killed ‘im. [*He throws the bloody sword to the side.*] Its over! I’m free! Finally... but I... killed ‘im. He was all the time tryin’ t’get me to do it. “Cut ‘is throat!” “Push im over!” “Give ‘im this, [or] give ‘im that”, he’d say. But I wouldn’t do it! Even when that Laetres fella came and offered us gold for poison. I wouldn’t do it. I switched it. I sold ‘im the other’n instead. But now... I killed ‘*im*. ‘E was all the time tryin’ to turn me murderer and he finally did it, but it was ‘*im* I killed. ‘Im! I killed ‘*im*!

HAMLET These irons, friend. Please. Remove them.

GRAVEROBBER Sorry, sir! ... There. Are ye alright, sir? Did ‘e hurt ye any?

HAMLET Well, friend; I am well. What... What was it you said about Laetres?

GRAVEROBBER Oh! Forgive me, sir. Can ye forgive me? It was me what sold the stuff to ‘im.... The stuff ‘e cut ye with. The stuff what laid ye down. The stuff what made ‘em *think* ye was dead.

HAMLET “Think” that I was dead?

GRAVEROBBER This fellah here... [*He looks down at the other graverobber; then looks away in fear for a moment; and then continues to say...*] He’s a graverobber and I would often go a-robbin’ with ‘im. But I’s actually a mountebank by trade. Learned it from me blessed mum. Some calls us mountebanks charlatans, tricksters. But me mum was the real thing. She helped people, and so did *I*; when *he* wasn’t gettin’ me t’do otherwise. [*Pauses briefly in remorse.*]

Then this dandy comes to us. Says his name is Laetres. Says he’s Polonius’ son and that he wants vengeance. That one [*motions towards the dead graverobber, this time without looking at him*] told me t’sell ‘im the nightshade, but instead I sold ‘im the dwale. All the time tryin’ t’turn me murderer. But I says, no to ‘im. No! I ain’t no killer! It was a potion I give ‘im instead. I sold ‘im the sleeper juice.

HAMLET Then Laetres, like me... lives! And the queen! My mother... both alive?

MOUNTEBANK Not Laetres, sir. We seen ‘*im*. Awful. [*Pause.*] Suffocated still scratchin’ to get out, ‘e was. But ye mum, now she was different. They buried her in Roskilde, where all the royals go. You’d o’ gone there too, ‘ceptin’ ol’ Fortinbras sendin’ ye “to be buried like a soldier”, meanin’ in an unmarked grave.

HAMLET [*Now excited in an agitated manner.*] The queen; we must get to her now! Yea, ‘though there be a thousand Norwegians to hack, we must go to her now!

GRAVEROBBER Don’t worry ‘bout them, sir. We’ll get through the wall here first. Then I knows a place where we kin get a couple o’ good horses for the journey. Then, once we arrive *I knows the way in, the passage; the way in to the vaults.*

HAMLET You know... Then more hasten we our cause. My heart craves for the soul that bore it; for the mercy of a queen, for the rendering of love... for my mother.

Both now exit away towards the nearby bushes.

SCENE 2 *Inside the burial vault of Queen Gertrude, Hamlet’s mother.*

The scene begins with both Hamlet and the mountebank already inside of Queen Gertrude's underground crypt, located beneath Roskilde Cathedral. It is to be understood that they have already opened the decorative stone coffin and looked in to find Gertrude's rotting corpse. As the lights come on, they both are standing at the coffin's edge, looking in.

Hamlet now turns and takes a step away from the coffin. His back should then be partially turned away from the audience, with a portion of his face still in view.

HAMLET Seal it back! Seal it! Please! [*He weeps briefly.*] Please.

Hamlet now weeps uncontrollably, without stopping. Meanwhile, the mountebank slides the heavy stone lid back in place over the stone coffin, which causes a loud grating noise, ending in an even louder thud. He then turns in Hamlet's direction and stands with his head hung down for a period of about 15 seconds, while Hamlet continues weeping uncontrollably. Finally, the mountebank lifts his head towards Hamlet and says...

MOUNTEBANK I'll be at the entrance outside waitin' for ye. I won't leave ye. I'll be waitin'. I won't leave.

Hamlet continues to weep, while gently waving away the mountebank, who then exits. Hamlet continues to weep for 10 more seconds. Then he finally begins to speak – first still turned away from the coffin, and then, as he continues speaking, turning gradually towards it.

HAMLET I never meant for it to come to this; watching you usurp a world of truth to create one where I could do no wrong. And now, stand I here blinded because you cannot see me, hidden in that I am now revealed. My everything turned to nothing that could not abide me with you gone.

Why is it that through death life is so apparent; pain so numbing; loneliness so real? A farewell never ending; a breaking heart that never mends. Man, who fears his own demise, bears this twin-like apprehension: maternal gear departed. The anchor lifted, the sail removed, the compass disappears; and the ship is lost at sea.

Finite detracts from those rejoining to the infinite. Thou set me here, and leave me walking back alone. Yet I am no more prepared for this journey than I was to see thee leave for thine.

From the womb to the stars – we leave our fitted kingdoms and then wonder why we never quite belong. Like Adam, seeking fulfillment in a copy of himself; thus precluded his great fall with what he thought was more than God.

Nay, should the earth outlive the moon then shall that genius sparked at midnight incomplete itself through illumination unnatural. And I the ecliptic murderous beast have sealed thee within this tomb and left me to wander through this world of shadows.

He now lowers his head and begins quietly weeping, with the tips of his fingers first placed along the edge of the stone coffin; then removed as he stands before it, both head and hands now down, gently weeping. After a brief moment, he slowly turns and stumbles back towards the exit. He turns to take one last woeful look upon his mother's coffin, and then, while beginning to weep slightly louder, exits back through the secret passageway.

Act 4

SCENE 1 *Somewhere in the forests of Germany, where...*

The scene opens with four men silently sitting around a campfire, staring into the flame, with Thorsen occasionally looking out into the distance. Finally one of them speaks.

VIGGO I'm tellin' ye, the Netherlands... that's the place.

THORSEN Let it go, Viggo. We'll know when he gets back.

VIGGO They're thrivin' over there. Big towns, fancy villages, lots o' food, plenty o' work to be done...

SVEN Ah, here we go again! [*Mockingly imitating Viggo's guttural voice*] "... and big fat buxom women. Ahhh, what a life we'd lead."

They all have a good long hearty laugh, with Viggo looking serious at first, then chuckling to himself, and then, finally, loudly joining in.

VIGGO Well, it sure beats some o' them skinny wenches back home.

NIELS They didn't get like that 'til 'em Norwegians come in.

THORSEN Would that Prince Hamlet had lived!

VIGGO Ay, and 'is father, too! Now there was a king! Fortinbras wouldn't o' been sittin' on *his* throne! He'd o' tore 'is skin off, and tossed 'im back to Norway, just like 'e done 'is pappy! Now there was a war.

NIELS "You took this fjord..."

VIGGO, SVEN & NIEL [*In unison*] "...now take this kingdom!" Ahhh!!

VIGGO I'd o' fought a hundred for 'im that day!

SVEN Didn't we? It seemed like we each took about that many and more. Them Norwegians are a bunch o' Norweezles, if ye ask me. All we need is a small army, and we kin snap there little necks and dig 'em right out.

THORSEN Our time will come.

VIGGO When? When do we stop runnin'? Fugitives! Vagabonds; fleein' from our land. When do we stop runnin'? When do we turn, gather our forces, and *fight!*

THORSEN Time, my friend. Time, wisdom, planning, and patience. First a base, then more strength, then we lift our swords.

VIGGO Ugh! You an' the captain, with ye little strategies. Always so patient; always figurin' everythin' out! Just give me a Norwegian an' a sword! I'll show ye what to do.

NIELS Ay, and fatten up some o' them Copenhagen wenches for 'im too. He'll fight even harder then!

SVEN [*Mocking Viggo again*] "Ahhh, what a life we'd lead!"

They all laugh again, including Viggo! A brief moment of silence then ensues.

NIELS Do ye think we'll see anymore o' them Protizints?
SVEN Its Protestants, Niels. Protestants! And I sure hope not. At least not the kind we saw lootin' that church the other day.
NIELS Yeah, them's the crazy ones. But I'm talkin' 'bout the ones that fed us the other day, now them was some good folk.
VIGGO There's always two kinds o' people in the world...
SVEN [*Imitating Viggo's voice again*] "... them's does the takin', and them's does the fakin'."
VIGGO That's enough, Svennie! Keep it up, and ye'll be *takin'* yer food with *fake* teeth.
NIELS Ah, Vig! We're just funnin' ye. Besides, we love ye little sayin's. Save ye sword for ol' Fort-stickin'-up-his...
SVEN That's right! 'Im and 'is lil' Nor-panzees is the only reason we're out here scrapin' like this.
THORSEN When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase.
SVEN What?
THORSEN Hush! He approaches.
A man is now seen stepping towards the camp from offstage. As he steps up towards the fire, he pulls back the hood from his cloak, and hands a large package to Thorsen.
VIGGO: Well, what of it? Is there a fight?
NIELS Did ye find help?
SVEN Did ye find food?
MARCELLUS I found out where they're headed. There's a castle south of here, a large one, back down the other road we passed; about a day and a half's journey. It's a place that's central to this region, where lots of people pass through. They say many Danes have come and gone recently. There's also plenty of employment ... and food.
THORSEN What sort of Danes, Captain?
MARCELLUS [*Smiling knowingly at Thorsen*] They said mostly ordinary looking folk, but many strong and with sword.
VIGGO, NIELS, & SVEN [*In unison*] And...
MARCELLUS [*Laughs*] And they shared some of their food.
Marcellus then motions to Thorsen, who opens the package and starts handing out food to everyone. They all start to hungrily eat, until Marcellus stops them by lifting his hand. He then nods towards Thorsen. They all bow their heads, as Thorsen prays.
THORSEN Our Father, which art in Heaven, we thank Thee for always answering our prayers, and for always supplying us with food for our journey. Please bless this food for our eating, and use it to strengthen us in our just cause; in Jesus name, amen.
They all sit down to eat, talk, and laugh as the scene fades away.

SCENE 2 *At the top of the steps, outside the door to the Chapel at Wartburg Castle.*

Hans, dressed in the robes of a priest, is shaking hands and saying farewell to the last of the people leaving the Chapel. Two young men are standing to the side, waiting for him to finish.

HANS Good day, sister. ... Brother, fare ye well. ... Until then. ... Now, Fritz and Franz; you had a question you wished to ask me?
FRITZ Well, we thought that Fortinbras was a wicked man.
FRANZ Yes, and that he had Hamlet buried in an unmarked grave.

FRITZ That's what most of the Danes that pass through here tell us.

HANS *[Pauses to reflect, and then says...]* You have to understand that Horatio... is a man on a mission. Whether that mission is the one he should be on is debatable. Yet still, he feels himself bound; bound to tell this story as he was charged to do, by his good friend, the tragic subject of his tale, Hamlet, the once Prince of Denmark. He therefore feels himself duty bound to present this repeated memorial exactly as it appeared to him at the moment of Hamlet's death. All else, any later revelation, or deed, to him, is non-essential to his tale, which again, he feels must be given exactly as it was received. Do you understand?

FRITZ *[Glancing over at Franz]* Yah, we think we do.

Just then an older woman steps up the stairs towards them.

MOTHER Fritz, Franz, what are you doing? Let Priest Tausen alone. He has work to do, and so do you.

She motions them down the stairs in front of her, while turning back to smile at Hans.

Horatio then steps out from behind the partially open door in back of Hans.

HORATIO I fear you know me better than I do myself.

HANS Ho, such a one! Horatio. What are you doing lurking in the shadows behind me?

HORATIO The shadows suit me well these days, old friend. I fall and fade as one of them.

HANS You are too much upon the ground. Where be all thy mirth from those days back in Wittenberg?

HORATIO Locked in a bottle. But that is me. What of you, good Hans. How fare you here?

HANS Hmm... My days shift as the shades of which you speak; my order having left me here, while they ponder what to do with me next. It seems my former training at Wittenberg has left them thinking me a Lutheran.

HORATIO Are ye then a Protestant?

HANS I am a man, and I have questions; nothing more.

HORATIO Are your questions being answered?

HANS Are yours? You seem as a man running away from something.

HORATIO Running to it would be more likely. I have a promise to keep. One I didn't want to make, but I did; and I'll keep it to the end.

HANS To the end of what, Horatio? Life looms ahead. Possibilities mount up. You have so much that you could do for so many...

HORATIO But I shall do but one for one. I am committed within my cause within this world, and then from it to depart.

HANS This speaks not well, my friend. What to the Almighty? Have ye not heard that, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment?"

HORATIO Judgment? What judgment was there when so noble a Prince, and so worthy a realm was so wastefully cast aside? Where is the righteous pronouncement in that? And wherefore am I thus judged to bear so weighty a cause within this weary bosom?

Judge? If there be a judge, his papers are miffed and he hath cast the wrong sentence! For it appeareth plainly to me, that all is wrong in the world; and all that is written rolls ever crookedly off of the page. All but this one tale, that is; all but what I ride forth to present; in tact; the preservation of something real, preserved for the annals of time; a truth; a truth to outlive every lie of man, and my blood which hungers to pour out.

HANS: Horatio!

HORATIO: Hans! You were not there! You did not see. You do not know. What a prince was that! What a noble mind! What a giant soul; cut down for nothing. The truth *is* held in shadows! Mockery basks in the light! I *have* seen, I *must* tell, I *shall* find the night!

Horatio now turns from him and quickly departs down the stairs.

HANS: Horatio! Horatio! Return!

HORATIO: I bid thee my love, Hans. Fare thee well.

Hans continues to watch Horatio speed away, then looks down at his hands, gazes momentarily up into the sky, and then while weeping and wagging his head, walks back into the Chapel, and closes the door.

SCENE 3 *At dusk, several hundred miles along the road to Wittenberg.*

The scene begins with Hamlet seen walking from a distance, along a dirt road, with his head hung low, slowly ambling back towards the center area of the stage. The mountebank then steps out from the forest (center stage) and begins speaking quietly to himself.

MOUNTEBANK Good! Good to see ‘im walkin’ and clearin’ ‘imself. Hurts me to see ‘im worryin’, like ‘e does.

We could all use a little rest; horses too. Ay, ‘n they’ve earned it. Figure we’ve done a good six hundred since startin’ out.

Well, I guess I’ll fix us up for the night, and then come fetch ‘im in a bit. Hope ‘e doesn’t wake up wi’ one o’ those dreams again.
[Lowers his voice and says] Hope I don’t either.

The mountebank then pensively lowers his head for a moment, and then exits back into the forest.

Hamlet now continues walking back slowly. As he reaches the center of the stage, he is heard saying...

HAMLET I am this, but what I shall be is the question:
Hither having caused the innocent to suffer
The appetite and reach of my misfortunes,
Nor did their honored right to end their trouble
Quicken that eternity of mine. To die – then scream,
Forever; and in that never ending pitch to let commence
The infliction and the enduring prick of pain
Which shall be this trifler’s due: ‘tis a compensation
Death shall never cancel. To die, then live;
To live, without a dream – ay, there’s true light:
For that we now call life has been this dream,
Where we dance away from mercy’s offered coil,
Refusing its pause – o’ dark disrespect
That makes memory eternal eternally hard to bear.
For who would cast away the gift of time,
The offered truth, the secret of the humble,
The path to that divine love, the law delayed,

The alternate of judgment, and the yearn
That inpatients the heart for something more within,
When his doomed destiny might in a moment
Change to hope? Who would folly garner,
Tuned to cacophony masking anguish,
Swirled in dregs imitating life,
This present fantasy, from whose stupor
A bewildered world must stumble, in flashes of truth,
And in one never ending moment of clarity
Realize knowledge within that burning light of flame?
Thus conceit makes fools of conquerors and of kings,
And thus the residential view of Hell
Is marked with sad betrayals of that great gift of mind,
As the engineer of vanity apprehends itself,
And as the furnace of time immemorial is stoked
With remembrances of inaction. – Soft you now,
This band of ruffians come! – Soul, be this
The end of thine escaping?

Three men appear walking towards him.

HAMLET What say ye, knaves. How doth thou approach?

VIGGO Who ye callin' a knave?

HAMLET Forgive me, friend. I meant no...

SVEN Where are ye from, *friend*?

HAMLET Matters of my own.

VIGGO Ye be from Denmark, and by ye little coy response, I think maybe ye be turned Norwegian spy.

HAMLET Calleth me no bounder, friend.

NIELS Look, Viggo! He's reachin' for 'is little pointy sword.

Viggo unsheathes his longsword, and brandishes it towards Hamlet. Sven and Niels laugh and step away from the two men.

VIGGO Ay, so 'tis a fight ye want, eh? Good. Good!

Viggo attempts to thrust his large longsword at Hamlet. Hamlet then unsheathes his rapier, and in three precise movements, uses the tip to catch Viggo's sword by the hilt, pull it from his hand, and then flick it several feet away.

Both Sven and Niel now brandish their swords and step towards Hamlet, while a startled Viggo begins backing away slowly.

A sword fight ensues, with Hamlet holding off both men at once. Viggo finally finds his sword, and comes rushing towards Hamlet from behind. Suddenly the mountebank runs out from the forest, behind Hamlet, with a long stick in his hand. He then stands directly behind Hamlet, and uses the stick to duel with Viggo, while Hamlet continues fighting off the other two men.

Viggo is finally able to hack away the mountebank's stick, and then slices him across the stomach. The mountebank falls momentarily to one knee, but then, looking up with determination, stands up again (still directly behind Hamlet) and positions himself with his hands open and ready to fight on unarmed.

Suddenly Thorsen and Marcellus come riding towards them and shouting...

MARCELLUS What is this?

THORSEN Yield. Yield! All men, yield!

Viggo, Sven, and Niels now all back angrily away, swords still brandished.

THORSEN What meaneth this rabble?

SVEN These men...

Marcellus and Hamlet's eyes now meet with a look of recognition. Hamlet gives a slight wag of his head, which Marcellus, still looking amazed, greets with a nod of understanding. Sven is the only one that notices this exchange.

MARCELLUS Give these men leave.

VIGGO What?

NIELS But they drew swords on us, Captain.

SVEN Captain's right. We never gave this one fellow a chance to explain himself.

The mountebank begins to fall, holding his stomach. Hamlet grabs him just before he hits the ground, and then falls to his knees holding him.

HAMLET Not again. Oh, God not again!

MARCELLUS [Addressing his men] Help them, both ... Bear the wounded man up. [Turns to address Hamlet] My deepest apologies, si- [almost

says, "sire"] We are riding to Wartburg Castle. Please allow us to accompany you there, where we may find help for your companion.

HAMLET We are in your debt.

MOUNTEBANK [Coughs.]

Sven and Niels step up and stand on either side of the mountebank.

HAMLET Friend, who for me has done so much; and for whom I have done so little, tell me; what is your name?

MOUNTEBANK "Name? [*Attempts to laugh, but ends up coughing*] Names are for givin' yeself away."

Sven and Niels now reach down and help support the mountebank, as Viggo apprehensively steps around Hamlet. They then all begin walking towards Marcellus and Thorsen, as the scene fades away.